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November 22, 2015
English 1101
Final Draft

Technology Distraction

Martin Luther King, Jr once said that, “The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.” However, the use of technology today is viewed as our path to the future. But the use of technology in high schools, such as cell phones, seems to take a whole different toll. In 1995 the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering stated that technology within the education system can “help remove inequities between the schools”(Bell) and they had also believed that with that said technology can be the “force that equalizes the educational opportunities”(Bell). However, researchers such as Means and Olson have found that the Academy of Sciences, and the Academy of Engineering’s point to be the complete opposite of theirs. They believed that the competition “with children coming from more affluent homes” with children coming from more of “low-income homes, where there is little or no access to technology” that has drawn a division within the lives of the students affecting their quality of life (Bell). Cell phone use in and out of schools seems to be not fully guaranteed to academically improve students, isolating students from their social lives, and affecting their quality of life.

Unlikely, cell phone use in high school, has become a major factor of distracting students to reach their educational goals affecting them academically. According to Ms.Purcell the associate director for research at Pew, during a focus group she attended, teachers had believed that a student being distracted by their cell phones is not good but “the label of “distraction” is a judgement of this generation”(Richtel). According to nearly 90 percent of these teachers, cell

phone use in classrooms had created an easily distracted generation with short attention spans. High school students who use technology everyday are believed to hinder the student's "ability to write and communicate face to face," which contributes to "hurt critical thinking and their ability to do homework," or even work with others (Richtel).

Nethertheless, it does not sound fair to blame teachers for creating a way to get students to learn and improve their academic standards, such as allowing cell phone usage throughout the classroom. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, school systems had "prohibited students from using cell phones or pagers in school because of the devices' association with drug dealers" at that time, the distribution of drugs was a major issue (Schools,States). On the other hand, within the classrooms the "ringing and beeping from the phones and pagers... were disruptive". Dan Domenech, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators had found that today, the "issue of security and red alerts on terrorism threats became an issue" events such as 9/11 have created the cause of "systems beginning to relax the prohibition on cellphones in schools"(Higgins). Administrators today find the safety of the children to be important, but yet some are "concerned about students' using the phones inappropriately" (Schools,States). These concerns happen to be students using their cell phones during school to report false "bomb threats ...on the day of a test" (Schools,States).

Students today seem to be socially affected with mobile apps and the Internet use in schools. Both "teachers and students are now using phones as.... providing feedback on student progress, and also to document labs, collaborate on group projects and capture teachers' notes," this allows students to take full advantage of the technology use in their school, creating concerns(Higgins). These concerns on mobile devices are believed to "promote a certain kind of

learning” and to Natalie Milman, George Washington University education technology professor states that this kind of learning is “limited”. The acceptance of technology use in schools seem to become " overused and used in ways that aren't educationally meaningful". Some of these created worries about “cheating, visiting inappropriate websites, and sexting” (Higgins). Such policies banning phones throughout school were in place to block such actions with phones throughout school hours, but “no-tolerance policies were difficult to enforce and distracted administrators from tackling larger issues” (Higgins). However that, proves to many that wireless technologies as more of a need rather than an accessory even throughout school hours.

The effort to provide technology within classrooms affects the students quality of life sparking a set of regulations throughout the Board of Education. Such As the Education Law, section 753 which includes that the “school district shall develop and maintain a plan” in order to be provided with technology for their school (“Part 100). However, the acceptance to a school allowing advanced technology, reconsiders the use of cell phone restrictions in classrooms for students. With this sort of plan it has required “staff development to demonstrate how classroom teachers will use instructional computer technology” throughout the classroom (“Part 100”). With a whole new lesson plan for teachers, trying to include technology begins to regulate with the actual use of technology in classrooms. For example, the Internet today in schools is mostly used for research and emails which is great and easy to get work done during that class time. there seems to be a distinction “between using the Internet to find biographical material of a local author,” which to students is considered “logging onto web sites to find out the latest gossip about a favorite pop music star” during class time, instead of researching what is asked for (“Codes of”). This enhances the acceptable-use

policy which is used among many districts including the “ground rules for when and how students...are expected to use appropriate language, to avoid off-limit sites and chat rooms, and to refrain from misuse of e-mail” (“Codes of”). Overall, these regulations are a step to advancement of a fair use of technology in schools.

Due to the fact that the Internet is not the only high tech tool that students seem to be distracted by, cell phones are taking a much higher toll during classroom lessons. Nevertheless, many school districts have school policies to “protect the learning environment” resulting in the punishment of students who “find themselves violating cell phone policies might find their cell phones confiscated” (Hsu). The rapid advancement of cell phones today has many schools creating policies in order to create a barrier between technology and education. This barrier is between what a student learns and what a student sees. For example, the Kentucky Center for School Safety written by Jon Akers states several cell phone problems faced in schools. These problems according to Akers include “...simply distracting students and teachers, with text messages or calls....cheating by sending, or taking pictures of test questions or answers,” Aker uses these reasons to argue the pros of “banning cell phones in elementary and high schools” (“Students and”).

In conclusion, cell phone use in and out of schools seems to be not fully guaranteed to academically improve students, isolating students from their social lives, and affecting their quality of life. Many today find that schools do wrong when they confiscate students’ cell phones, even claiming that the school has committed the offense of larceny, also known as theft. But in order for a school to be guilty in offense of larceny “the school must intend to

permanently deprive you of your property” (Hsu). These kinds of regulations give students’ an idea of what will happen if policies are violated, which makes it easier for the school because it keeps their rule in place and same goes to their students’ education.

References

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