

Cell Phone Policies - Chemistry

Lecture: My mention of cell phones in the syllabus is two part

- 1) I do not allow students to take pictures of the work I do on the board or video tape my lectures. I want them actively participating in the note taking process. I feel they most likely will not look back at the images and by taking notes they are learning the information. During regular lectures I don't care if the phone is out but they cannot use them to take pictures of the work we are doing to circumvent actively taking notes. I remind them of the Study Cycle: Preview, Attend (and actively take notes), Review (rewrite notes), and Practice. Other than that, I do allow cell phones to be out on their desk during a normal lecture period. Many have family, work, misc issues where the phone may be needed and I want to make it known that that is an appropriate use of having the phone out. I walk around the room a lot during my lectures so that keeps them on track with the class.
- 2) During quizzes or exams I absolutely do not allow cell phones or smart watches out at all or on their person. I require them to turn them off, place them in their bags and place bags on a back wall. If they leave to go to the bathroom they must prove they do not have a phone on them. I have caught many instances of cheating due to electronic devices so I make sure I have a conversation with them about my policies and make sure they understand the difference between normal lecture time and quiz and exam time. We have a standardized final exam and we need to maintain the academic integrity of that exam so following the policy all semester long does get them ready for this.

Lab: I require cell phones to be put away in a pocket or backpack. This is for safety reasons. Cell phones cannot be out on the lab bench as well as computers or other electronic devices. If chemicals splash, spill or leave residue on their cell phone, that can possibly come in contact with their face and skin. They are welcome to step outside at any time to take calls as long as their experiment is safe and they notify their lab partners. During the midterm and final in the lab class, we have the same policy as lecture where cell phones must be off and put away in their bag and set on one wall of the room. Again I have a conversation with them and explain the purpose of these policies.

Sometimes during an exam, a student has a situation where they want their cell phone accessible. I tell them they can leave it with me on the front podium and I can notify them if I notice a call coming in. This typically puts them at ease.