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TED 414
Dr. Sapp

Student Texting in Class

The Student and Behavior

Danny is a 7th grade student. He is not your typical student, he always shows up late to school. He does very poor in class and is in danger of failing most of his classes. Danny is always using his phone around school. In class he is always texting or using social media. Very rarely do you see him without his phone in hand.

The Purpose of the Behavior

Danny feels that there is nothing wrong with using his phone. He says that as long as he is not bothering anyone he should be allowed to use it. He challenges teachers by saying that his Mom says it ok to do it. Not even for a second will he put his phone away. Danny has even stopped socializing with his peers in school. He always uses the excuse that he is doing work on his phone.

Two Teacher's Perspectives

I asked two fellow teachers whom I know about how they would handle this situation. They told me that every teacher now a days deals with the same problem day in, day out. Here are the responses given:

- *"I always start with a strict policy, No phones allowed, period!"*
Tony Rodriguez, Elizabeth Learning Center, 6th Grade
- *"I assign a free period for using phone in class, educational purpose only, but I do have my 3 strike rule. One, no using phone during class lecture, Two, volume must be off or vibrate mode, Three, If it is a distraction at any point, you must put in desk."*
Tom O'Donnell, LAUSD 20 Year Teacher, 8th Grade

Strategies to Modify the Behavior

Here are some helpful strategies to use in your classroom:

- **Preach what you teach** – Don't use your phone in front of class, this way they can emulate your rules
- **Always have a well prepared plan and lesson for your day, students tend to get distracted easily and veer off track** – Students are always looking for a reason to do something else besides class work. Keep them busy and motivated at all times.

- **Give students the opportunity to pick n choose** – Give students a bit of more participation freedom to choose assignments, order of lesson or random lessons. This doesn't mean they do what they want, but they choose from teacher centered option given.
- **Time-out Tables or areas** – Always explain the consequences of actions. Don't surprise the students with random punishment, but give them random reminders of what they could possibly face. Students don't like to be put on the spot, so this might make them think twice about their actions.
- **Detention before or after school** – This can be a last resort before disciplinary action comes in. Most good instructors can manage to avoid detention, but in many cases it is ok to let the student experience a different approach. During detention, use the time wisely to think about actions and consequences.

Online Resources

They might be interrupting their friends' learning

Donn Cottom, South East High School (Los Angeles, Calif.), journalism and English teacher

In my class, students have access to an iPad, so I can look at it like, "Why should you need your phone if you already have access to an iPad or a computer for our work?" Conversely, I can also look at it like, "If it's more convenient for you to look something up or take notes on something we're doing with your phone, then use whatever is most efficient." I typically lean toward the latter.

Something I share with students is that one thing they don't usually consider is that when they text a friend in another class, when that friend looks at their text, it's that moment when they have disrupted their friend's learning. If their friend looked away at a critical time in a lesson, say during a complex math problem, then they could be confused and lost in that math concept. Most students don't look at it that way.

Resources

<http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-how-teachers-cope-with-texting-in-class-20151103-htm1story.html>