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**W**hen the cell phone was invented in 1973, nobody imagined the tiny supercomputers that we carry in our pockets now. Cell phones weren't even a common personal item until the early 2000s. Generation Z has lived through multiple eras in tech, and the oldest members of this generation aren't even 25 years old. Most of Gen-Z are still students, and according to globalwebindex, a market research company, 98% of them have a smart phone.

One of the most widely debated topics between teachers and their students is student's usage of their phones in the classroom. And if cell phones really have as big of an impact as teachers say they do, if any at all.

"I hear a lot of students say that they can multi-task and still be on the phone and learn. I wish we would all understand the role phones play in our learning, concentration and ability to be engaged. It really does make a difference. Sometimes, being 'bored' is what brings out creativity and

critical thinking skills," principal Sherry Poole said.

Math teacher Alexandria Caskey's statistics students set out to find the answer to this question during first semester by creating an experiment that randomly selected and compared two of Caskey's geometry classes.

"The gold day third and fourth blocks were chosen to have their phones taken, while the green day third and fourth blocks were chosen to carry on as usual," junior Sierra Davis, one of the designers of the experiment said.

It wasn't a shock to anyone when the classes who promised to give up their phones were more engaged, participated more and got better test scores. The students also had absolutely no trouble giving up their phones when asked, and those that didn't give up their phones were not counted in the experiment.

"Once the expectation was that phones would be charging or put away, but we would not be using them in class, students overall did a great job of focusing on course-

work rather than their phone. There were very few reminders from me to put phones away. Not all students in the randomly selected courses were willing to stay off their phones for eight class periods so their assessment data was taken out of our calculations," Caskey said.

Even though the study was performed by students in a one semester class, both Caskey and Poole have shown interest in pursuing the study further, and on a larger scale. This experiment has shown them that students are more engaged, successful, and enjoy school more when phones are out of the picture.

"I would like to continue investigating this topic in future statistics classes if there is interest. I would like to see these results inform some of the expectations we have in classrooms regarding phone use, on a building level," Caskey said.

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# STAT STUDY

STUDENTS EXPLORE THE EFFECTS OF PHONES IN THE CLASSROOM

Words and Design: Isabel Sullivan, Editor In Chief

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