Friend or Foe: Do Phones Make a Difference?

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Many teachers have started using phones as a way to encourage students in the classroom. I wondered how effective this method was, and what some of the undesirable consequences could be. The problem I saw was that if there was an incentive to complete the work, what was stopping them from rushing through it? My hypothesis was that if you tested students on something they already know, with no stakes, they would generally do better if they did not have an incentive. To test this theory, I recruited 20 freshmen to complete two tests over the course of a fortnight, one per week. On Test 1, they would not be told what to do after it was completed. For Test 2 they would be told that they could use their phones once it was done. By using their scores and test times, I was able to see that my hypothesis was correct. Compared to Test 1, there was a decrease in average time taken and in their average scores. While not a large margin of difference, a bigger group would more than likely increase this difference. This experiment shows that students will do better with no reward, or at least a phone, information that teachers can apply to their lessons and classrooms

Awards Won:
Fourth Award of $600