

Cheating Lessons: Learning from Academic Dishonesty

By James M. Lang, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. eBook, 272 pages, \$26.95, 2013. ISBN 9780674724631.

Have you ever had a student cheat in one of your classes? Did you wonder what was wrong with them or why they were so lazy? Why didn't they just do the research, write the paper in their own words, or study for the exam? Everything I teach is exciting and relevant; why don't they see that? James M. Lang in his book *Cheating Lessons: Learning from Academic Dishonesty* explains not only why students cheat but what we, as instructors, can do to reduce cheating. He covers topics of curriculum design and classroom etiquette, including chapters titled *Fostering Intrinsic Motivation*, *Learning for Mastery*, *Lowering Stakes*, and *Instilling Self-Efficacy*. An understanding of what causes students to cheat inspires simple changes that can be made in any classroom, ultimately resulting in increased student learning.

The book was inspired when Lang saw the opportunity to look "at the problem of cheating through the lens of cognitive theory" and try "to understand cheating as an inappropriate response to a learning environment that wasn't working for the student." With that knowledge faculty could potentially prevent academic dishonesty by "modifying the learning environments they constructed." The book is broken up into three parts. Part 1 is titled *Building a Theory of Cheating* and is based on a review of the literature on academic dishonesty. In it Lang admits that it's easy to point fingers and blame students, but suggests that students cheat when they are "uninspired to learn, feel challenged instead of helped by their professors, and see their courses as stumbling blocks instead of steps to a better life."

Part 2 is titled *The (Nearly) Cheating-Free Classroom*. In this section Lang draws on his years of writing columns for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, both on his experiences as a new faculty member and later on by highlighting the work of outstanding educators across the country. Part 2 provides examples of some of those outstanding educators and reveals that how they structure their curricula and classroom environments naturally discourages cheating and increases student learning. And in Part 3, *Speaking About Cheating*, Lang provides solid advice for how to structure our individual classes to reduce cheating and increase learning, while fostering a campus culture that promotes academic integrity in our students.

I found this book to be a thorough summary of the research on cheating in college and it gave me new perspective into situations I've encountered in my own teaching where I've questioned students' academic honesty. As a relatively new faculty member I appreciate the many examples Lang provided of outstanding educators and have already put a few of the recommended strategies into practice. I read the book during the fall semester and was able to discuss a few of the changes I planned to make for spring semester with a group of students and get their feedback; these were not students I suspected of academic dishonesty. They were excited about the course improvements for the positive impact they believed it would have on student learning. I found the book rather empowering because it helped me realize that I am not at the mercy of the vague campus-wide academic honesty policy; in fact, if you're doing it right, it shouldn't even come to that. Lang presents a variety of strategies to reduce cheating in college that individual faculty members can adopt, that will not only increase student learning overall but will help us become better educators in the process.

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Food Science: An Ecological Approach

Edited by Sari Edelstein, Jones & Bartlett Learning, Burlington, MA. Hard cover, 554 pages, \$152.95, 2014. ISBN 9781449694777.

Let me preface this by saying that I hold degrees in Nutrition and Food Management (a component of Family and Consumer Sciences; FCSC), Food Science (FDSC), and Horticulture and I know the differences between the disciplines. I also teach in all three of these disciplines at a community college in Wyoming. One of the courses I teach is an introduction to food science (FDSC 1410 Food and Your Well Being) and I've been looking for the "right" textbook for this course for three years; there are only a couple of choices currently on the market and none that meet the needs of my course or degree programs. Last year I discovered *Food Science: An Ecological Approach* edited by Sari Edelstein. I'm a busy person, as most faculty members are, and I didn't take the time to read the entire book before I adopted it

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for my class Fall Semester 2013. I wanted to write this review to describe what I thought of this textbook for any other instructor who may be in the market for an introductory food science textbook. This textbook has several features that I liked, but also a few that, in my opinion, make it unacceptable for an introductory food science class.

One of the reasons I was interested in this textbook was because of its "Ecological Approach." As stated on the back cover, this textbook "explores the idea of global sustainability and examines the ecological problems that challenge our food supply and raise increasing concerns among consumers." Most of the chapters include a section on "Going Green" that I found useful for sparking class discussions. I also appreciate that each chapter contains a section on Food Safety so that students became aware of the unique risks associated with each food product category (meat and meat substitutes, milk and dairy products, etc.) as we addressed that product category. I like the way the chapters are formatted, the use of color and color figures, the companion website for students, and that instructor resources are available.

My biggest concern with this textbook is the authors' presentation of the concept of organic crop and food production. For example, on pages 336-337 it states that, "organic simply means that the food was grown and produced without added chemicals, such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, antibiotics, hormones, or food additives." This statement is misleading. The USDA Fact Sheet titled USDA Oversight of Organic Products (Nov. 2012; <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3004443>) states that, "The organic standards are designed to allow natural substances in organic farming while prohibiting most synthetic substances. A portion of the USDA organic regulations list the exceptions to this basic rule. For example, sewage sludge, irradiation, genetic engineering, and most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides may not be used. In organic processed products, any non-organic

ingredients must be specifically allowed (e.g., baking soda)." USDA National Organic Program guidelines do not state that no chemicals can be used, just that synthetic chemicals cannot be used unless they are specifically allowed (ie. they are on the Organic Materials Review Institute [OMRI] lists of approved substances). I believe it is important for students to understand that applied natural chemicals are still chemicals.

In contrast to the editor's statement in the preface that the textbook "presents the introductory concepts students studying food science are required to learn," I found the textbook to primarily have a FCSC-focus, which I should have expected as the majority of chapter authors are registered dietitians. My students are required to take a human nutrition course so I don't need my food science textbook to also address nutrition topics in every chapter, nor do I need it to cover home food preparation principles. Perhaps in future editions the editor will invite contribution from agriculture and horticulture professionals to help present all sides of the food production story and food science professionals to give credence to the textbook title.

I believe this book would be acceptable for a FCSC class if the instructor stresses the USDA definition of organic and introduces the OMRI lists which specify all the chemicals that are allowed in organic crop and food production. Though for this purpose I still prefer Amy Brown's *Understanding Food: Principles and Preparation* or Marion Bennion and Barbara Scheule's *Introductory Foods*. In my opinion *Food Science: An Ecological Approach* is not directed at a food science audience and is unacceptable for an introductory food science course; therefore I am still on the lookout for the "right" textbook for next fall semester.

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