

Preface

Almost certainly, every educator has been touched by cheating in some way or another. If, as teachers or administrators, our backgrounds are like most of our students', at one or more times in our own education it is likely that we took a test or completed an assignment and were aided in some way that was not appropriate. Perhaps we failed to credit the work of others in a term paper; or maybe we just outright cut-and-pasted chunks of material from other sources and formatted that potpourri of information into "my" report. We may have copied from another student, passed or accepted a slip of paper containing information that should not have been given or received during a test. Maybe we claimed to be ill so that we might eke out an extra day or two to complete an assignment beyond the stated deadline.

Into our careers as educators, we have almost certainly experienced cheating from the other side of the desk. Perhaps it was the writing style used by a student in her term paper that was inconsistent with her previous work in the class. Maybe it was in observing one student looking intently in the direction of another student during a test and wondering whether he was attempting to copy an answer, or just innocently staring across the room. Perhaps it was in noticing that fifth-period Chemistry I students performed so much better on the quiz than first-period Chemistry I students did, even though both classes were taught the same material and given the same quiz. Maybe it was in the uncomfortable feeling accompanying rumors that a fellow teacher had provided "hints" to students regarding their answers to certain questions on the state-mandated mathematics test.

Whether in the form of tests, quizzes, portfolios, term papers, projects, or assignments, assessment of student learning has always been an essential feature of American education. So, too, has cheating. With the prominence of so-called "high-stakes" testing and educational accountability systems, the visibility, importance, and consequences of assessment have only increased in recent years.

Vigorous debate continues about whether the increase in student testing that is currently observed in K-12 education in the United States is a needed reform or a detriment to student learning. One thing

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is clear, however: Increased testing has been accompanied by more frequent and more visible incidents of cheating. And the phenomenon does not appear to be limited to cheating on large-scale, high-stakes tests. Cheating has become a fairly common occurrence when students take classroom tests or prepare term papers or other assignments.

The problem of cheating is not limited, however, to those who take tests or turn in term papers. Perhaps due to the use of high-stakes tests in student and educator accountability systems, cheating is increasingly committed by those who give tests.

The prominence of cheating has caught many educators, administrators, and policymakers by surprise. Confusion marks our ideas about what constitutes cheating. Uncertainty exists regarding how best to prevent cheating. Hesitance characterizes our notions of how to respond to cheating.

Despite apparent recent increases, cheating is not a new phenomenon. A little-known but solid body of research evidence and practical advice has accumulated over several decades to address the questions of what constitutes cheating and the steps teachers and administrators can take to reduce and respond to it.

This book provides a collection of no-nonsense information about cheating geared toward the practical needs of teachers, principals, school board members, and policymakers—in short, toward those who deal with the issue in K-12 classroom contexts. The first chapter provides a workable definition of cheating and describes how cheating is studied in educational contexts. The chapter also provides information on students' reasons for cheating, and documents some characteristics of students and classrooms that are associated with cheating. Chapter 2 presents data and rationales to support the idea that cheating is a serious problem, including information on the frequency and consequences of cheating. This chapter also provides insights into students' and teachers' perceptions of cheating.

Because a first step in responding to cheating is recognizing it, Chapter 3 provides a catalogue of specific methods used to cheat on tests and assignments. In Chapter 4, both traditional and more high-tech methods for detecting cheating are provided. Preventing cheating is the topic addressed in Chapter 5; this chapter includes practical suggestions for teacher actions and changes in classroom environments that can reduce the incidence of cheating. A concluding chapter, Chapter 6, suggests some next steps that will be of interest to educators and others who want to address the problem of cheating. Each chapter ends with several questions that can be used for individual reflection, or can serve as prompts for further group discussions.

Several resource sections are also included. Resource A is a glossary of key terms. Resource B provides a sampling of some Internet

sources that aid students in cheating. Resource C is the counterpart to Resource B; it provides educators with an annotated list of some resources for combating cheating. Resource D includes examples of model cheating policies and honor codes. This book on cheating concludes with (naturally) a complete list of references used in preparing this work, and various indexes.

Before diving right into the subject of cheating, a few notes and acknowledgments are in order. First, I have written other books and articles on the topic of cheating, all of which have been of the densely footnoted, scholarly variety. Those works have also gone into considerably more depth than the present volume, and, for the reader whose interest in the subject of cheating is piqued, references to those previous efforts can be found in the list provided at the end of this book. Most of that previous work has focused exclusively on the specific problem of cheating on tests. While I obviously hope that the former works have been helpful to assessment specialists, those who oversee testing programs, policymakers, and so on, the present volume has a decidedly wider focus and a different audience in mind.

Compared to addressing a more academic audience, this book has given me the opportunity to write primarily for educators—an audience with whom I feel the closest affiliation. I began my own career in education as an elementary school teacher (2nd and 4th grades) for five years. After a stint in a testing organization, I returned to the classroom—though this time to the college classroom—and have now spent the majority of my career in a university setting. More than anything else, I still consider myself to be a teacher. So, when Tom Guskey (coeditor of the *Experts in Assessment*TM series with Robert Marzano) offered me the opportunity to contribute to this series for educators, I was both honored and delighted.

I have seized on Tom's offer as an opportunity to write in a different way. As readers will (I hope) notice, I have tried to avoid breaking up the text with citations. I have tried to write in a more conversational style, and to include more practical illustrations of the sort that I—and presumably many other teachers—have encountered in classrooms. I have omitted treatment of topics such as how to use simple statistical methods to detect cheating (readers can see my other writings for that topic), and I have included treatment of topics that I had not previously given much attention to, such as plagiarism and the emerging, high-tech methods that can be used to combat that form of cheating.

In addition to the series editors, I must also acknowledge the support and assistance of many others. First, some of what I know about cheating has been acquired via my own personal experiences as a student, teacher, and scholar. However, the vast majority of what I know about cheating is the result of encountering the work of other

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scholars who have labored tirelessly investigating the topic, and my own research and writing lean heavily on the shoulders of their efforts. A quotation from author Wilson Mizner seems appropriate to make the point: "If you steal from one author, it's plagiarism; if you steal from many, it's research."

Thus, proper attribution of the intellectual history that makes such a book as this possible must recognize many others. Several scholars who have devoted major portions of their careers to studying, understanding, preventing, or detecting cheating deserve recognition; among them, the significant contributions of Professors Fred Schab, Robert B. Frary, Stephen F. Davis, and John P. Houston warrant special mention. Studies of cheating are becoming somewhat rarer, however, as fewer young scholars commit themselves to the topic and apparently fewer resources are allocated to furthering an understanding of the issue and fostering academic integrity. Nonetheless, a few organizations persist in these efforts, most notably the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University and the California-based Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics. (Additional information on these organizations and others can be found in Resource C.)

In addition to the aforementioned intellectual assistance, I want to acknowledge the considerable editorial expertise and encouragement provided by Corwin Press, which has a long and successful history of publishing practical, helpful works in the field of education.

Finally, I am so grateful for the continuing support of my wife, Rita, and our children, Caroline, David, and Stephen, who I join in thanking God for showering his abundance on the American educational system and in pleading his continuing favor.

—GJC