

Article of the Week (AoW) Directions

1. Mark your confusion – either highlighting or underlining.
2. Mark up the text. Annotate the article with comments, questions, inferences, etc. You can use a variety of sentences, phrases, and symbols to show your thinking.
3. Write a developed paragraph response to one of the prompts below.

Study: Cell Phone Ban Linked to Rise in Test Scores

Source: Kristin DeCarr/EducationNews.org/May 18, 2015

A new study has found that schools that ban the use of cell phones have shown an increase in student test scores of 6%, causing researchers to suggest stricter cell phone policies in classrooms.

In their paper, *Ill Communication: Technology, Distraction and Student Performance*, researchers at the University of Texas and Louisiana State University looked at cell phone policies within schools in four cities in England beginning in 2001, paying particular attention to any change in test scores before and after any cell phone ban was enacted, writes Dan Kedmey for *Time*.

While none of the schools surveyed had cell phone bans in place in 2001, 50% had them in 2007. By 2012, 98% of schools surveyed did not allow cell phones on school grounds.

According to researchers, after schools placed a ban on cell phones, the average test score of students aged 16 or higher increased by 6.4%.

“We found the impact of banning phones for these students equivalent to an additional hour a week in school, or to increasing the school year by five days,” the study’s authors wrote on the academic blog, *The Conversation*.

The authors discovered the largest positive change in test scores was seen among students who were considered underachieving or disadvantaged. The results found among this group of students, gains were twice those found among average students, and that no significant results were viewed on students who held the highest test scores. “Allowing phones into schools would harm the lowest achieving and low income students the most,” the authors conclude.

In addition, no effects were found among the 14-year-old age group. Researchers believe this to be because cell phone use is lower in this demographic.

Even though the study took place in the UK, where 90.3% of teenagers owned a mobile phone by 2012, researchers believe the results to hold weight in the US as well, where 73% of teenagers have their own cell phones.

While mobile phones are considered a technological advancement that increases productivity, and other forms of modern technology are used in the classroom on a daily basis to engage students and improve performance, there are a number of drawbacks to mobile phone use in schools.

Cell phones offer students a number of distractions, including access to texting, games, social media and the Internet. In addition, researchers believe that mobile phones could have negative effects on students' academic achievements, as it would take a sizable financial increase to add the extra instruction time that such a ban creates for free.

Despite these findings, a number of schools are beginning to lift the ban on mobile phone use. In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio recently ended a ten-year ban on phone use while on school premises. School chancellors believe that doing so will reduce inequality.

Respond to one of the following prompts. Use the a separate sheet of paper.

1. Do you think schools should reconsider banning cell phones based on these findings? Explain your position with details from the article.
2. Why do you think this increase in scores was found by banning cell phones? Explain with details and examples.
3. Select a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph and respond to it.