

Research Paper on Cheating

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Abstract – This paper studies in detail about the motivation for students to cheat during exams or doing home works and assignments. It describes the various forms of cheating practices performed by students. It also tells the ways to prove whether a student has cheated or not. Finally it also highlights the necessary steps to be taken by everyone – students, parents and professors to eliminate cheating. This content includes some comments said by students during past research.

Index Terms – Brain-boosters, Cost-benefit analysis, Creativity, Gadgets, Smartphone, Stigmatize, Surveillance Camera

INTRODUCTION

Education is important to know and live in future. It takes us to the future we cannot grasp. So it is necessary to give a child good education for him to survive. This is a simple solution. But the real problem comes when we realize that the child is not able to study well or more precisely we do not know in advance in which field he could perform well. Every child is a born artist and has his innate talents. In the last section of the paper we would know that everyone has the ability to succeed in life if he chooses the path which is right for him. This path can be decided only by him although it takes time to determine which one suitable for him. Parents should not force him to choose a career in which he has no interest and talent. If he is compelled to take a path in which he is not capable, he may not perform well and score low grades. Then he may be forced to resort to ways that circumvent the problem like cheating.

Cheating is defined as representing someone else's work as your own. It can take many forms: from sharing another's work to purchasing a term paper or test questions in advance, to paying another to take a test or do the work for you. It is an act performed to accomplish a task in an unethical manner by a person when he does not have knowledge of how to do it in a legal way. Cheating is so common these days that it sometimes becomes necessary for some people to succeed in their task. It is done by students in their exams or completing assignment, home works and in other academic activities that the student is engaged in.

Not all students engage in cheating. Those who do such illicit activities are incapable of studying efficient enough to meet the standards of the institution. The main motive for cheating is grades as it determines the future of the student.

"Everything is about the grade that you got in the class. Nobody looks at how you got it."

MOTIVATION FOR CHEATING

Statistics show cheating among high-school and college students has risen drastically during the past 50 years. The results [1] of the 29th Who's Who Among American High School Students Poll were released in November, 1998. Among the findings:

- 80% of the country's best students cheated to get to the top of their class.
- More than half the students surveyed said that they don't think cheating is a big deal.
- 95% of cheaters say they were not caught.
- 40% cheated on a quiz or a test
- 67% copied someone else's homework

When it comes to cheating there may be several reasons that might encourage a student to engage in it. The primary reason for cheating is because the student may not have studied and thus inefficient to write an exam or complete an assignment. The general complaint from students is that the textbooks are too expensive to afford [3]. So they try to manage the entire coursework just by the live class lecture note without buying books. But during to answer all the questions in exams only the class notes might not suffice. It might require some knowledge that can be acquired only by reading textbooks. So the student might be inclined to cheat to answer such questions in exam.

Another reason for cheating during exams may be due the toughness of the question paper. Most of the time the paper set for graduate level may contain lot of questions to be answered in a minimum time. Although the student might be capable of answering all the questions he may not have time to work out the solution for each question as there is less time. So he might work out and answer partial question paper and try to copy the answers of the remaining questions from others. This situation although might seem ethical and can cause the students to think cheating is necessary and acceptable cannot be excused.

There can also be a situation when a student can feel it is ok to cheat. For example most students argue when all are cheating why I should refrain from doing it. Just by saying cheating is bad and immoral might reduce their intensity but would not stop them completely from doing so. It is due to behavior modification [3]. While writing an exam if one or

more members of a in-group [2] cheat then there is a fair chance that others in that group might too indulge in cheating. Students do this cost-benefit analysis for cheating [3]. The keep asking themselves the following questions:

- What crime am I doing?
- How much will I benefit from it?
- What is the probability of getting caught?
- How much will I be punished if I do get caught?

Based on the situations the answers might change and they would decide if cheating in that particular exam is worthwhile or not. General statistics show that there are majority of people who cheat less [3]. The percentage of people who cheat extensively is less. People who cheat less will continue doing as long as it does not change their impression about themselves.

Some students cheat because they do not want to study eight hours a day. They want to go out and have fun. And some professors make it easy, students said. They overlook even the most obvious instances. In fact a survey of more than 4,000 U.S. and Canadian schools revealed half of all faculty members admitted ignoring cheating at least once.

FORMS OF CHEATING

Over the period students have designed and tested different methods to cheat. Some have been successful and some got caught. At the most basic level cheating has evolved and can be categorized into three different forms:

- Traditional cheating
- Cheating using Technology
- Usage of Drugs

I. Traditional cheating

This is the most primal form of cheating. This has also been convenient for students as it is easy and free which makes it more popular among the group of students who have the habit of cheating.

It can range from carrying bits of paper with written information which can be hidden anywhere in clothes to simply copying by looking at others answer sheet. Students also write some answers on their hands or legs and slightly wash with water in order to make it light and less obvious to proctor. They can even write in handkerchiefs or small bits of paper that they look over when they want to write answer. The old rubber band trick [8] — stretch one out and write everything you need on it, and when it shrinks back to shape, no one will be the wiser. It is easy for students to adopt this technique and the approach makes it slightly harder for professors to detect cheating.

II. Cheating using Technology

Although modern technology has created revolutions throughout the world it has also some negative usage. Typically some rich students use Smartphone or other hand-

held devices like iPAQ to store and retrieve information whenever required [8].

The simplest of all is a graphic calculator that is allowed by professors during exams. It can be used to store or download all kinds of information. Students also send text messages to others who have such devices and ask them the answer to some questions. In such manner the exchange conversation and find out all unknown answers. Some devices also have capability to connect to internet and can be used to browse for information whenever required. Students also use this to their advantage to answer some objective type questions. There also some websites that contains popular question and answers that aid students and encourage them to appear for exam without studying as all answers are available online. There also chances that the question paper might leak before the exam and it gets circulated through e-mail to everyone. Websites like Papers4Less, Cheathouse.com and Schoolsucks.com has term papers for students' access. This makes a student completely avoid studying and just prepare answers for the questions asked.

This method is needs some prerequisite knowledge and speed to handle devices and thus it is hard and takes time for copying. It is easy for a proctor to detect whether a student is using any unnecessary device for writing a pen and paper exam.

III. Usage of Drugs

This method is a rare form of cheating as it is risky and also much expensive. This is done by only high-end students who desperately need top grade. It requires a lot of precision in using drugs and is too risky that makes students avoid this method.

The drugs used are nothing but brain-boosters or performance-enhancing pills [4] that temporarily improve memory, concentration, planning and reduce impulsive behavior and risky decision-making, and many more are being developed [5]. In a recent commentary in the journal Nature, two Cambridge University researchers reported that about a dozen of their colleagues had admitted to regular use of prescription drugs like Adderall, a stimulant, and Provigil [6], which promotes wakefulness, to improve their academic performance. The former is approved to treat attention deficit disorder, the latter narcolepsy, and both are considered more effective, and more widely available, than the drugs circulating in dorms a generation ago. The journal has been conducting its own, more rigorous survey, and so far at least 20 respondents have said that they used the drugs for nonmedical purposes, according to Philip Campbell, the journal's editor in chief. The debate has also caught fire on the Web site of The Chronicle of Higher Education, where academics and students are sniping at one another [6].

Although tough to use, it is employed by advanced students that need good grades. This method also makes professor difficult to detect whether a student has cheated or not when the examination is in progress.

METHODS TO DETECT CHEATING

When students cheat in exams or doing assignments it is the responsibility of the professor to detect it and curb it in order to maintain the degree of fairness in grading.

The task of finding whether a student has cheated or not becomes easy or hard depending on the technique used. In traditional techniques, it depends on how sharp is proctor in his observation. The proctor may slip seldom in catching a student using bits or written notes on hand or kerchief. But he can be able to read the emotions and facial expression of a student copying which are not natural during cheating. For example the student might keep looking the invigilator to check his movements and wait for an opportunity for him to turn away so that he could use his written bits at the precise time. Sometimes doing any illegal activity may also cause students to sweat heavily. If any such unusual activity is seen then the proctor could enquire and test his innocence.

The process is almost similar but considerably easier for students using gadgets for cheating. It would be obvious when a student is busy fumbling something below the desk without writing the exam. He may also exhibit all the emotional expressions as mentioned above. So it can be easier for a proctor to catch a student copying. For both the above cases we can also detect cheating by placing a surveillance camera and monitor them during or immediately after the exam or we compare papers to find similar or equal answers although it may be rigorous. Fortunately, for students copying from web, educators have technological options too. Schools have been subscribing to a service called Turnitin.com, which can help teachers compare students' papers to all the available literature in its database. Typically 30 percent of all the papers submitted have significant levels of plagiarism [8].

But for students using drugs, it is very difficult or impossible to detect cheating. Only option is to dope test every student which would be both time consuming and expensive. Since it happens rarely, this is mostly avoided to save time.

GUIDELINES TO ELIMINATE CHEATING

Cheating is like addiction. Once a student succeeds in cheating an exam he may be tempted to do that again and again. It is very difficult to curb cheating completely.

To stop cheating we need to adopt a reverse process i.e. rather than punishing a student or spoiling his life we need to analyze his situation and understand what has caused him to indulge in this habit. As we discussed in previous sections there may be several reasons such as:

- He may not understand the lecture or the subject
- He may not have the course material to study
- He may feel the exam duration is less compared to the toughness of the question paper
- He may not at all be interested in the field
- His friends circle are indulged in cheating/peer pressure

The most primary thing that he may be forced to take up a career by his parents might cause him loose interest. So a child must not be forced to jump into a career where he may fail or cannot perform well. Although it might take time to decide he can be successful and most important have satisfaction in what he is doing. Other reasons like expensive books may not be in our control but we can make sure that plenty of copies are in library and accessible to students for the full term. They can also provide an electronic copy of the book. Regarding exams, the toughness level must be increased gradually instead of making all exams too tough to clear. It is always good for both students and university reputation to have good quality professors as they could teach well and increase the interest among students to learn more than just get good grades. We should not stigmatize students for minor errors as they will stop expressing their creativity. The whole point of education is creativity is important and should be treated equal to literacy. This makes them lose their creativity i.e. we educate them out of creativity and not into creativity and by the time they grow up they lose this art [3].

Finally the students should also from their side should be moral and understand that only real and hard work is rewarded which could help them sustain for long.

Even if is a closed book test the exam hall should be well equipped such as having surveillance cameras and some jamming devices that block internet capable devices. But in firsthand students should not be allowed any kind of gadgets while writing exam.

CONCLUSION

Students cheat and will continue to cheat if they feel apprehended and incapable to clear exams. The atmosphere around students should be conditioned in such a way that they feel confident and enjoy studying. For that purpose they should made to work in the area where they are proficient and thus could perform well. The exam should be made open book exam and should contain creative questions.

Many think it's like you're not really there to learn anything. You're just learning to learn the system. Cheaters are basically decent kids whose values are being totally corrupted by a world which is sanctioning stuff that even they know is wrong. But they can't understand why everybody allows it. Cheating in school is a dress rehearsal for life. Even if the world were more ethical, students still have reasons for cheating. Some cheat because they're graded on a curve and so the score is affected by how other students do. There are others getting better grades by cheating. Why am I not going to cheat? [7] Its kind of almost stupid if you don't. The pressure for good grades is high. Grades can determine your future, and if you fail this then you're not going on to college. College teaches students many things: how to learn, behave, overcome challenges, and succeed. By approaching honestly, they'll learn far more than they imagine. But more than that, they'll come out of it better, stronger people [8].

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