

The Case

A New Trend

Laura was a new 10th grade student at Millport High School. Laura quickly became friends with her next door neighbor and classmate, Jessica. They lived in the same neighborhood and had all of the same classes. Because they looked similar, they shared everything; they even had the same type of cell phone. In the afternoons, they would play, study, and work on their homework together. As their friendship grew, their studying decreased and they began to talk during class.

Because of their incessant talking, they had to be separated in English class. This was a perfect classroom situation until one day they took a test. When the tests were graded, the teacher noticed a similarity between Laura and Jessica's answers. On all the correct answers they had the exact same explanation, and they missed all of the same questions. The teacher confronted Laura and Jessica about this phenomenon. They claimed that there was no way for them to cheat because they were sitting on opposite sides of the room.

The teacher believed them but decided to carefully monitor the class during each exam. For the first exam, she did not notice anything out of the ordinary however, Laura and Jessica's tests were exactly the same. On the next test, the teacher kept her eyes on Laura and Jessica. She noticed that both girls kept one hand on the desk and one hand in their lap. Walking quietly, she came up to Laura and discovered that she was using her cell phone. Jessica was using her cell phone as well. She immediately confiscated both cell phones and gave both girls a zero on the exam.

The teacher began to further investigate the use of the cell phones. She discovered that Laura and Jessica were sending the test answers through text messaging. This practice of sending answers through text messaging has become very common among teenagers. No sounds can be heard and teenagers can type without looking at the phone. The next day Laura also admitted to taking a picture of some of her test answers and sending it to Jessica

Questions for Discussion

- If you were the teacher, how would you handle this situation?
- As a teacher, would you ban all cell phones in your classroom?
- What should happen to Laura and Jessica?
- Should cell phones be prohibited in schools? If so, how do you make parents feel that their kids are safe at school? And how can a policy be enforced?