

## **The Fight Against Cell Phones**

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The debate rages on whether or not cell phones should be allowed into any school classrooms. Horrifying videos, shot from cell phone cameras, are popping up all over YOUTUBE showing the inappropriate actions of teachers within their own classrooms. Some schools have banned the use of phones while at school and others collect these phones when the students come through the doors. Whatever the situation might be at any one of the SDA schools in Canada, we can all admit that this technology is an issue.

Recently, I was reading a newspaper article published in the *Leader Post* (Regina) about a different approach to the use of cell phones in the classroom. The article suggests that instead of fighting against students who would like to bring these phones into classrooms, teachers should embrace the technology and incorporate it into lessons and assignments. I immediately questioned how teachers would be able to regulate the phones so that they would be used only for specific purposes. Text messaging, for example, is rampant and extremely unproductive for many students. A quick poll of my students revealed that many of them are “texting” over 3000 messages per month. Although there are many negatives to having cell phones in the classroom, however, I found a few educational applications. I am not suggesting that we immediately add this technology to the curriculum; however, I feel that we might be able to benefit from some open mindedness.

Cell phone technology is becoming increasingly better. The camera and video options really put a useful tool, if used in the right way, into the students’ hands for making creative assignments. In my English classes, this technology can be used during representation assignments. The students could make a short video presentation or even create picture plot diagrams. Whatever the situation, I have always found that, if challenged creatively, students never cease to amaze me with the creative ideas they come up with.

Another useful tool is the organizer or scheduler on the phone. I chuckle to myself as I think of all the unused school planners that are passed out at the start of a school year and remain unused. Students are always telling me that they forgot about an assignment. My school does not allow the use of phones in class but students are allowed to be on their phones as long as they are not in class. The first thing students do when leaving my classroom is to open their phones and check their messages. A thought came to me. If we could get them to send themselves reminders about homework or studying for a test each time they opened their phones, students would rarely miss an assignment.

In conclusion, I am not naïve to think that anyone who reads this article will rush off to allow phones into the class. This article is intended to take a look at the positives that cell phone could bring to the classroom.