

Student Cheating: Understanding And Prevention

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Abstract

Understanding why students cheat is the key to convincing them that academic honesty is worthwhile. Dishonest students characteristically lack maturity and commitment, and tend to rationalize their cheating behavior. They have unclear or misplaced values and low self-image, and may regard coursework as irrelevant. They also use opportunities to cheat, and have not thought through the short and long-term consequences of their behavior. Some have learned to be lazy. Effective schemes for preventing cheating deal with root causes, which include attitudes and behaviors not only of the student, but also of the faculty and institution. A teaching/learning climate that has integrity includes a positive moral stance.

Introduction

Knowing how students cheat may be useful in frustrating their efforts to do so. Understanding why students cheat lays the framework for changing student attitudes in the direction of discarding cheating as a viable means of obtaining satisfactory grades. Teacher attitudes, as well as the ethical climate of the institution, may actually contribute to the problem of student cheating (Rutter, M. B., et al., 1979). Welsh asks "Is not character growth, the study of ethics and values, service to others, and development of creative powers part of a good education?" (Welsh, P., 1986).

The current extent of academic dishonesty is revealed in a recent report that summarizes: "Consistent with previous findings, the proportion of students who reported having cheated in college varied by type of cheating, ranging from 23% on term papers or projects to 78% for homework or lab work to be turned in, with 43% reporting cheating on exams. --Only 14% of our sample never cheated on exams, papers or homework" (Michaels, J. W., and T. D. Miethe. December 1989.) In one study in which college students did not know their cheating could be detected, close to 50% cheated on a study guide assignment (Gardner, W. M. et al., fall 1988). In another study, almost an identical number of college students, 49%, self-reported cheating (Tom, G., and N. Borin, Jan. 1988). Another recent study revealed that about 60% of college instructors have observed cheating but very few take action (Jedreck, M. P., 1989). Cheating in college is a serious problem.

Many young adults today seem to espouse a denial of responsibility. Educational institutions must make it clear

to all entering students that in regard to academic honesty, each will be held responsible for his/her own behavior. It is equally important that new faculty be exposed to discussions of policy and procedures used to maintain academic integrity, including statements defining academic dishonesty, recommendations for prevention, procedures for dealing with problems, and disciplinary actions that will be taken by the institution.

How Students Cheat

Student's academic dishonesty takes two major forms: cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is involved whenever a student uses means other than his/her own knowledge to complete a quiz or test or an assignment; plagiarism is the submission of work done by someone else.

Once in a while an instructor may come across a very gifted, bored student who undertakes cheating as a challenging and exciting game of outwitting the instructor. These students actually put more effort into the development of ingenious ways to cheat than would be required if they studied diligently. They may not realize that cheating is a dangerous game in terms of the effect this might have on their career aspirations.

Quizzes and Exams

During quizzes and exams some students simply copy answers from other students seated nearby. Eye position can be concealed by sunglasses or a cap visor.

Some students carry "crib" notes on slips of paper, on sleeves, the bottoms of cap visors, or even concealed in programmable calculators that the instructor may have permitted for the solution of math problems.

Passing answers during an exam is a collaborative activity carried out surreptitiously by two or more students. A simple nod or wink can indicate a correct answer.

A "stooge" (nonenrollee) may sit in on an early exam session, deliberately avoid submitting the exam at the end of the period, and leave with the copy of the exam to give (or sell) to a student who is scheduled for a later exam session.

Stealing or buying a copy of a test allows a student to selectively study only what is needed. It also provides for writing the answers prior to the exam and switching exam papers.

"Ghosting" is when a non-enrollee ("ringer") completes a test for a student enrolled in the course, forging the signature, if necessary. Students doing poorly in a course may induce others to "Ghost" their exams.

When an instructor has handed back graded papers for discussion as a means of review and reinforcement, some students may change answers or even grades assigned to the

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exam or paper while it is being reviewed in the class session. These students then ask the instructor to review the paper and post a higher (unearned) grade.

"Take home" quizzes carry the risk the student will seek help in completing it.

Papers Or Reports

Papers or reports may be purchased from "writers". In University communities these services are often openly advertised in local newspapers. The work is often of exceptionally high quality.

Cheating may involve outright fabrication of material, including data from an exercise, or the citing of fictitious literature.

Plagiarism is involved when a student submits as his/her own work all or part of which was actually prepared by someone else. It could involve reuse of a paper previously submitted by someone else enrolled in the course at an earlier time. The networking of computers has provided an opportunity for students to access material from a very extensive array of sources, permitting theft that may be nearly impossible to detect. At one university a graduate student was found to have submitted both a Master's paper and a Doctoral thesis that were direct translations of European documents in a foreign language. In exceptionally unusual action the degrees were withdrawn by the university.

Students have also been known to steal rationed computer time from other students in the same class for the purpose of gaining grade advantage over them. Unless other students complain, the instructor may be unaware of this dishonesty.

Students have been known to simply change the grade on a paper or report when it has been returned to them. The student may later ask for a record of his standing in the class and "notice" a discrepancy between the grade on his paper and the one recorded by the instructor.

Why They Cheat

Why do some students cheat? Academically dishonest students typically have three common characteristics: immaturity, lack of commitment, and rationalization of cheating behavior (Haines, J., et al., 1986). It is interesting that this study also showed that these cheating students typically are also not financially responsible for their education.

Students may cheat because of: Misplaced or unclear values, the perception that programs of study are irrelevant, low self-image, excessive competition for grades, opportunities to cheat, simple laziness, or not thinking through the consequences of cheating.

Misplaced or Unclear Values

Cheating is often evidence that the student has developed values that focus on short term self satisfaction rather than long term satisfaction and the welfare of others and society as a whole. They are likely not to have prioritized their values or thought through the short and long term consequences of the values they have accepted. Many of today's youth simply do not have the solid base of ethical values of respect for others, honesty, individual responsibility and civic duty that our society has accepted as the "norm" for hundreds of years. Cheaters may not even

comprehend why cheating is wrong (Bushway, A. and W. R. Nash, winter 1977).

Ethical attitudes and values are developed in very early years almost exclusively from those unconsciously taught by parents or child care givers. Those having negative ethical attitudes and values pass them along to those in their care. Students who cheat may have had parents who used either end of the discipline range--from no discipline at all to that of harsh physical punishment. Broken homes, drugs, disillusionment, rejection of patriotism and religion as well as the "do your own thing" ethic of many parents has led to acceptance of these attitudes and behaviors by their children. These same parents find themselves in conflict with teachers and schools that refuse to tolerate the self-damaging behavior exhibited by their children. Schools, for their part, often falsely assume that because it is inappropriate for them to teach religion that it is also inappropriate for them to insist on the discipline of moral and ethical behavior from faculty, staff and students.

In 1979, 9% of college students reported that they had always cheated, while 30 to 50% said they had cheated at one time or another (Carnegie Corporation of New York for Public Broadcasting, 1979). A Princeton survey in 1980 showed that 34% of students admitted cheating on exams at least once (U. S. News and World Report, Oct. 1980).

Close to 10% of undergraduate college students say they must cheat to get the grades they want, and 47% believe that many successful students "beat the system" instead of studying (Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, 1979).

Many students feel that "wealth" is more important than "meaningful life". In a 1984 study, 70% of all college freshmen said that being wealthy is "essential" or "very important". This contrasted with 40% in 1970 (Astin, A. W., 1984). This distortion of priorities is cause for concern.

Perception That Learning Is Irrelevant

An instructor has an obligation to clarify how the material covered and the work assigned in a class has immediate relevance to current studies, as well as to career goals. Students are less likely to cheat if they see acquiring knowledge or skill in the area under study is of more long-term value to them than the grade attained in the course.

Low Self Image

Students who historically have performed poorly often have a low self-image, and are more likely to cheat than students with a record of high achievement (White, F. C., March, 1992). On the other hand, many high-performing students interpret grades as revealing their self-worth, and feel that anything less than an A is unacceptable (an emotional response is likely). Extroverted students are more likely to cheat than introverted ones, and students who cheat associate frequently with others who also cheat rather than with non-cheating peers (Bushway, A., and W. R. Nash, winter 1977). There is evidence students having high work-ethics are strongly resistant to cheating (Eisenberger, R., et al., Aug. 1985).

Insecurity is sometimes at the root of cheating. Students with introverted personalities often feel inferior. These stu-

dents seem to be more strongly motivated "not to fail" than to "be successful". This is a little tricky--these students probably will respond only to positive reinforcement of good performance, and may be "shattered" by even a mild reprimand. An example of positive reinforcement is deliberately calling upon students who are performing poorly in a class to share their good quiz answers with a class. This improves their peer image, proves that they are capable of doing well, and encourages good performance, which in turn, improves their self-image. Self-discipline is closely tied to self-image (Etzioni, A., Nov. 1982).

Test anxiety causes poor student performance. It appears to be a response learned early in life and has been linked with negative self-esteem as well as other anxiety symptoms. Excessive fear of test failure contributes significantly to cheating. Students who do poorly in math hate it; they hate it because they do poorly in it. They have low expectations of their own performance. Perceptive, caring teachers help these students break through this vicious syndrome by calmly leading them through a series of small successes to the point where they can handle more difficult challenges with the attitude "I can do it!"

Sometimes student insecurity manifests itself as a disrespectful attitude or actual hostility toward an instructor. Poor performance (possibly including cheating) coupled with hostility is a tough combination to overcome. In this case the instructor may be successful with the approach that "we don't have to like each other, but we each have a job to do, so let's do it."

"Tough courses" may incite cheating because a hostile teacher makes unreasonably demanding assignments. These teachers often give quizzes and examinations that are designed the "weed out the weak" rather than serving as formative evaluation designed to improve performance of all students. In this case it is the instructor who feels insecure and needs development of his/her own mature attitudes toward self-worth. One survey (Milton, O., et al., 1986) showed about 50% of undergraduate students in a "grade oriented" group category have dropped a course to avoid a failing grade. Students who do well in "tough" classes may be more interested in impressing the teacher than in learning.

Anonymity in large classes tends to isolate the teacher and the student. This social distance between the instructor and the student promotes cheating because the student feels that he/she is simply a number on a seating chart with no personal relationship with the instructor.

Excessive Competition

"High grades at any cost" seems to be the motto of many high school and college students who have been led to believe that high grades--not what they have learned and mastered, will ultimately get them into the high paying job that is necessary to provide them with the things they must have to "be somebody" (Perry, A., et al., Apr. 1990). The attitude many students have toward grades is revealed in two statements: "I earned an A"; "I was given an F."

A misconception held by students, parents and educators is that grades are predictive of future performance (Milton,

O., et al., 1986). Any teacher who has seen a poor student suddenly "catch fire" does not believe this myth. Grades are simply a reflection of student performance in a particular course, as perceived by the instructor in *that* course. Furthermore, students who have repeated an F course and received a B with a different instructor likely attest to the wide range of both pedagogical expertise and grade perception among teachers.

Are educational institutions partially responsible for the undue emphasis on high GPA's rather than the development of lifetime skills and healthy self-realization? Is the pursuit of "excellence" simply chasing an illusive butterfly? Is the educational goal of developing graduates who are effective in their personal lives as well as effective, productive citizens an outmoded concept? Personal integrity and concern for others seems to have been tossed aside by a high number of our citizens.

Opportunity To Cheat

Probably the major contributor to cheating is that students observe others cheating and perceive the risks of getting caught as slight. "Others do it--why not!" They view the instructor as either naive or not caring. Loosely managed and proctored exams and assignments contribute to an environment that is favorable to cheating.

Laziness

Some students cheat because they do not want to put forth the effort required, in other words, they lack motivation. Some effective educators feel that motivation is so important that they believe that "involvement is the name of the game!" Laziness is learned at an early age from role models, and may be reinforced by peers. Because it is in the affective domain, relearning to change this attitude into a high work-ethic one may require prolonged, persistent effort involving peer group exercises, and perhaps counseling.

Unclear Consequences

One major reason for cheating is very likely that students have not been given a clear definition of what constitutes cheating or academic dishonesty. Institutional policies appear to vary all the way from whatever the individual instructor adopts, to one requiring that students sign an "Honor Code" pledge to report any instances of observed cheating to the instructor or other authority. These vaguely charted waters often cause difficulty when an instructor attempts to encourage collaborative work by students, or when he/she attempts to explain the fine distinction between plagiarism and abstracting reference material for a paper.

Students who cheat also do not seem to understand the possible effect of this behavior on career aspirations they may have. Aside from the point that they will not have mastered the skills required for effective job or career performance (really cheating themselves), letters of inquiry to the school by potential employers will not result in responses that most of us would like to write. Most employers are as interested in honesty, integrity and positive employment attitudes as they are in the quality of the technical (non-interpersonal) skills of a potential employee. At the

college level, letters of reference written by advisors or instructors carry considerable weight with potential employers.

One report summarizes consequences positively: "It would seem that a person who is a good problem solver, who has self-confidence, and who interacts positively with society, will be able to adjust to competition as an adult more easily (and perhaps more honestly) than one who has years of anxiety or training in cheating behind him." (Enkar, M. S., September 1987).

How To Prevent Cheating

Cheating, whether opportunistic or deliberate can often be prevented when the *rationale* for this behavior is understood by the instructor. The attitude of the teacher toward his/her role can have a profound effect on cheating. There are subtle and not-so-subtle ways of providing positive reinforcement of acceptable ways for students to be academically successful (Kibler, W. L. and B. G. Patterson, 1988; Singhal, A. C. and P. Johnson. 1983).

The Moral Dimension

"The American political principle of separation of church and state does *not* mean that what goes on between teachers and students is morally neutral--really good teaching is 'good' in a moral sense." (Goodlad, J. I., et al., 1990). These authors expand on this concept to show that the moral dimension is just as involved in effective instruction as the technical and pedagogical dimensions. Both teachers and students are subject to the moral and ethical standards that form the base for interaction in our society. These standards include honesty, justice (fairness), respect for persons and people, and responsibility (self-discipline). These comprise personal integrity.

Honesty is required of both the instructor and students. It requires personal integrity--actions that are consistent with what one has accepted as true. It also requires that persons (including teachers) with immature self-interest be restrained in regard to such things as cheating, lying, and stealing (plagiarism). In cases of student dishonesty, the teacher should devise a consequence that helps the student learn that cheating is counterproductive, that there are appropriate ways to complete the work required in the course, and that the student does have the capacity to perform well. This approach may also show the student that the effort involved in doing honest work is about the same as that for doing dishonest work, and that troublesome guilt feelings are replaced with feelings of accomplishment. The trick for the teacher is to do all this with forgiveness and respect for the student as a person.

Respect for persons and people is another active moral principle in the teaching/learning scene. An effective teacher assumes that all students are full-fledged members of the learning community (class), and that all of them are capable of learning. An effective teacher has high expectations of self-discipline. The instructor is responsible for providing the optimum environmental, social and moral conditions for learning to take place. The teacher must stimulate positive motivation, must be thoroughly prepared,

provide appropriate delivery of the subject matter (the "vehicle" for teaching life-long skills), provide opportunity for learning, use high quality instructional materials, deliver clear instruction, and provide for appropriate formative (corrective) and summative (final) evaluation of student performance.

Respect for persons and fairness also means protection of vulnerable students in a learning situation. Those who enter a class without a few of the needed academic skills or who are naive about the expected social graces, may need special help from the teacher beyond that of the majority of students. This special help, to effectively bring students "up to speed", must be provided in a non-condescending, caring, manner. For thoughtful teachers there is a special joy in seeing growth in these persons.

Fairness (or justice) in instruction is another moral principle that must be modeled in instruction. Respect for the individual as a person is demonstrated when a teacher is careful to treat students equally in regard to individual attention, encouragement in the sometimes painful process of growing, and evaluation in meeting course goals and objectives. Fairness leads to trust. To extend this concept--an effective teacher is a mentor, or *trusted guide* through an interesting, and occasionally hazardous journey. An effective mentor joins hands with the novice as together they walk through experiences that are new to one but familiar to the other.

Responsibility is taught by role modeling. Teachers have a special responsibility to establish and maintain a positive learning environment.

A teacher can bring about positive behavior in students by the way he/she manages a class. The teacher and the students have a mutual responsibility--the teacher should come to class prepared to teach, and the students should come prepared to learn. The body language used by the teacher quickly conveys positive attitudes--a smile, movement toward a student with a question, a nod for a good response, ignoring slightly disruptive behavior, all help curb cheating temptations. We all have an effect upon the interpersonal environment and we, in turn are influenced by it.

Some misconceptions about the role of a teacher may contribute to cheating. Instructors who view themselves as "facilitators" rather than authorities are likely to gain respect and inspire successful learning. Students who say at the conclusion of a course "We learned a lot and worked hard, but the course was easy" had an instructor who understood his/her role was to help students to be successful learners. That teacher had developed clearly defined, purposeful, attainable goals, and used instructional techniques that helped students to be successful. He/she also respects students as thinking, feeling, self-directing persons, who are also responsible for their own behaviors. It is also likely that this teacher used criterion-referenced grading which made it possible for a student to attain a high grade regardless of the performances of other students in the class. To put it another way, cheating is less likely to occur if students look upon the teacher as a trusted guide (mentor) in the adven-

ture of learning, rather than a person one must please in order to get a good grade.

Clarify Course Goals

Early in a course the instructor should provide clear goals for the course that are tied into career goals, thus clarifying relevance. One procedure that accomplishes this is to hand out the final exam, or an example of one, in the first class meeting. If carefully considered goals include the development of higher order thinking skills, application of principles, and the utilization of factual material, and these are reflected in final examination questions, students are quick to realize that mastering the course material is essential in order to score well in the final exam. Thus the instructor has integrated the goals and evaluation of the course, and hopefully will make sure that the instruction fits appropriately between them (Stinson, R. F., 1991).

A positive ethical climate that has been established and maintained by the instructor discourages cheating (Hardy, R. J., 1982). Many instructors do not want to deal with the unpleasant responsibility of maintaining academic integrity by monitoring the behavior of learners. Some even feel that to impose ethical conduct on students is to deprive them the highly cherished "freedom" they should have. Some teachers bypass reality by simply closing their minds to the possibility that the problem exists, and refuse to discuss it with either colleagues or students. This "head in the sand" attitude serves only to postpone the time of serious confrontation.

Instructors should discuss ethical expectations at the first class meeting. Honesty and personal integrity should be expected of both students and instructor. Clear definitions of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism should be provided. Copies of institutional policy on academic integrity should be distributed, and an explanation of procedures, and the consequences of conviction should be detailed. A clear explanation of the consequences of cheating, possibly including examples, should be provided.

Excessive Competition For Top Grades

In order for worthwhile learning to take place, course requirements should be challenging and require reasonable effort from students; however, requirements must not be so high that students view them as overwhelming and impossible to achieve. Unreasonable course requirements may stimulate a student to seriously consider cheating as an alternative means of obtaining a satisfactory grade in the course.

One effective way to avoid grade competition among students is to use criterion-referenced grading. This method of grading should be carefully explained to them. Once they comprehend that the effort of each will be measured against a non-variable standard and not against a class norm, class morale improves and purposeful learning is likely to take place.

Another technique for improving learning is by occasionally asking to review their class notes (with a promise not to grade them) to see whether the important points got across. One could then encourage good note taking by sug-

gesting ways of organizing them so that they form a good base for review of the material covered. Early in the course, some teachers hand out topic outlines at the beginning of each class session as a device to encourage organized note taking.

When only a midterm and a final, or relatively few examinations or exercises are used to determine a course grade, students often become so anxious about grades that the tense atmosphere is not conducive to effective learning. A variety of ways of assessing student learning should be used at frequent intervals to accommodate the many learning styles found in a class. A short quiz every 5th or 6th class meeting stimulates students to keep up to date, and provides frequent feedback to the instructor for formative evaluation. Assignments, reports and papers should be used to assess the development of skills that cannot be measured by tests. Prompt grading and return of all student work serves as a strong model of responsible behavior.

Collaborative learning is one approach that helps reduce competition for high grades. One technique is to sometimes give graded small group work. This flies in the face of the pledge sometimes exacted of students that they "have neither received or given aid in the completion of assignments." An example would be assigning a laboratory exercise to groups of 2 to 3 students who submit one report for a common grade. A novel variation is an in-class quiz in which 2 or 3 students voluntarily work out the answers together for a common grade. Collaboratively written reference reviews are another possibility. A formal classroom debate, with group grades based on participation in arguments, rebuttals and summaries is another possibility. Small group preparation for a debate provides an opportunity for students to "act out" their ethical convictions. Usually several experiences with this collaborative approach to teaching/learning are necessary before students and instructors are comfortable with the technique. It does carry the hazard that the work may be avoided by a lazy student, but deliberate regrouping over time, as well as peer pressure is likely to overcome this problem. An important learning goal that is fulfilled through small group activity is development of the ability to work effectively with other people in solving problems (Bouton, C. and R. Y. Garth, Sep. 1982).

Reduce Opportunities

Instructors often unwittingly provide opportunities for cheating simply by failing to think through simple security measures. For example it is not a good idea to reuse tests. Even a lengthy exam could be written down with great accuracy by the average student immediately after leaving the classroom. Locking up the computer disks containing batteries of test questions or actual tests may seem an unnecessary precaution, but predicting behavior of desperate students is often uncertain. Test forms that are being held for use should be locked and not simply kept in a desk drawer. Sequential numbering of exam forms helps the instructor to quickly determine any missing papers.

In large classes the temptation to cheat on multiple-choice exams is very difficult for students to resist. The use of several computer scrambled sets of the questions, to-

gether with corresponding computer-created grading sheets is one solution to the problem. The quiz and grading sheets can be coded in ways that are not obvious to those taking the test.

Reducing student anxiety reduces temptation to cheat. Student anxiety can be greatly reduced by providing old tests as study samples--students feel that this is a fair and legitimate way for a teacher to be helpful. Another technique is to provide, for study purposes, an advance list of questions, some of which will be selected for use in the quiz itself. Some instructors hold an unstructured review class session prior to an exam as an opportunity for questions of concern to students--this is not helpful if it is conducted as an instructor-centered "summary" session.

Legal "cheat sheets" are another device that reduces test anxiety. For a mid-term exam, for example, the instructor permits students to use one 3 by 5-inch card on which they have written anything they choose that may be helpful. This device stimulates students to prepare for the test in an organized way. The teacher might ask that these "legal cheat sheets" be turned in with the exam papers.

Anxiety can also be reduced by testing frequently, which reduces the weight placed on any one test and thereby reduce concerns about having a "bad day". Some instructors who test frequently also offer to "throw out" the lowest quiz grade. Sometimes teachers use the first quiz in a course as a "dry run", and simply do not count the score in calculating the course grade, feeling that this is fair to students who are not used the exam style of the teacher.

Physical arrangements influence whether cheating takes place. Instructors should insist that all books and papers be placed on the floor before the test begins. The familiar device of alternate seating for an exam helps frustrate potential cheaters. A variation of this device is for the teacher to assign different seats during an exam that those usually occupied by students--this breaks up collaborative efforts at cheating (White, F. C., March 1992). Some instructors of large classes have found it necessary to ask students to identify themselves by providing an ID card--the instructor then hands the exam paper to the student after initialing it to verify that the person taking the test is in fact enrolled in the course and not a "ringer." If students are asked to simply leave the exam paper face down on the desk when they leave this permits the instructor to collect the papers sequentially to determine possible collaboration between neighboring test-takers. An empty top may indicate that the exam paper was removed from the room, which can be verified if the papers had been sequentially numbered.

If bluebooks are to be used in an exam, students should be required to turn in a signed, blank one at the class meeting prior to the one in which the exam will be given. The instructor can then examine them to be certain that they are in fact blank before distributing them to students just before the exam. A special "inspected" mark could be used. This action circumvents the switching of a prewritten bluebook for a blank one during the exam.

During an exam "walking" monitoring is an excellent means of convincing "borderline" cheaters that the risks

may be too great. In fairness, the instructor should inform the students that he/she intends to do this, and that the primary purpose is to help students by providing individual response to anyone who may have a question about the exam. If, while doing this, a question is raised that may be of concern to the entire class, it would be useful (and fair) for the teacher to give the response to the entire class. In large exams the use of several monitoring proctors or TAs may be practical.

Papers and reports are subject to plagiarism. When these appear to be clearly beyond the capability of the student, and do not resemble writing assignments completed during class time, there is good reason to suspect plagiarism. It is important for teachers to explain, in making an assignment, that even paraphrasing source material without acknowledgment of the source is a form of plagiarism, and that footnotes are acceptable and appropriate in a paper (Skom, E., Oct. 1986). There are several devices that can make it difficult for students to use this form of dishonesty. One of these is to assign a specific, rather than general topic--but one that allows a range of choices. This should be followed by the requirement of prior written (and filed) approval of the chosen topic, together with outlines and bibliography lists that have been assembled before the writing is undertaken. Switching topics late in the term should not be permitted. Although it is time-consuming, an instructor should encourage submission of preliminary rough drafts for suggestions by the instructor. This last step helps students to understand that the teacher truly is a facilitator who wants them to do well with the assignment. An instructor should keep a file of student papers and reports for at least the number of years the average student is likely to be on campus so that evidence of re-submission of a previously submitted report is verifiable. If a student requests permission to use one report to satisfy requirements of two courses it is important that the instructors communicate the decision and both keep a record of it.

If the final examination for a course has been distributed during the first class session, it may be a wise precaution to hand it out on a different color paper at the actual exam time so the opportunity to switch already filled out exam papers for the "real thing" becomes impractical.

The possibility of dishonest behavior by students does not end when all of the exam papers have been collected. Papers should be carefully locked during interruptions while being graded. Scores should be carefully recorded in ink in a record book, or if computer grade records are kept, security of the disk must be assured. Academically dishonest students can be really ingenious in carrying out their purposes.

It is important to record grades before returning papers to students. When quizzes are returned to students for the purpose of review as a teaching device, it is important to realize that this may be an opportunity for dishonest students to change responses, or even change grade marks on the paper. These students may then ask to resubmit their quiz papers for rescoring. This creates a dilemma because there is always the possibility that the instructor may have miscalcu-

lated a grade. Good judgment suggests that the instructor accept the papers, and later carefully consider each case before making a decision. If there is reason to suspect that certain students have engaged in this dishonesty in the past, making a photocopy of the tests before they are returned to students provides verification that changes were made after the papers were graded.

Laziness

Teachers can improve motivation through enthusiasm for their topic, demonstrating the relevance of the material, and providing interesting assignments and activities. "Take home" quizzes are particularly vulnerable to cheating by lazy students. Small group projects in which the participants have been carefully selected so only one poorly motivated student is in the group, takes advantage of peer pressure to ignite the lazy one. Peer pressure often succeeds when efforts by a well-intentioned teacher has not. These students should also be referred to academic counselors for the development of responsible study habits.

Irresponsibility

When a student repeatedly fails to act in a responsible way, for example, by failing to fully complete assignments, the teacher is confronted with a challenge of turning the situation into a learning experience for the student in broad terms of personal growth. The teacher needs to ask himself/herself the following questions in selecting an approach that is likely to be helpful to the student: "Is my perception of the this problem valid?", "Will my action be appropriate for the situation?" and "Will my action benefit the student?" Responsible behavior is learned.

Consequences

It is an excellent idea for an instructor to review the institutional policy at the first class meeting of a course, and explain it's application to the course.

The *Penn State Policies and Rules for Students, 1990-91* (Campus Life Assistance Center, 1990) contains the following statement, page 26 :

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. At the beginning of each course, it is the responsibility of the instructor to provide a statement clarifying the application of academic integrity criteria to that course. A student charged with academic dishonesty will be given oral or written notice of the charge by the instructor. If students believe they have been falsely accused, they should seek redress through informal discussions with the instructor, department head, dean, or campus executive officer.

Because policy on dishonesty is rarely reviewed by instructors, both the instructor and students may actually be

unaware of the mandated sequence of actions and the consequences of proven cheating. One study concludes that "--faculty members tend to ignore academic dishonesty policy and prefer to handle situations on a one-on-one basis. Faculty members did not understand the implications of either following or ignoring the university's policy." (Jedreck, M. P., Sept., 1989). Instructors who fail to take action when cheating is observed may actually encourage cheaters to extend their dishonest behavior to other courses and eventually into their careers. Students may think that a verbal reprimand by the instructor or a school official, together with a reduced grade for the course may be the normal consequences. In many cases a single proven instance of cheating could result in an F in the course, lost tuition money, a reduced grade point average, and the necessity of repeating the course (the student hopes with a different instructor). Repeated instances of academic dishonesty by a student could result in suspension or dismissal from the institution.

A recent examination of academic dishonesty policy statements in 110 college catalogs (Weaver, K. A., et al., 1991) revealed "eight themes: definition of academic integrity/statement of expectations for academic conduct, the responsibility for academic dishonesty, definition(s) of dishonest acts, an honor code, procedures for handling suspected academic dishonesty, an honor committee, punishment, and the appeals process."

The best source of discipline is from within--it is the highest discipline. It is learned. Self-disciplined students have healthy self-images and perform well in school (Etzioni, A., Nov. 1982). The general public believed in 1988 that "lack of discipline" was the second most serious public school problem; drug abuse was first (Gallup, A. M., and S. M. Elam, Sept. 1988). Self-discipline is learned from parents, peers and society, and also from teachers. When self-discipline fails, ethical conduct must be imposed from a higher authority. The earliest development of self-discipline occurs through attitudes learned from parents, and/or from child care persons. In the elementary grades the teacher also becomes an authority and model of self-discipline, and peers begin to have an influence. Small children may explore cheating simply as one alternative approach to receiving approval for their efforts. At the secondary level, although parents and teachers continue to have an influence, teenagers are beginning to examine and choose their own values, and are strongly influenced by peers. At the secondary level ethical conduct may be imposed by the teacher or administrative personnel if self-discipline fails. In higher education, if self-discipline fails, the influencing authority is the college instructor or professor, backed up by college policy on academic integrity--the consequences may be "heavy".

Instructors and professors should be prepared for the possibility that students may cheat. Faculty must be consistent and unemotional in the way they handle cheating. They must persistently be friendly, fair, and firm! A frequently successful technique is to privately point out evidence of dishonesty as well as successful honest actions, and appeal to the student's self-respect. Steps beyond private confer-

ences should be taken if the student persists in cheating. Because the goal of all educational institutions is for enrollees to become successful as persons, in careers and as citizens, dismissal of a student should be considered the undesirable ultimate consequence for violation of instructional integrity (cheating).

"--self-discipline is nurtured every time a--teacher treats students with civility, dignity, and respect, all within the framework of positive expectations." (Stoops, E. and J. King-Stoops, 1972).

Summary

Academic dishonesty is a concern for instructors at all educational levels, and can be effectively dealt with by a recognition of why and how students cheat. Students can be very inventive in devising ways of cheating.

Students may take advantage of opportunities to cheat because they have unclear, misplaced values or have not accepted high ethical standards. A denial of personal responsibility is often at the root of student academic dishonesty. Value acceptance and ethical behavior are learned early in life; they are deep-seated (in the affective domain) and highly resistant to change through relearning. Faculty, counselors and parents need to become involved in collaborative efforts to bring about positive changes in values and ethical concepts held by a student.

Sometimes students cheat because they do not understand the relevance of course instruction to their personal goals. Teachers have an obligation to make a strong effort to link them.

Low self-image is another important contributing factor toward student cheating. Teachers should deliberately use techniques that permit all students to be successful. Techniques that reduce excessive competition for high grades among students also help overcome problems caused by low self-image. Group assignments not only help overcome this reason for cheating, but also help students develop effective interpersonal skills.

Laziness as a cause of cheating may require the assistance of an academic counselor in overcoming this learned behavior.

Some students cheat simply because they are not sure what constitutes cheating, and do not know the short range and long range consequences of doing so. Teachers are obligated to clearly discuss academic honesty with students.

There are a multitude of reasons why students cheat. Academically dishonest students typically have three common characteristics: immaturity, lack of commitment, and rationalization of cheating behavior. These cheating students typically are also not financially responsible for their education.

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