

# Are Students Responding to My Text Message During Your Class?

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LET ME CALL YOU BACK, THE  
TEACHER IS DISTRACTING ME.



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# Background



- **Students not paying attention in class is not a new phenomenon (ie. sleeping, reading the campus newspaper, doodling on the desks).**
- **However, electronic communication allows students to engage in immediate contact and to carry on conversations outside of the classroom.**

# Background



- **Advancing electronic device technology facilitates quick and discreet access, and also potential academic integrity issues.**
- **On the other hand, directed and integrated use of electronic communication devices can also enhance teaching and learning and may be required in some classes.**

# Background

Assumption - Text messaging, checking email, Facebook, Twitter, and Google searches during class time are potential distractions from student focus on lectures and other classroom activities and may interfere with teaching and learning.

Thus we decided to conduct an action research survey to assess the extent to which our students were using electronic contact outside of class to provide some guidance to faculty on cell phone use policies for classes in Agronomy.

# Previous Studies

**In a survey, students reported viewing an average of 2.6 text messages in a 50-minute lecture. Concluded that students who frequently text message during class have difficulty staying attentive to classroom lectures and consequently risk having poor learning outcomes. F. F Wei, Y. K Wang, and M. Klausner, *Communication Education* (2012).**

**In a survey, 95% brought phones to class every day, 91% used phones to text during class time, and 62% believe texting should be allowed in class. About 10% indicated that they have sent or received texts during exams, and 3% admitted to transmitting exam information during a test. D. Tindell and R. Bohlander, Wilkes University (2010).**

**Students were significantly less likely to report using their phones in class when a cell phone policy was enforced by the professor as compared with students in non-policy or non-enforced courses. K. D. Hopke and P. A. Marsh, *Psychology and Education Journal* (2012).**

**Class cell phone bans to prevent cheating on tests may compromise campus plans that use cell phones for campus emergency alerts. C. Moran, *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2008).**

# Objectives

- 1. Evaluate the extent to which agronomy students are making “electronic contact” outside of the classroom during class time**
- 2. Identify the factors that encourage or discourage such activities.**
- 3. Compare student and faculty opinions on the factors that influence use and the effects it has on teaching and learning.**
- 4. Evaluate how extensively faculty use policies to restrict electronic contact and how they are enforced.**

# Methods

- 1. Surveys administered end of Spring 2012**
- 2. All current agronomy majors at K-State**
- 3. All agronomy teaching faculty and TAs**
- 4. Student response was 87/150 (58%)**
- 5. Faculty response was 18/33 (55%)**

# Results – Devices Brought to Class

| <b>Which of the following electronic devices do you bring to class on a daily basis?</b> | <b>Percent Response</b> |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Cell phone that is a phone only</b>   | <b>3.4%</b>             |
| <b>Cell phone that can send/receive text messages</b>                                    | <b>39.1%</b>            |
| <b>Smart phone (Internet capabilities)</b>   | <b>60.9%</b>            |
| <b>Laptop computer</b>   | <b>24.1%</b>            |
| <b>None of the above</b>   | <b>1.1%</b>             |

# Results – Type of Electronic Contact

| During class, how often do you : | Frequently | Occasionally | Never |
|----------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------|
| Check text messages received     | 31%        | 62%          | 7%    |
| Send text messages               | 26%        | 63%          | 10%   |
| View class related web sites     | 24%        | 30%          | 46%   |
| Check Facebook                   | 16%        | 37%          | 47%   |
| Check email received             | 21%        | 31%          | 48%   |
| View non-class related web sites | 11%        | 39%          | 49%   |
| Send email                       | 7%         | 33%          | 60%   |
| Check Twitter                    | 11%        | 14%          | 75%   |

# Results – Student vs. Faculty Perceptions

**The surveys included several matched Likert scale questions for students and faculty.**

**Example:**

**Student Question:**

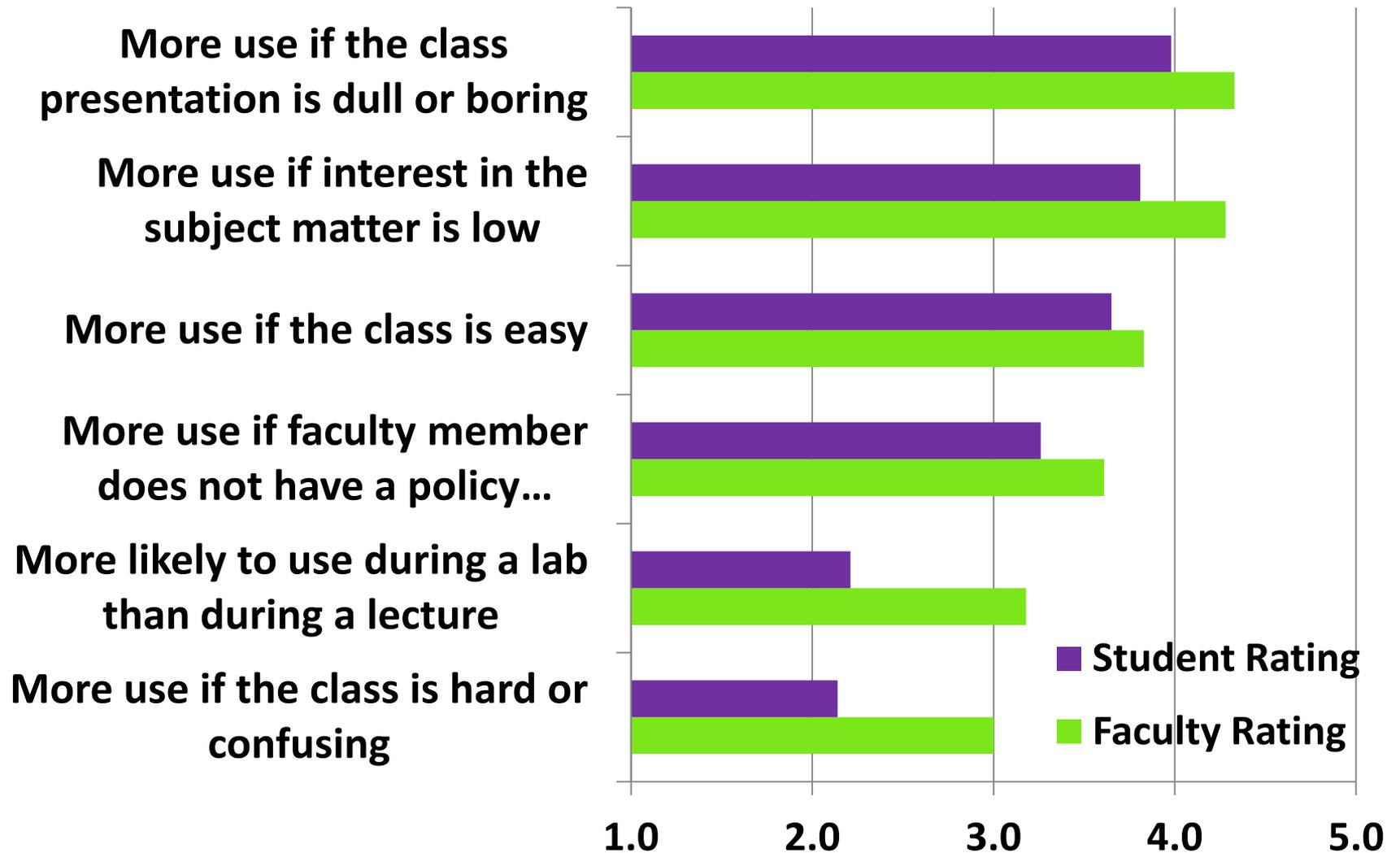
**I do more if the class is easy for me.**

**Faculty Question:**

**Students do more if the class is easy for them.**

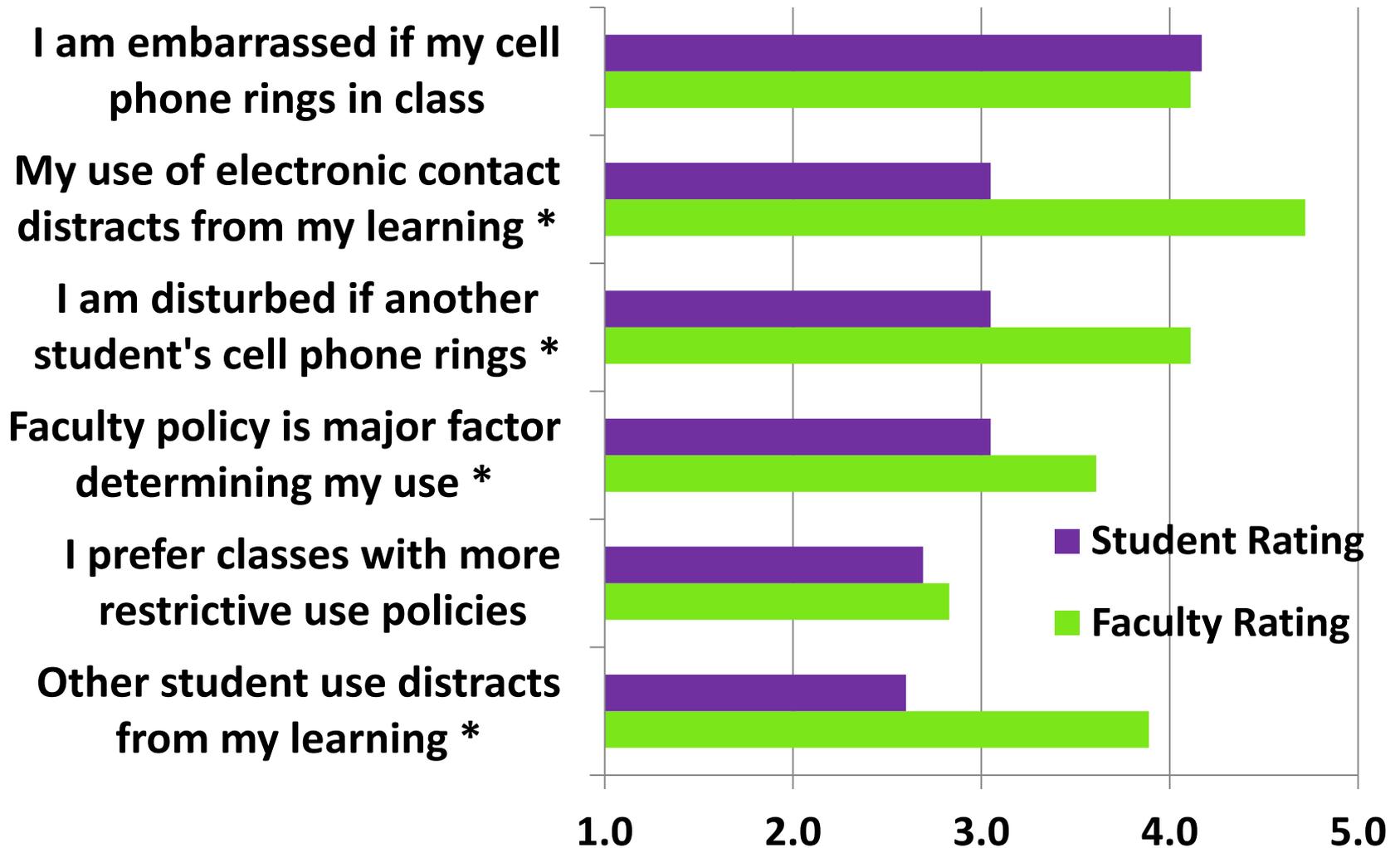
**Rating: 5=Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3=Neutral 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree**

# Factors Influencing Use of Electronic Contact During Class



Rating: 5=Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3=Neutral 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree

## Impacts of Use of Electronic Contact During Class



Rating: 5=Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3=Neutral 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree

# Selected Student Comments: Factors Encouraging More Use

**What classroom situation factors most likely lead you to use electronic contact during class?**

**Boooorrrriiinnggg lectures (31/64 comments mention "boring")**

**Time sensitive situations at home or with an extra-curricular organization**

**Waiting for an important email or text regarding work or some other important event**

**Entering in information for class projects or assignments**

**Help answer questions during group discussion**

**Tweeting for class, finishing a project or working on homework**

**Friend is still sleeping**

# Selected Student Comments: Factors Discouraging Use

**What classroom situation factors most likely discourage you from making electronic contact during class?**

**Teacher who actively asks questions and keeps students involved in the lecture**

**Hard class, attention grabbing lecture, interesting topic**

**Small class size**

**Interactive learning instead of strictly lecture**

**Deducting points for use, getting kicked out of class (only 8/64 mentioned restrictive rules)**

**It is a learning environment and I do not want to distract anyone**

**Professionalism and common courtesy**

# Results – Faculty Policies

**Reflecting on the past semester, about how many of your professors had a cell phone use policy?**

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| All of them    | 5%  |
| More than half | 17% |
| About half     | 24% |
| Less than half | 46% |
| None of them   | 8%  |

**Reflecting on the past semester, about how many of your professors had a computer use policy?**

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| All of them    | 1%  |
| More than half | 8%  |
| About half     | 17% |
| Less than half | 23% |
| None of them   | 51% |

# Results – Agronomy Faculty Policies

|  | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Do you have a restrictive use policy?  | 8   | 10 |
| Do you ever require students to bring a laptop to class?                           | 5   | 13 |
| Do you ever require students to access websites, Facebook or Twitter during class? | 4   | 14 |

| If you have a restrictive cell phone and/or laptop use policy, how strict is your enforcement? |   |
|--|---|
| Very strict - zero tolerance   | 2 |
| Fairly strict  | 3 |
| Moderately strict  | 1 |
| Not very strict  | 2 |

# Selected Student Comments: Consequences of Faculty Policies

**What are the some consequences of unauthorized use of a cell phone during class that you have experienced?**

**Teacher just embarrasses you by stopping class and pointing you out**

**Verbal reprimand**

**I got my phone taken away**

**Kicked out of class**

**Bring cookies to class**

**The teacher gets to answer if phone rings**

**None (19/64 comments mention no consequences observed)**

# Selected Student Comments: Summary Statements

**Is there anything else you would like to add in regard to cell phone or laptop use during class?**

**Short of being disrespectful, it has not deterred me from using or holding it against someone else using theirs.**

**I generally only text if I have been texted first. I think that the majority of students who bring a laptop to class are not always taking notes, but are on Facebook, email, or games.**

**I don't feel like the teacher should have rules about usage of either one. We pay the money to be there and therefore, have the choice of if we want to pay attention or not.**

**I think more should be done to incorporate cell phone and laptop usage in classes. We will use it in real life in our jobs.**

**It helps me when a teacher is talking about something that I don't know about. I can pull my phone out and Google it.**

# Selected Faculty Comments: Summary Statements

**Is there anything else you would like to add in regard to cell phone or laptop use during class?**

**Students are going to use their electronic devices. Therefore, faculty should either have strict policies and enforce them, or provide more classroom engagement to where students will not want to use them.**

**I think it is born out of being bored in class and/or not understanding the subject material.**

**If student is distracted by something in their life outside of class, might be connected by phone to situation and continue to deal with it.**

**There are times when these devices (apps and internet) can be used effectively.**

**It would be nice if a policy statement might be provided by KSU or Agronomy that we can use without concern about saying something that would be considered inappropriate.**

# Conclusions

- **Results suggest texting is the most common “electronic contact” outside of the classroom, with over 90% participating.**
- **Boring presentations and lack of interest in the subject are primary reasons encouraging student use.**
- **Students and faculty generally agree on the factors that encourage use, but faculty generally think such use is more distracting and interferes with learning more than students.**
- **Restrictive use policies by faculty seem to have minimal impact on deterring use, unless strictly enforced, and are unpopular.**
- **Students expressed a desire for more incorporation of these technologies into the teaching and learning process.**

# Questions?



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**UNIVERSITY**