

## College class challenges students to stop texting

Written by Barbara Baker

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In a society where many of today's 18-year-olds were literally teething on a cell phone, punching out a message on a mini keyboard is just second nature. Studies show that most teenagers will text an average of 60 times per day.

Northeastern Junior College sociology professor Jeff Schiel, who also teaches anthropology classes, decided to challenge his students to stop texting. He asked a cultural anthropology class of 18 to voluntarily commit to use their cell phones as if they were only an old-fashioned land line for one full week and to live to tell about it.

The students were asked, on an honorary and voluntary basis, to give up any use of their hand-held device other than to make a phone call where they would speak voice to voice, person to person for one full week. They had to promise not to text, to stay away from the games and other apps they frequent every day, including the built-in phone calculator. Could they do it?

The social experiment was designed to help the students see how much interpersonal communication has changed, how face-to-face talk time has evolved into a thumb-driven technological whirlwind that consumes many day after day.

Sixteen students in the class signed up, made the pledge and started the exercise. Two flat declined, saying that they knew they could not, and would not do it, for various reasons.

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