



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2009 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Elaine Cunha; Mei Lan Hughes	Project Number J0609
Project Title Dropped Connections: How Cell Phone Use Affects Performance	
Abstract Objectives/Goals The object of our science project was to determine if attempting two things at once, in this case, taking a simple reading comprehension test while answering multiplication problems over a cell phone, is less efficient and accurate than doing one task at a time. Methods/Materials We used two reading comprehension tests and two cell phones. Our test subjects were sixteen seventh and eighth grade students at Sunny Brae Middle School (eight boys and eight girls). Every individual had two minutes to complete each of the two tests. Both tests had a one paragraph passage and four questions. The first reading comprehension test was taken without the cell phone and multiplication problem distraction, and the second one with. Each student was tested separately in an empty classroom. Results By using the three measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode), multitasking with cell phones appears to be not only less accurate but also less efficient. As for gender differences, the boys scored higher on both reading comprehension tests (with and without distraction). The girls, however, achieved a higher score than the boys on the multiplication problems. This is partly due to an outlier in our data. Conclusions/Discussion In conclusion, our results indicate that multitasking cuts efficiency and accuracy by a significant amount.	
Summary Statement The affect of cell phone use on pre-learned knowledge.	
Help Received Mrs. Jones let us use her classroom and my mom and dad helped read over and edit the different parts of our backboard.	