Cheating is at or near an all-time high in schools and colleges. In addition to cheating on tests, students are plagiarizing from on-line term-papers mills. Many educators say the intense pressure created by high-stakes tests fosters cheating by students who worry that college admission, or graduation, hangs on the outcome of a single test. Moreover, teachers are cheating too, test critics say, because test results often determine whether schools retain their accreditation, whether educators get fired or get raises — and even whether local real estate values go up or down. Exasperated ethicists ask whether educators are doing everything they possibly can to curtail cheating and instill core values, while others think implementing honor codes in more schools and curtailing high-stakes tests might help solve the problem.
CHEATING IN SCHOOLS

THE ISSUES

747 • Are students today more dishonest than earlier generations?
• Should schools adopt honor codes?
• Should educators be more aggressive in stopping cheating?

BACKGROUND

756 Ancient Crib Sheets
More than a thousand years ago, civil service applicants in China were searched for crib sheets.

756 Values Confusion
During the short-lived “values clarification” movement, students were encouraged to determine their own values.

CURRENT SITUATION

759 High-Stakes Testing
Recent cheating scandals have renewed the perennial debate about whether they encourage cheating.

760 Defending the Tests
Some experts say the solution is better test security.

760 Preventive Measures
Schools are cracking down on cheating.

OUTLOOK

762 More Cheating?
Some educators say cheating will probably increase — at least in the short term.

SIDEBARS AND GRAPHICS

748 Most High School Students Cheat ‘Often’
The American public ranks politicians, lawyers and journalists as most likely to cheat “often” — with high school students not far behind.

752 College Students’ Top 10 Reasons for Cheating
They generally blame the instructor or fellow students.

754 High-Tech Students Click to Cheat
In the age of the Internet, cheating has gone high-tech.

757 Chronology
Key events since 1918.

758 Developing Nations Face ‘Rampant’ Cheating
Cheating in many countries is more extensive than in the United States.

761 Honor-Code Students Say They Cheat Less
Twice as many students at colleges without honor codes said they cheated.

763 At Issue
Should high-stakes tests be abolished in order to reduce cheating?

765 How to Prevent Cheating — the Students’ View
Students say scrambled tests and smaller classes work best.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

765 Bibliography
Selected sources used.

766 The Next Step
Additional articles from current periodicals.

Cover: Educators say academic dishonesty is widespread at all grade levels, with students cheating on tests, plagiarizing from Internet Web sites and copying homework. (Corbis Images)
Cheating in Schools

BY KATHY KOCH

THE ISSUES

When half the students in an honors biology class at Annapolis High School — including five National Honor Society members — were caught cheating on a test last spring, senior Andrew Smith wasn’t surprised.

“Cheating is very prevalent among high school students all around the country, not just at our school,” says Smith, the nation’s only voting student school board member. After he asked the board to take a tough stand on cheating, it decided to do a student survey on the problem.

While cheating isn’t new, the scope of the problem is. Throughout the 1990s, studies consistently found that more than 75 percent of college undergraduates had cheated at least once — an all-time high — and 20-30 percent regularly.

The problem is even worse in high schools, where the slackers aren’t the only ones cheating. Honor students are as likely as low-achievers to cheat; girls now cheat as much as boys and — alarmingly — medical and engineering students are as likely to cheat as liberal arts students.

In its last annual survey of 700,000 top students, Who’s Who Among American High School Students found that 80 percent of the high-achievers admitted to cheating, the highest percentage in the survey’s 29-year history.

“Perhaps the most startling finding of the studies on cheating is that kids say it isn’t wrong,” says Josie Plachta, director of media relations at the Washington, D.C.-based Character Education Partnership, which advocates character education in schools. More than half of the students in the Who’s Who poll said cheating was “no big deal,” a victimless crime.

But cheating is unfair to non-cheaters when a test is being graded on a curve, and it destroys non-cheaters’ incentive to work hard, teachers say. It also undermines the integrity and fairness of standardized tests and threatens the value of degrees and certifications, they say.

The long-term negative effects are even more ominous. “Do you want to go to a doctor who cheated his way through anatomy class, or drive over a bridge built by an engineer who cheated?” asks Donald McCabe, founder of the Durham, N.C.-based Center for Academic Integrity, which promotes anti-cheating campaigns on more than 200 college campuses.

Besides being blasé, some of today’s cheaters brazenly show no remorse. “Apologize for what?” asked Jolie Fitch, one of nine students from Chicago’s Steinmetz High School who were caught cheating to win a 1995 statewide academic championship. “I would do it again,” she said defiantly, after watching a made-for-TV movie last May about the incident.

Perhaps more disturbing, lately it’s not just the students who are cheating. In recent years, schools in Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Ohio, Texas, Virginia and other states have discovered teachers or administrators who tried to improve performance by either changing answers or encouraging students to change their answers on statewide tests. In New York City, investigators found 52 educators at 32 schools were cheating.

And today cheating cuts across economic and social strata. In affluent Potomac, Md., the principal at a top school in the horse Washington suburb resigned in May after allegedly directing students to cheat on a statewide test.

“There’s been a general desensitization to cheating on tests, both among students and teachers,” says Gregory J. Cizek, a University of North Carolina education professor and author of Cheating on Tests: How to Do It, Detect It and Prevent It. Teachers are either ignoring student cheating, enabling students to cheat or changing their answers outright, he says. “That’s the most distressing to me. The people you’d think should be the kids’ role models are really giving kids the opposite.”

Teachers aren’t the only poor role models, says Harold J. Noah, professor emeritus at Columbia University’s Teachers College and co-author of the forthcoming book, Fraud and Education: The Worm in the Apple. In all parts of adult society, he says, “there is a greater emphasis today on winning. In business and in sports,
we’re seeing an incredible rash of corrupt behavior.”

Gerald Tirozzi, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), says schools cannot keep society’s degenerating morals from slithering under the schoolhouse door. “Adults cheat, businessmen cheat,” he says. “Just about every movie you see these days has someone cheating on something. We’re naïve to think kids aren’t watching and learning from that.”

The problem isn’t just pop culture, but the way it’s financed, says Theodore Sizer, chairman of the Coalition of Essential Schools, in Oakland, Calif., which promotes the establishment of non-traditional schools and opposes standardized testing. “Pop culture is largely driven by advertising revenues, and advertising is a form of lying,” he says. Today’s kids are subjected to more advertising than any other generation, and “after 500 advertising messages in a day, kids learn that lying is the way the world goes around.”

There’s plenty of adult blame to go around, says philosophy Professor
Lawrence M. Hinman, director of the Values Institute at the University of San Diego. “The ball is being dropped all down the line for the problem to be this extensive,” he says.

He says today’s large college classes and the Internet make cheating easier. “The larger the class, the greater the potential for anonymity,” Hinman says. Similarly, when using the Web, either to download an illicit term paper or to take a distance-learning course, “it’s easier to cheat or plagiarize if an instructor doesn’t even know your name, and you don’t feel any personal responsibility toward him,” he says.

He blames weak enforcement by penny-pinching college administrators and ambitious faculty at large, research-oriented institutions, where 500 students can sit in introductory classes taught by graduate assistants unlikely to pursue cheaters.

Not only does the Internet make cheating easier than ever, but so do other new high-tech gadgets, like programmable graphing calculators, pagers and cell phones used to transmit test answers. (See sidebar, p. 754.)

Some say kids cheat today because they are too busy and under too much competitive pressure. “You can’t just be a good athlete,” says Gary Pavela, director of judicial programs and student ethical development at the University of Maryland. “You’ve got to make good grades and do community service, too. These kids are being asked to do too much.”

There’s more cheating now because more people are being educated than ever before, so there’s more pressure on certain parts of the population than in the past, other observers say. “Once kids dropped out of school to work on the family farm,” Noah says. “But you can’t get a job as a supermarket checkout clerk anymore without a high school diploma.”

The increased pressure is partly internal and partly external, Pavela says. “This generation has higher expectations for itself,” he says. And baby-boom parents push their kids more than they themselves were pushed, he says, because they worry about their children’s futures in an uncertain information economy where corporate downsizing is commonplace. “They know an education is essential to survive in the new economy,” he says.

Politicians have also ratcheted up the stakes — especially regarding performance on new statewide standardized tests instituted as part of education reform, say test critics. Test results often determine whether schools retain their accreditation, whether educators get fired or students graduate — and even whether local real estate values go up or down.

Many think the intense pressure created by high-stakes tests is causing the increase in cheating. Alfie Kohn, a well-known opponent of high-stakes testing, for example, sees cheating not as a sign of deficient character but as a pragmatic response to “an outrageous, heavy-handed, corporate approach to getting tough with kids and teachers.”

“Cheating is increasing because the stakes are higher,” agrees Cizek of the University of North Carolina. And if students haven’t been properly prepared for the tests, the cheating may be part of a backlash against the tests, some critics of the new tests say.

Others say that the definition of cheating has been blurred in an era of high-stakes testing, collaborative learning and cyber research. Students doing research on the Internet no longer view plagiarism as previous generations did, and they are confused about whether sharing notes on a collaborative project is cheating.

But McCabe of the Center for Academic Integrity says some of the fourfold increase in what he calls “unpermitted collaboration” among college students since the early 1960s, is deliberate. “The kids feel it’s OK to collaborate, even if the teacher did not authorize it. They argue that the teacher did a poor job of explaining the lesson, that they learn more that way and finish their work quicker,” he says.

Sometimes teachers cheat inadvertently when they prepare students for standardized tests, says Peter Sacks, author of Standardized Minds: The High Price of America’s Testing Culture and What We Can Do to Change It. “There’s a fine, unclear line between cheating and teaching-to-the-test coaching,” he says, “and school officials are turning a blind eye toward it.” For instance, he points out, teachers don’t know it’s wrong to copy old versions of a test to make workbooks for kids to study.

Rodolfo de la Garza, a professor of government at the University of Texas, asks, “Is it cheating to buy notes from a commercial outlet? Is the student who can afford a tutor competing fairly with students who can’t afford such help?”

Others say kids today are just lazier. The average student today spends only seven hours per semester studying for an introductory psychology course, says Stephen F. Davis, a professor of psychology at Emporia State University in Kansas. “Kids tell me, ‘Fifteen minutes of cheating is a lot better than three hours of studying,’” he says.

McCabe points out that some kids are not raised with much of a work ethic these days, largely because their parents have made things easier for them. “But, ironically, those same parents have higher expectations for their kids than their own parents had for them,” he says.

But Pavela of the University of Maryland doesn’t see the problem as laziness but as the “dot-com-instant-gratification phenomenon.” Some students think they should be millionaires by age 35, he says, “And to do that they work very hard — in
some cases, too hard,” but sometimes they take shortcuts.

Davis concedes that perhaps it’s not laziness so much as different priorities. “Today’s college population has a whole different set of values,” he says. “They value acquiring things over getting an education.” A third of the students at his university work full time while taking a full course load, and others have children. Spending time with their kids may be more important than studying for a test, he says.

Others care less about the learning experience than about the diploma at the end of the trail, Davis says. “They feel justified to use any means they can to get that piece of paper,” because they feel it’s necessary to get a good job.

Plus, more people are going to college today than ever before, McCabe says, “many of whom are not as well-qualified to do college work as previous generations.” As a result, many have a chip on their shoulder. “They complain that the system is unfair, the tests are unfair and the teachers are too hard,” Davis says. “Therefore, they feel it’s OK to cheat.”

As educators and ethicists wring their hands over the problem, these are the questions they are debating:

Are students today more dishonest than earlier generations?

While at least three separate studies have found that cheating on high school and college campuses is at a historical high, educators and ethicists differ on whether that means today’s kids are more dishonest than previous generations.

One of the studies, conducted in 1998 by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, in Marina del Rey, Calif., found that 70 percent of high school students admitted cheating on exams, compared to 64 percent in 1996 and even lower percentages earlier in the 1990s. Moreover, 47 percent of the students surveyed admitted to stealing something from a store in the last year, compared with 41 percent in 1996.

“Unequivocally, yes, students are more dishonest today,” says institute President Michael Josephson. “Kids’ internal sense that it’s wrong to cheat has been clearly diluted.”

And students today are quick to assume the culture’s widespread “victim attitude,” he says. For instance, the Steinmetz High School students excused their actions by simply declaring that the “system” was unfair because their next closest competitor was a wealthier, better-funded magnet school. “To me, an honorable person would never say, ‘You made me cheat,’” Josephson says.

He blames adults for kids’ lack of a moral compass. “In the past, we sent a very clear message that cheating was wrong,” he says. Today adults themselves are cheating on taxes and campaign finances, he says, and coaches communicate a win-at-any-cost attitude to athletes. “We’re sending the clear message to kids that success at any cost is more important than character.”

To make matters worse, kids often cheat because punishment is infrequent and more moderate than it used to be, he says. “They cheat because they are allowed to,” Josephson says. “There are lots of up sides and very few downsides. We have created an atmosphere of free-crime zones, where all manner of lying and cheating is a very, very safe undertaking.”

And it’s not only educational institutions that are looking the other way. “Other institutions responsible for enforcing integrity standards have simply caved in,” he says, citing recent sports and résumé frauds. “More and more, we are focusing on competency rather than character,” he says.

The Center for Academic Integrity’s McCabe, who has conducted several long-term studies on cheating, sees a twofold explanation for the increase in cheating: a very real increase in the number of cheaters and an increase in the number of students willing to admit that they cheat. “It might be that cheating is just not such a big deal to kids today,” he says.

Kevin Ryan, director emeritus of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University, says that when he started teaching in the mid-1950s, he never saw or heard about cheating. “There was such a strong attitude against it. It was clearly shameful,” says Ryan, a professor emeritus of education.

Davis of Emporia State, whose ongoing study of student attitudes is now in its 14th year, says today’s students are more academically dishonest than earlier generations. He found that 40-60 percent admitted to cheating at least once, compared with only 18-23 percent in a 1941 study, and half of those students are cheating on a regular basis. “That means up to a third of students are cheating their little hearts out,” he says.

And even more students, about 78 percent, say they cheated at least once in high school, and 65 percent did so on a regular basis. “I guess you’d have to say kids today are more dishonest,” Davis says, but it’s perfectly understandable because kids see adults in business, sports and government cheating and not getting punished. “What are they supposed to think?” he asks.

Pavela at the University of Maryland agrees that the failure is not with the students, but with “the people running higher education. For 30 years, we have been reluctant to challenge students to be honest, because a lot of faculty did not want to appear judgmental or dogmatic.”

The failure is also with society at large, says Sizer at the Coalition of Essential Schools. “If we re-elect people who play verbal games, then we’re sending the message that kids don’t have to be honest,” he says.

Hinman of the Values Institute says today’s students may not be more
dishonest, but they clearly haven’t gotten the message from adults that cheating is wrong. “These are not bad kids,” he insists. “But there is this sort of blind spot for many of them about cheating being wrong.”

Larry Nucci, an education and psychology professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago and director of the university’s Office for Studies in Moral Development and Character Formation, thinks it’s “silly” to call today’s kids more dishonest than previous generations. “There’s no evidence that they are more dishonest,” he says. “In fact, research going back to the early 1920s shows that everyone will cheat under the right conditions.”

Today, with easy and sometimes free access to Internet term papers and large, anonymous, overcrowded lecture courses taught by graduate students, the conditions are perfect for cheating, he says. “The teacher doesn’t know his students or their abilities individually and students are packed into seats close to one another when they take tests,” he says.

He thinks cheating has become more of a pragmatic issue than a moral one. “When students face high-stakes tests perceived as part of an abstract, unfair sorting process, separate from their classroom learning experience, they will cheat,” Nucci says. “But if kids perceive a test as a legitimate assessment of what they know, and if they see it as hurting other people if they cheat, then they feel it’s wrong and they don’t do it.”

**Should schools adopt honor codes to reduce cheating?**

For centuries some schools — particularly Southern colleges and military institutions — have had honor codes requiring students to pledge not to cheat and to report any cheating they observe. Exams at honor code schools are usually unproctored. Allegations of cheating are usually handled by a student judiciary panel, and those found guilty are usually expelled.

Surveys conducted in 1990 and 1995 by the Center for Academic Integrity found that only 57 percent of students at honor code schools admitted to cheating, compared with almost 80 percent at schools without codes. As a result, some educators and ethicists recommend that honor codes be adopted nationwide. “I think every high school across the nation should have in place a very explicit honor code,” says Arthur J. Schwartz, director of character education at the John Templeton Foundation in Radnor, Pa. “It won’t reduce cheating to nil, but it is a first step and will send a strong message to students and parents that cheating will not be tolerated.”

Honor codes focus everyone’s attention on ethical behavior, and make them commit to explicit ideas about how to behave, Cizek says.

And there’s an added benefit, Hinman says: At schools with effective honor codes, honesty is not limited to classwork. “People can leave a laptop in their classrooms, and it won’t get stolen,” he says. “And even the merchants don’t worry about bounced checks.”

Many educators think that traditional honor codes work better on small campuses than at large public institutions, where the sheer size of classes makes it difficult to generate the same community spirit possible on smaller campuses. But even on small campuses they only work if the students, faculties and administrations are supportive and enforce them, they say.

Honor codes also work best in institutions with a long tradition of honor, in which students are told throughout their school experience, “This is who we are,” Josephson says. Without a great deal of moral reprogramming and advocacy on the importance of integrity, today’s average student body is not ready yet for traditional honor codes. “Until that occurs, an honor code only advances the cheaters,” he says.

“It would be crazy to try to do that now in high schools,” he says. “We need more monitoring right now, not less. We need more enforcement right now, not less.”

Others agree that an honor code would never work except in a fairly tightly knit community. “I haven’t seen any evidence that it would work in a large public university,” says Joe Kerkvliet, an economics professor at Oregon State University.

Instituting an honor code requires at least a decade of hard work establishing an environment where honesty is valued, and students and administrators must be on board from the beginning, Hinman warns. “To just suddenly adopt an honor code would be courting disaster,” he says.

Some say that honor codes are a waste of time because teenagers are not morally developed enough to understand what they are signing. “I don’t think the existence of an honor

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**‘I don’t think the existence of an honor code does anything more than a speed limit sign does. It’s a reasonable beginning, but it’s not an end in itself.’**

— **Theodore Sizer**

Chairman, Coalition of Essential Schools
CHEATING IN SCHOOLS

College Students’ Top 10 Reasons for Cheating

When asked why they cheated, college students generally absolved themselves of responsibility, blaming their actions on the instructor or fellow students. Their responses also reflect concern about grades and time pressures.

<table>
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<th>Rank</th>
<th>Reason for Cheating</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The instructor assigns too much material</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>The instructor left the room during the test</td>
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<td>2.*</td>
<td>A friend asked me to cheat and I couldn’t say no</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>The instructor doesn’t seem to care if I learn the material</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>The course information seems useless</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The course material is too hard</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.*</td>
<td>Everyone else seems to be cheating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>In danger of losing scholarship because of low grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Don’t have time to study because I’m working to pay for school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>People sitting around me made no effort to protect their work</td>
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*Tied


A part of the student’s permanent record and can only be expunged if he completes a six-week integrity seminar, and if the student honor council agrees. Each student applying to Maryland must write an essay about academic integrity and sign an honor pledge, but it does not have a “non-toleration clause,” requiring students to report cheating they observe. “When we researched it, we found that the vast majority of students on campuses with strict honor codes simply weren’t following the non-toleration clause,” Pavela says.

According to a 1999 survey by McCabe, only 6 percent of students at schools with traditional honor codes reported that they cheated repeatedly, compared with 10 percent at schools with a modified honor code and 17 percent at schools without honor codes.

Should educators be more aggressive in stopping cheating?

A U.S. News & World Report poll last fall found that 90 percent of college students say cheaters never get punished, and 95 percent of confessed cheaters in the Who’s Who poll said they were never caught. Moreover, nearly a third of the 1,000 faculty members from 21 different campuses interviewed by McCabe for his fall 1999 survey admitted that they had observed cheating in their classes and did nothing about it.

“The culture of academic integrity on many campuses seems to have declined,” McCabe says, adding that one out of four universities do not have a written academic-integrity policy, or it is not readily available to students.

“Students arrive at college generally ready to follow the rules, believing that the atmosphere will be tougher on cheaters than it was in high school,” he says. But the minute the new students see cheating going
on and professors ignoring it, they feel that they have to cheat too, in order to compete, he says. “Then cheating spreads like wildfire.”

Middle and high school teachers “absolutely should be doing more” to curtail cheating, Josephson says. And he doesn’t mince words about why they aren’t. “Teachers are not doing more to stop it because they are irresponsible,” he says. “Since our first report on cheating in 1990, schools have done virtually nothing about the problem.”

Josephson says individual teachers and administrators could do many things that would easily cut the cheating rate in half. “This is not an intractable problem,” he says. “We know what works.”

Kerkvliet agrees. “We can’t blame everything on lazy students with poor morals,” he says. “If professors exercise controls, they can have an effect on the amount of cheating going on.”

In a 1998 study, Kerkvliet found that cheating on exams could be significantly reduced if professors simply used multiple versions of a test, hired additional proctors and warned students that cheating would not be tolerated.

The single most effective disincentive for cheating, he found, was to stop using graduate assistants to teach. “Having courses taught by full-fledged faculty members reduces the probability of cheating by 32 percent,” he says. Teaching assistants are less experienced, less likely to want to confront a student, or come from countries with different cultural attitudes about cheating, often with strong cultural taboos against interpersonal confrontations, he explains.

Having smaller classes taught by full professors would reduce cheating to nearly zero, he adds, “but there’s been a general reluctance on the part of the faculty and administrators to do anything about this issue.” Throughout the 1990s, cost-cutting college administrators have increasingly hired adjunct and part-time professors to teach students in larger and larger classes.

But classroom teachers point the finger of blame back at cost-conscious administrators or state and county officials. For instance, the NASP’s Tirozzi says, if the state or county provides a standardized test, they alone can provide different versions of the test.

Tom Mooney, president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers, said states actually encourage cheating by refusing to spend money for more test security, like hiring proctors. “They’re doing this dirty and cheap and quick because there’s a lot of political pressure to get these tests in place,” Mooney said. “In what other industry do you have these kinds of stakes put on something and then have them administered by those who will be affected? You’re just asking for it.”

If administrators were more willing to spend money, Jacobson says, they could make tests as secure as college entrance exams or medical and bar exams. For example, after Florida authorities hired a former FBI agent to help beef up bar exam test security, they began using fingerprints and photo IDs to prevent impersonators from taking the exam for someone else. Then they photographed where everybody was sitting, in case there were similarities in the exams of people sitting near each other.

But Hinman of the Values Institute warns against expelling cheaters for a first offense, and other harsh measures. Such “zero tolerance” techniques could actually encourage educators to ignore cheating, he says. “The teacher may perceive the punishment as too harsh or the administrators may not want to throw out the child of a big donor,” he says.

Tirozzi says school officials fear lawsuits by parents if they crack down on cheating. Similarly, fear of litigation or negative publicity often keeps college professors and administrators from pursuing any but the most open-and-shut cases, Maryland’s Pavela says.

However, he notes, faculty fear of lawsuits is a red herring. “There hasn’t been a single case in which a faculty member was held liable for reporting a case of academic dishonesty,” he says. Lawsuits are usually filed against the institution, claiming lack of due process, he says, which is why educators must scrupulously follow proper procedures for reporting cheaters.

Instead of worrying about lawsuits, teachers should make it harder to cheat and make the cost of cheating fairly high, Nucci says. “My students know that if I catch them cheating they get an F in the course,” he says.

Others say professors don’t pursue cheaters more aggressively because it is too time-consuming. Catching and prosecuting a cheater “is a royal pain in the ass,” says Richard Thaler, a professor of behavioral science and economics at the University of Chicago. “Students demand due process, making the time costs of pursuing a cheater very high.”

Professors have too many students, too many classes, too many committee’s, and too many publishing responsibilities and do a lot of advising on the side, explains Bill Chamberlain, a journalism professor at the University of Florida. “Many work more than a 60-hour week, contrary to the common perception,” he says.

Prosecuting cheaters takes “a huge amount of time,” says Chappell Lawson, an assistant professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “And spending time playing ‘gotcha’ with students is not the fastest way to make tenure.”

Besides chasing after tenure, professors are chasing after research grants, leaving little time for chasing
Cheating Is Just a Click Away...

Cheating was once a fairly low-tech undertaking — notes scribbled on your palm, a peek at a classmate’s paper. But in the age of the Internet, cell phones and graphing calculators, cheating has gone high-tech.

“Video cameras can be concealed in a tie-tack,” says Professor Stephen F. Davis of Emporia State University in Kansas, “with a video feed going to someone outside in a van who sends back answers to the test-taker on an alpha-numeric pager.”

Lazy, immoral or overworked students — depending on your view of cheaters’ motivations — also use the vast cyber-library of the Internet, where they can access tests, term papers, foreign-language translators and class notes from major U.S. universities. Students with credit cards can click on the Schoolsucks.com Web page, for instance, and have term papers sent to their e-mail address almost instantaneously.

Technology also allows students to get answers from a friend across the room by simply clicking the screen of a palm pilot. Another popular cheating tool is the graphing calculator, now standard equipment in most higher-math classes. Cheaters program them to display formulas and other information needed during exams. When teachers caught on, they ordered kids to empty the memory of their calculators before taking a test, but some students simply programmed a button next to the actual delete button to say “Memory deleted” when pressed.

“A lot of students are so tuned in to technology ... they can create programs teachers aren’t aware of,” said a spokeswoman for Texas Instruments in Dallas, which makes the most popular graphing calculator. “A lot depends on the teacher and what he knows about technology.”

Moreover, high-tech cheating is apparently a global phenomenon, say Harold J. Noah and Max A. Eckstein in their forthcoming book, Fraud and Education: The Worm in the Apple. For instance, during military exams in Thailand, soldiers vying for promotion to non-commissioned status hid radio-controlled receivers and batteries in their underwear. And in Australia, frustrated educators have proposed banning students’ use of all technological aids, such as preprogrammed calculators, pagers and mobile phones.

Perhaps the most common form of high-tech cheating is the so-called “new plagiarism” — downloading excerpts or entire essays from either legitimate Internet document sources or from scores of Web-based term-paper mills, some of which offer term papers for free. Big spenders can even order customized papers at up to $35 a page.

Advertising directed at college students supports the Web sites. And while dozens of states now make it illegal to knowingly distribute term papers that will be used illicitly, the laws are poorly enforced, and the Web site operators argue they are entitled to free-speech protections. Many of the operators also claim, disingenuously, that their papers are meant only for research and should not be submitted as the student’s own work, even as they offer to include the student’s name, course name and class period on the cover sheet of custom-ordered papers.

“Some of them will even customize your bibliography to coincide with books in your university’s library,” says Anthony Krier, the research librarian at Franklin Pierce College in Rindge, N.H., an expert on Internet plagiarism.

In recent years, cyber-cheating has been on the increase at several prestigious universities. In 1997, Virginia Tech registered 280 cheating complaints, up from 80 the previous year, and in 1998 officials at Boston University went to court, unsuccessfully, charging on-line term-paper mills with violating mail fraud and racketeering laws.

Some educators think more cyber-cheating goes on in high school than in college. “High school teachers are generally clueless about Internet plagiarizing,” says Donald McCabe, founder of the Durham, N.C.-based Center for Academic Integrity, which promotes anti-cheating campaigns on more than 200 college campuses. “And the quality of the papers is sufficient to get by in a high school course. But for college, the quality of Internet papers is crap.”

But high school teachers are catching on. Scott Underbrink, who teaches French and Russian at Natrona County High School in Casper, Wyo., wised up about Internet cheating after students began turning in translations exceeding even his own abilities. Native French-speakers would have been put to shame by some of the grammatical nuances the students used, he said.

“I can’t prove it, but I can stop it... The writing [assignments] are going to be in class from now on,” he said.

Krier says students today think information found on the Internet is in the public domain. “They feel that if they get it off the Internet, it’s different from taking it out of a book,” he says.

Cheaters, says Daniel Garrison, chairman of the Undergraduate Academic Conduct Committee at Northwestern University. “The more time faculty spends on research and personal career development, the less time they have for writing up fresh exams.”

This is particularly true at large state universities and research institutions, where research grants buy relief from teaching duties, he says. “Then classes end up being taught by graduate students and part-time professors, increasing the cheating opportunities.”

Schwartz says professors are not rewarded by administrators for catching cheaters. “There is nothing in
...For Today's High-Tech Students

Lawrence M. Hinman, director of the Values Institute at the University of San Diego, says the Internet makes cheating easier because it’s fast and private. “There is no public shame in asking somebody for a paper,” he says. And it can be done in the privacy of your own room. “You can download a paper at 2 a.m. and hand it in at 8.”

Much of the new plagiarism apparently occurs because students are either overworked, or they procrastinated and got too far behind. “Many students who plagiarize from the Web do so at the last minute,” Hinman says. “Five years ago, if they had let an assignment go that long they couldn’t have done anything.” In the old days, when term papers were offered in tiny ads buried in student newspapers, even plagiarism required planning ahead.

Hinman points out that some cyber-cheating may be unintentional. “With ‘drag and drop’ capabilities, it’s easy to plagiarize if you start gathering data on the Web, and several weeks later you’re not sure which of your notes are yours and which came from an on-line source, especially if you forgot to write down the URL,” he says.

Fighting back

To help teachers and professors fight digital plagiarism, at least three services now offer to scan papers, like a search engine, for plagiarized passages. Professors at the University of California, Berkeley, developed plagiarism.org and Turnitin.com. A former writing instructor from the University of Illinois, Chicago, offers the Glatt Plagiarism Screening Program, at plagiarism.com.

The programs worked well for two Wyoming teachers who became suspicious about work that did not match their students’ styles or abilities. “One of them knew about plagiarism.com, and they ran it,” said Natrona County High School Principal Byron Moore. “Sure enough, there were all kinds of matches.”

But others say such services aren’t foolproof. “I don’t think the anti-plagiarism services are that effective,” Krier says. “There are just too many sources that can be plagiarized.

Some educators are also fighting back against the newest trend in cyber-cheating — downloading lecture notes from more than a dozen on-line services, like Versity.com and StudentU.com, which pay students for their class notes. Such services allow students who miss (or skip) class to search a data bank, usually for free, containing course notes from a variety of major universities. The operators of Versity.com say their site currently lists course notes for 90 campuses from 4,000 note-takers.

Some educators shrug off the services and even provide their lecture notes to them for free. But others, like Purdue University sociology Professor Mathieu Deflem, argue that the companies violate copyright laws protecting professors’ lectures. Deflem’s Web page, Free Education Now!, lists case law he says supports that premise. He also blasts on-line companies for their lack of quality control, pointing out that Versity.com, was founded by four 22-year-old college dropouts, “who wanted to have fun, it seems, playing with computers.”

Educators fear that unless something is done to nip high-tech cheating in the bud, it will only get worse. “When these junior high and high school kids who’ve acquired these habits get to college, you will see higher levels of Internet cheating,” McCabe says. “Not many schools are using the anti-plagiarism programs, and it’s not clear that it is completely effective. I’m not convinced that it will stop it.”

In the view of recent Yale graduate John Hickman, the only real solution may be as simple — and expensive — as having smaller classes. “Having spent millions of dollars wiring their students to the Internet, universities may have to invest in smaller classes and a better teacher-to-student ratio,” he writes. “That may be the only way to keep on-line plagiarism at the fringes, where it belongs.”

Their contract that says they must produce honest, trustworthy students,” he says. “What gets measured is what gets emphasized; and we don’t measure whether teachers are taking this issue seriously. So our teachers don’t think that we as a society are taking this issue seriously.”

Others say they’d rather spend the hours that would be taken up pursuing a cheating allegation helping their honest students who are interested in learning, McCabe says.

Leo Damrosch, a professor of English literature at Harvard, tries to make it hard for students to cheat in his class by giving assignments unique to his courses, making it

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4 Ibid.
heating has been around as long as there have been examinations. More than a thousand years ago, civil service applicants in China were searched for crib sheets before entering the exam rooms. Test-takers, who had to write compositions, were locked into tiny, individual cells with enough food and water for three days. But some were caught smuggling in elaborate “cribbing garments” — rented undershirts inscribed with more than 700 complete compositions, composed of nearly half a million Chinese characters.7

In the United States, teaching morals to children in public schools was one way to keep cheating in check. President Theodore Roosevelt supported moral education, declaring, “To educate a man in mind and not morals is to educate a menace to society.”8

In fact, teaching morals was a major part of children’s education in America until the second half of the 20th century. Colonial schools were first established to teach children to read so they could study the Bible. Even as late as the 1920s, the nation’s most widely used schoolbooks, McGuffey’s Readers, were filled with Bible stories and moral lessons.

But attitudes about religion in schools began to change during the 1960s, after the Supreme Court ruled that school prayer and Bible readings were unconstitutional. Many teachers interpreted the ruling as outlawing moral education altogether, and traditional moral instruction began disappearing from public schools.9

In earlier eras, Southern American culture — much like contemporary Middle Eastern and Asian cultures — valued the integrity of the family name above all else, Schwartz says. “That’s why you didn’t cheat in those societies,” he says. “In the South, you gave your word as a gentleman. Today shame is no longer a moral motivator in most of this country, and it’s a great loss.”

There’s still a greater sense of honor in the South than in the rest of the country, he says. For instance, he points out, the University of Virginia and the University of South Carolina have a long history of honor codes.

But even the Southern culture of honor was rocked by the radical sociological upheavals of the 1960s — the antiwar movement, struggles over minority and civil rights and the sexual revolution. Those movements shattered public assumptions about what morals were accepted and expected by the community. “The adults lost a sense of certainty about what values the community cherished,” says Ryan of Boston University. “There was no longer a collective, clear vision of what was right or wrong.”

Values Confusion

Then in the 1970s, the Watergate political scandal “showed that the nation’s leadership was equally confused about values,” he says. At the same time, “cultural relativism” swept the country, announcing that it was OK to “do your own thing” as long as it didn’t hurt others, but that it was not OK to make value judgments about other people’s behavior.

In the midst of all this “values confusion,” Ryan says, educators “quietly and definitely stepped back from teaching kids what was morally right and became ‘information transmitters.’ We were there simply to explain mathematics or American history. Any involvement in kids’ moral or ethical lives was at our own risk.”

An offshoot of “cultural relativism” was the “values clarification” movement, which dictated that teachers were to allow students to determine their own values through guided discussions. But teachers were to act merely as moderators — without declaring what is right or wrong.10

“During the 70s and 80s, values clarification was the biggest movement in the education field,” Ryan says. “You couldn’t go to a workshop or conference without hearing about it.”

But when researchers began finding that the programs were ineffective, values clarification lost its appeal. “Parents would go to school boards and say, ‘You mean my kids can go through values clarification and still believe in cheating and lying?’” recalls James S. Leming, a professor at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and an expert on evaluating values-education programs.11

Continued on p. 759
**Chronology**

**1700s-1800s**
*Moral education with strong Christian overtones is an integral part of American public schooling.*

**1900s**
“Progressive” educator John Dewey challenges the use of moral tales to teach students character.

**1918**

**1960s**
In the wake of the antiwar movement, the sexual revolution and struggles over civil rights, American society increasingly views ethics as a matter of personal choice. Attitudes about prayer and moral instruction in public schools begin to change following U.S. Supreme Court ruling on school prayer.

**1962**
Supreme Court rules in *Engel v. Vitale* that daily prayer in New York state public schools violates constitutional separation between church and state. Many teachers respond by avoiding discussions of morals.

**1966**
“Values clarification” becomes a popular method of teaching morals, in which teachers are urged to help students “clarify” their values without being judgmental.

**1970s-1980s**
Cultural relativism sweeps the country but eventually fades from popularity along with values clarification. Youth violence and school discipline problems skyrocket. Several public school systems resume teaching values, but without religious overtones.

**1982**
In Baltimore, a countywide values-education program is established based on 24 common moral values from the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

**1990s-2000s**
Studies show widespread cheating. Teachers and students are caught cheating on high-stakes standardized tests after states begin linking test results to teacher bonuses and student promotions and graduation. Pressure mounts for character education and honor codes.

**1992**
A consortium of colleges launches the Center for Academic Integrity to promote academic honesty and honor codes on campuses. Josephson Institute of Ethics convenes educators to draft a statement endorsing character education. It becomes the basis of the Character Counts! program.

**Feb. 5, 1993**
Education groups form Character Education Partnership to promote character education.

**1994**
Congress provides money for character education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

**1995**
Students at Chicago’s Steinmetz High School are caught cheating to win a statewide academic championship. Alabama begins requiring at least 10 minutes a day of values education.

**Jan. 23, 1996**
President Clinton endorses character education in his State of the Union address.

**1998**
Educators begin acknowledging that students are plagiarizing papers using Internet sources and on-line “term-paper mills.” Boston University unsuccessfully sues the services. Study finds various classroom security methods can significantly reduce cheating.

**1999**
Center for Academic Integrity finds that only 6 percent of students from schools with traditional honor codes cheat repeatedly, compared with 10 percent at schools with a modified honor code and 17 percent at schools without honor codes.

**2000**
In cheating scandals around the country, teachers are caught helping or ordering students to cheat on statewide, standardized tests.
Developing Nations Face ‘Rampant’ Cheating

Academic cheating may seem widespread in the U.S., but it is even worse in many other countries — and sometimes occurs at the point of a gun.

“Indeed, in some countries, cheating during even the most important exams appears to be almost the norm,” says Harold J. Noah, a professor emeritus at Columbia University’s Teachers College.

Students in countries with civil unrest are often coerced to cheat — sometimes under threat of violence, according to Gregory J. Cizek, a professor of education at the University of North Carolina. In 1990, for example, exam-takers in the Kashmir province in India showed up with AK-47 assault rifles, pistols and hand grenades. “Ph.D.s were doing exams for 16-year-olds, and no one dared complain,” said a news report.

In 1997, widespread cheating at three Nigerian universities included concealing source materials in headscarves or skirts, using walkie-talkies to get correct answers from helpers and bribing proctors. In 1998, test-takers in Moscow received answers to essay questions via their pagers.

Noah and Max A. Eckstein, authors of Fraud and Education: The Worm in the Apple, found that “fraud in education is absolutely rampant on the Indian subcontinent and in many African countries.” And in several countries, including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa, “students caught cheating had better not be punished, or the teacher might be beaten up,” Noah says.

“Wherever an educational credential is very important economically, the incentive to cheat is greater than when there are many other avenues to success available,” he says, especially in countries where teachers and other civil servants overseeing tests may be paid only a few dollars a month.

Cizek reports that, just as in the United States, teachers as well as students in other countries are being caught cheating:

• Ten teachers at the Guiteras pre-university school in Havana, Cuba, were jailed in 1987 for accepting bribes to help students falsify exams.
• Fifty teachers were fired in 1995 after a cheating incident in Bangladesh. A teacher who spoke out against the cheating was hacked to death by angry students.
• During the inaugural national tests for 11-year-olds in Britain in 1995, teachers assigned test questions as homework and wrote answers on the blackboards during the test. The test results — like many U.S. high-stakes tests — were being used to develop school performance reports.

Cheating is defined differently in various countries, so international comparisons on cheating rates must be interpreted cautiously, Cizek writes. For instance, because no study shows college students overseas admitting to cheating as much as U.S. students (80 percent or more), “It may be that U.S. students are either the most dishonest in the international community — or simply the most honest about their dishonesty,” he writes.

In many other countries cheating is considerably more acceptable than in the United States, Cizek points out, even when it is perceived as wrong. For instance, a 1984 study of Russian student attitudes toward cheating found that “even students who recognize behaviors as inappropriate . . . nonetheless judge [them] as acceptable.”

Thus, as the United States moves toward a more multicultural society, Cizek concludes, those seeking to prevent cheating must understand the various perceptions about cheating held by test-takers from different cultural backgrounds. Otherwise, school administrators could face a situation like that described by educator W.P. Cordiero. At an unnamed U.S. university, he wrote, more than 50 foreign students from the same country were caught passing notes and signaling each other.

The students acknowledged the activities but said it wasn’t cheating. In their country, people are viewed as a “brother” in an extended family. “Each ‘brother’ was expected to assist other brothers,” Cordiero writes.

Researchers discovered similar attitudes among American-born minorities. In two different studies, high-achieving black and Hispanic students argued that their actions were justified because cheating was a pragmatic way for poor students to improve their socioeconomic status or because helping other students was their responsibility.

As the U.S. student population becomes more diversified, it is important for educators and administrators to communicate to students that cheating is not OK in American schools, educators say.

It is also important to tighten up security on test-takers. The Educational Testing Service (ETS), which gives millions of college and graduate school entrance exams each year, says it has tightened procedures both here and abroad. In China and India, for example, exams are now given via computers in separate testing carrels. The tests are videotaped, and test takers must present photo IDs before taking a test.

“We have our name and credibility to protect,” says Ray Nicosia, head of ETS security. “Our job is to stay ahead of the cheating curve.”

2Ibid., pp. 77-78.
3Ibid., p. 89.
Today, even leaders of the movement think it was a mistake. “I’m sorry to say we denigrated the direct teaching of traditional civic values,” says Howard Kirschenbaum, who co-authored a values clarification handbook. “History clearly shows that was a very bad assumption,” because learning values doesn’t happen unless society consciously works at teaching those values.”

But the experiment left in indelible mark on teachers, who became much more timid about telling students that certain values or behaviors were wrong. “It was much easier for young teachers, who had been themselves educated through a values-neutral curriculum, to teach their own students the same way,” Ryan says. “As a result, those teachers suffer in schools where children are disrespectful of one another and of school authorities, and the teachers don’t have any moral authority.”

Thomas Lickona, a professor of education at State University of New York, Cortland, says that the self-esteem movement, which was also popular at the time, helped make teachers reluctant to tell students their judgment about something was wrong. “There was a great deal of fear that any criticism would damage a child’s self-esteem,” he says.

**Feminism and Multiculturalism**

Just about the time that public schools began creating a values vacuum, they were inundated with new immigrants — many with very different cultural values about cheating. And many all-male colleges and universities began admitting female students.

In response, educators began stressing multiculturalism and women’s rights. “As a result of the stress on tolerance during the past two decades, things are definitely better today than in the 1950s for women and minorities,” says Josephson of the Josephson Institute. “But in the rush to teach tolerance, we let the integrity lessons fall by the wayside.”

Schwartz agrees. “Today, tolerance seems to trump all other values on college campuses, including honesty,” he says. “I’m not one who wants to turn back the clock to the 1950s, when blacks didn’t have the right to vote, but we had less cheating. But we sort of threw out the baby with the bathwater, and we have to retrieve it.”

Paradoxically, high-stakes testing is lowering education standards — not raising them, he says. “The real cheating going on in education reform is by those who are cheating students out of an authentic education by turning schools into giant test-prep centers,” Kohn says. Every hour spent drilling students to ace statewide exams is an hour not spent teaching them to become creative, critical and curious learners, he complains.

Rather than focusing on students who cheat, society should be concerned about the whole range of cheating committed by adults in the name of education reform, he says. Administrators “play a variety of games” to raise their schools’ scores, he says. They encourage low achievers to drop out of school or stay home on test days, channel poor achievers into special-education classes exempt from high-stakes tests, or ignore meaningful curriculum to drill students on test materials. “It’s outrageous,” he says. “Even if it works, it compromises the validity of the tests as a measure of what’s going on in the school.”

Critics claim that in some states, cheating is a backlash to tests perceived as unfair because they are given without first spending money to retrain teachers in the material being tested or to realign the classroom curriculum to match the material on the tests.

Sacks, the author of the book on standardized testing, calls it unconscionable when politicians order students to be tested but don’t give failing schools any more money until they improve test scores. Such an approach is tantamount to setting up the public schools to fail, which he says is the real agenda of the testing advocates. If school failure rates can be quantified by test scores, he says, school critics can justify privatizing public education through use of vouchers.

By pushing rote memorization and test-prep, high schools are producing graduates who are more likely to...
Honor-Code College Students Say They Cheat Less

Twice as many students at colleges without honor codes said they cheated compared with students at schools with codes. But researchers question whether honor codes actually discourage cheating — or just make students less willing to admit it.

% of Students Admitting Cheating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheating Behavior</th>
<th>Schools With Honor Code</th>
<th>Schools Without Honor Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copied from another student on exam</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped another student cheat on exam</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used crib notes on exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To生产企业，因为对于大学水平的工作，Sacks says. “Professors tell me students are arriving at college expecting a cook-book approach to education, with everything spelled out for them in worksheets and drills. It’s a shock to these kids when they learn that everything will not be spoon-fed to them in multiple-choice tests that review a certain page in the book.”

Overreliance on multiple-choice tests also encourages cheating, he says, because they’re easier to cheat on. When other countries give rigorous high-stakes tests they generally give essay-style tests, which tends to rule out the kind of easy cheating seen on American tests, he says. Indeed, Sacks notes, “Multiple-choice, machine-scorable tests are known in Europe as ‘American-style tests.’”

It all comes down to money, test critics say. It costs less to use computer-graded standardized tests to assess large numbers of kids than to use multiple, hand-graded assessments. It also costs more to have classes small enough so teachers know their students’ capabilities well enough to immediately spot a plagiarized paper, says Sizer at the Coalition of Essential Schools. Having students orally defend their papers also discourages cheating, he says, but it takes time, which cost-cutting school boards are reluctant to fund.

But others, like Tirozzi of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, say eliminating high-stakes standardized testing just because some kids cheat would amount to “throwing the baby out with the bathwater.” Out of 15,000 school districts in the country, only a tiny number of students and teachers have been involved in cheating scandals, he points out.

Nonetheless, he adds, if administrators or teachers are cheating, “they should be punished and punished severely,” especially if the test is fair and aligned with the curriculum and the state standards. Non-aligned tests, however, are “an exercise in futility,” and should be done away with, he says. “But under no circumstances is it OK for the teacher to cheat.”

If a test isn’t fair, “there are other ways to protest than cheating,” Tirozzi says. “That’s why we have school boards and state boards of education.”

Noah agrees that high-stakes tests should not be eliminated just because some teachers are cheating. “After all, the answer to business corruption is not to do away with strict accounting standards,” he says.

Defending the Tests

Education reform proponent Chester E. Finn, Jr., president of the conservative Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and a fellow at the Manhattan Institute, says abolishing testing because of cheating would be like abandoning the Olympics just because a few athletes take performance-enhancing drugs. “The remedy is to have secure tests,” he says. Any high-stakes test creates temptation to cut corners, he says. “We’re all tempted to break the speed limit. That’s why we have policemen waiting with radar.”

Cheating is not OK even if a high-stakes test isn’t aligned with the classroom curriculum, he says. “Sure everybody should have a full opportunity to learn,” he says. Tests are one way of “smoking out those schools that lack the necessary instructional resources or procedures,” he says. In the meantime, there is bound to be “some fallout,” he says, admitting that many states need to both improve their state academic standards and align their curriculums with those standards.

Finn admits that some states erroneously think that education reform will happen automatically without adding funding. “But you have an equal number of states who have been dumping money into their education systems without monitoring the results,” he says. “That’s also wrong.”

The solution is not to throw out the tests, he says, but to institute good standards, aligned curriculums, consequences for both students and adults and tighter test security.

And, just as the anti-test folks think their opponents have a hidden agenda, Finn also thinks his opponents have ulterior motives. “The true agenda is to smoke out those schools that lack alignment with the state standards and align their curriculums with those standards.”

Continued on p. 762
Should high-stakes tests be abolished in order to reduce cheating?

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WRITTEN FOR THE CQ RESEARCHER, SEPTEMBER 2000

ntense pressures to raise test scores for “accountability” have led directly to increased cheating by teachers and administrators. Why? Because “high-stakes” testing — to decide student promotion or graduation, or to reward or punish schools — sends the message that test scores are the most important goal of education.

Overt cheating, however, is only “the canary in the mine.” It warns us of a much greater danger: High-stakes exams are turning schools into little more than test-coaching programs.

Teaching to tests is becoming rampant across the nation. First, schools drop important content areas that are not on state exams. Next, daily instruction comes to resemble testing. Then teachers coach their students with questions that are very close in content and format to those on the test. Finally, some teachers provide the exact questions. We all recognize the last step as “cheating,” but each of these steps cheats students out of a rich and meaningful education.

Focusing on exam scores causes the elimination of art, music, recess and physical education, and it can prevent some students from learning to read, write and do math. In Texas, for example, many low-income children who get acceptable test scores in reading cannot really read. They have been trained to hunt for key words in a short passage in order to respond to test questions.

Similarly, writing instruction often is reduced to a five-paragraph canned exercise to fit exam requirements that’s useless for any other writing. Meanwhile, history and science teachers are required to provide test preparation in reading and math instead of teaching their own subjects. Students across the nation are being driven out of school, retained in grade or placed in special education solely in order to improve school scores.

Test-driven schooling also cheats the public and fails as accountability. Because teaching to the test creates score inflation — gains from coaching and cheating that do not represent real learning — the public cannot tell how well schools are doing, even by the limited measure of standardized tests.

We could reduce overt cheating by focusing on security, making schools more like jails. A bad solution in its own right, this does nothing to address the larger problem.

Testing has not, cannot and will not induce high-quality education, but it does encourage cheating, both overt and covert. To address these problems, we must radically de-emphasize testing and rethink accountability.

CHESTER E. FINN JR.
JOHN M. OLIN FELLOW, MANHATTAN INSTITUTE
WRITTEN FOR THE CQ RESEARCHER, SEPTEMBER 2000

hould the Olympics be abolished because eager athletes may try to boost their chances by taking drugs? Should elections be done away with because unscrupulous politicians may seek to rig them?

The fact is that every high-stakes human endeavor — one where success brings reward and failure brings unhappiness — carries incentives to finagle the outcome. It’s human nature — just like the impulse to slack off where there are no consequences at all. Do we really think world athletics would be taken as seriously — or that athletes would strive as hard as they do — if there were no quadrennial Olympics?

So, too, with education. Where it doesn’t matter, it isn’t taken seriously. Where learning is not prized, little of it occurs. Where test results don’t count, nobody gets worked up about them. Attach consequences, however, and they become important to do well on. And they invite finagling.

We’ve known this forever. That’s why college entrance tests such as the S.A.T. are proctored — and why a lively industry exists to help people do well on them.

As state-level academic standards gain traction, as standards-based education reform begins to get serious and as tests are relied on as key indicators of whether standards are, in fact, being met, we must expect that people will exploit opportunities to rig the results. Does that mean tests should be done away with? Hardly. (A very different question is whether test scores alone should determine high-stakes consequences for youngsters. I think not.)

Keep in mind that standards-based reform — today’s main strategy for improving U.S. education, endorsed by governors, business leaders and public opinion — is meant to alter the behavior of educators and students. (If it doesn’t affect their teaching and learning, it surely won’t change their results!)

A lot of teachers don’t like that. Some just don’t want to change. Others resist “behaviorist” methods on principle. Some are lazy or unscrupulous. What we’re seeing in recent cheating episodes are those people trying to finagle their results in the short run and quash standards-based reform itself over the long run. They’re wrong, however, and it would be wrong to throw out the standards baby just because of the dirty bathwater in which he is occasionally immersed. Better test security is the proper response. Plus, of course, good tests aligned to worthy standards!
CHEATING IN SCHOOLS

Continued from p. 760

some states. In the last year, high-stakes test critics have been heartened by a sprinkling of protests. Wisconsin moved away from using them after parents protested, and in Massachusetts hundreds of students boycotted statewide, standardized tests last spring. Louisiana and Arizona recently delayed their state exam requirements for a year.

“I think policy-makers are beginning to realize that school improvement is more than simply demanding it and enforcing it with a test,” says Glen Cutlip, senior policy analyst at the National Education Association.

Preventive Measures

Schools and colleges around the country are cracking down on cheating — tightening security, giving different versions of the same exam, walking the aisles during testing, switching teaching staffs on standardized test days and changing seating arrangements.

Some colleges are requiring students caught cheating to perform community service, and several large state universities — including Penn State, University of Denver, University of California, Davis, and Kansas State — are adopting modified honor codes like the University of Maryland’s.

States are also working to align their tests to classroom curriculum. “If the tests are considered a fair evaluation of what the students have actually been taught in the classroom, it’ll get rid of a lot of the motivation for cheating,” Sacks says.

And some schools and even colleges are switching from relying solely on multiple-choice tests to using portfolios of students’ work to make decisions about graduation, promotion and college entrance, Cizek says. And to discourage plagiarism, some teachers and professors are collecting notes, outlines and rough drafts along with finished essays.

Character Education Gains

Supporters

Hundreds of school districts around the country are also bringing values-based instruction back into the classroom. For instance, the Chicago school system has instituted a character-education initiative that incorporates 10 values — including honesty, truthfulness, caring, courtesy and courage — into lessons and assignments.

Six years ago, the Josephson Institute launched Character Counts!, a program that started out with 27 organizations agreeing to promote ethical values in a non-sectarian, apolitical way. Today, 422 school districts, sports organizations and YMCAs participate.

“The character-education movement is growing fast,” says Plachta of the Character Education Partnership. Forty-eight states now address character education in one way or another, she says, prompted partly by the 1998 mass murder at Colorado’s Columbine High School. 15

“After Columbine, people started clambering for something other than metal detectors, which they knew was only a short-term fix,” she says. “Character education is a long-term solution that will get to the heart of the matter.” She says schools with character-education programs are seeing declines in violence, disrespect, bullying and cheating.

Ryan of Boston University predicts the movement will continue to grow, and he suspects that much of the push for charter schools, vouchers and home schooling is motivated by parents’ desire that their children be educated in a moral environment.

Maryland’s Pavela says colleges are also instituting character-education programs. “The whole movement is shifting from middle and high schools to college campuses,” he says.

OUTLOOK

More Cheating?

Some educators say cheating on college campuses will probably increase — at least in the short term. “Left unchecked, that’s the direction we’re headed,” says Hinman at the Values Institute.

Garrison at Northwestern is equally pessimistic. “It’s not a hopeful picture,” he says. “We are in an amoral culture right now, moving away from the right direction.”

Others think cheating will increase as the consequences of high-stakes tests go into effect and more kids and schools start failing. “We’ll start seeing huge numbers of kids failing to complete high school and probably more cheating in the process,” says FairTest’s Hartke.

Kerkvliet of Oregon State University says cheating at universities will probably increase as administrators continue to hire adjunct and temporary faculty members, and as they offer more distance-learning courses. “Right now, it’s impossible to know who’s taking a test in a distance-learning course,” he says.

Distance education is merely an extension of the large, anonymous, 500-student undergraduate classes where cheating is common, says Hinman, except that lectures will be available on-line and questions will be handled by e-mail. “The personal relationship will be even more diminished,” he says, “because you won’t even physically see the students.”
Others say cheating will escalate if voucher advocates are successful in establishing programs allowing public school students to attend private schools using public tax money. If education is privatized, parents and students will become consumers, and schools will sell themselves based on their standardized test scores, says Kohn. “Schools will be more inclined to turn a blind eye to cheating if it raises test scores,” he says.

In the long run, some observers say, if cheating is not brought under control, both democracy and the fundamental competence of society could be undermined, because people will be unable to trust in the competence of their doctors, engineers, lawyers or merchants. “It will eventually undermine the argument in favor of a democracy run by its citizens,” says Sizer at the Coalition of Essential Schools.

Hinman argues that trust is fundamental to the social, political and economic fabric of any successful society. Economists have found that societies where there is no trust outside of the family unit usually hit a developmental glass ceiling, he says. “Without trust in public and business institutions outside the family, an economy stops developing after a certain point,” he says.

Others, like Boston University’s Ryan, warn that if public schools don’t start teaching character development, the public may abandon the values-free public schools for institutions that place a greater emphasis on morality and good behavior. However, he is optimistic that the public schools will get their act together.

“We are, at heart, a very moral society,” he says. “We’ve just gone through a lot of wrenching changes in the last 30 years. All of us — political leaders, parents and classroom teachers — need to be much clearer about what we expect from students. We’ve been very confused, so Hollywood and muck sellers have done the teaching for us. We need to take that role back from them.”

But it won’t happen overnight. “It took us a long time to get where we are,” Ryan says. “It will take us a long time to get back to where we were 30 years ago.”

McCabe at the Center for Academic Integrity thinks things are already turn-
People’s behavior can change, he says. “A hundred years ago Jews, women and blacks could not go to most colleges and universities in this nation. That has changed. Now we need to tackle this last issue.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, Box 90434, Durham, N.C. 27708; (919) 660-3045; www.academicintegrity.org. This consortium of 200 colleges and universities provides a forum to identify, affirm and promote the values of academic integrity among students.

Character Education Partnership, 1600 K. St. N.W., Suite 501, Washington, D.C. 20006; (800) 988-8081; www.character.org. This nonpartisan coalition of organizations and individuals is dedicated to developing moral character and civic virtue in the nation’s youth.

Coalition of Essential Schools, 1814 Franklin St., Suite 700, Oakland, Calif. 94612; (510) 433-1451; www.essentialschools.org/. A network of 1,000 schools and 24 regional support centers that helps schools through systematic change.

FairTest, 342 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass. 02139; (617) 864-4810; www.fairtest.org. The National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest) works to end the abuses, misuses and flaws of standardized testing and ensure that evaluation of students and workers is fair, open and educationally sound.

Josephson Institute of Ethics, 4640 Admiralty Way, Suite 1001, Marina del Rey, Calif. 90292-6610; (310) 306-1868; www.josephsoninstitute.org. This nonprofit group established the Character Counts! Coalition, a popular program promoting character education in schools and community groups.

National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, Va. 20191-1537; 703) 860-0200; www.nassp.org. The NASSP promotes excellence in school leadership to Congress, the administration, the news media and general public.

John Templeton Foundation, P.O. Box 8322, Radnor, Pa. 19087-8322; (610) 687-8942; www.templeton.org. This nonprofit, grant-making organization encourages appreciation for all peoples and cultures; supports studies that demonstrate a progressive approach to learning; and promotes a high standard of excellence in scholarships and character.

Notes

1 For background, see Kathy Koch, "National Education Standards," The CQ Researcher, May 14, 1999, pp. 401-424.
5 See the center’s Web site at www.academicintegrity.org/research.asp.
7 Gregory J. Cizek, Cheating on Tests: How to Do It, Detect It and Prevent It (1999), p. 75.
8 Quoted in Boston University press release accompanying Character Education Manifest, April 3, 1996.
9 Beginning in 1962, the Supreme Court issued a series of rulings on school prayer and Bible reading, starting with its decision in Engel v. Vitale that the daily prayer in New York public schools violated the constitutional separation between church and state. See Kenneth Jost, "Religion in Schools," The CQ Researcher, Feb. 18, 1994, pp. 145-168.
10 For background, see Sarah Glazer, "Teaching Values," The CQ Researcher, June 21, 1996, pp. 529-552.
11 Ibid., p. 543.
12 Quoted in Glazer, op. cit., p. 542.
13 Ibid.
Books

A University of North Carolina professor takes an in-depth look at cheating in the United States and around the world and offers recommendations on how to stop it.

Two emeritus professors discuss dishonesty in academia at home and abroad, of, from fraudulent research to faked credentials and fabricated academic papers.

Education researcher Sacks argues that America's over-emphasis on standardized testing does little to improve education but merely punishes the poor and disadvantaged and waters down curricula nationwide.

Articles

Two scholars of comparative education report that cheating has become ubiquitous among students, faculty and administrators at all educational levels. They blame competitive pressures and new technology.

Fritz details a shift in attitudes among today’s students, fostered by the vast array of information available on the Internet about what constitutes plagiarism. Cutting and pasting passages from the Web into a school report, he writes, “doesn’t seem nearly as nefarious as pilfering a passage from a library book.”

Glazer takes an in-depth look at the return to character education in schools after it fell by the wayside during the 1960s and '70s.

Reporter Johnson discusses how the students involved in the Steinmetz High School cheating scandal in Chicago have no regrets about cheating — only about getting caught.

A cover story on cheating looks at the scope and reasons for the increase in cheating around the country.

Reporter Matthews links the spate of teacher-cheating scandals around the country with the rise in high-stakes standardized testing.

Saying that colleges and universities haven't done nearly enough to combat cheating, two experts outline areas administrators should address.

Roberts discusses a recent cheating scandal in Ohio in which the teachers’ union complained that states encourage cheating by rushing to impose high-stakes tests without first beefing up test security.

An education researcher argues that high-stakes tests put too much pressure on students and teachers and are a poor substitute for quality teaching and strong curricula.

Many college and university professors turn a blind eye to students who cheat, contending it’s not worth the trouble to file formal complaints because school judicial systems are “laborious, even labyrinthine” and punishments rarely match the crime.
**Academic Integrity**


Dartmouth College was back to normal, having survived a major cheating scandal that jolted the Hanover, N.H., campus. Authorities have exonerated 78 students who were accused of plagiarism in an introductory computer science course. The scandal rocked the Ivy League college whose fabled honor code is so rigorous that some classmates will not even let others peer at their notes.


How have we arrived at a point where student cheating has become a firmly rooted part of life in our high schools? Two years ago, Sunny Hills High School in Fullerton, Calif., tossed 13 top students from the National Honor Society for cheating in a high school philosophy course. The same school has been back in the news with the disclosure that about a dozen honors students have been disciplined for using e-mail to share information on a history final.


One freshman at Boston’s Northeastern University has been suspended and 19 others have been ordered to take a course on academic integrity after they pleaded guilty to cheating before a university disciplinary board. According to university officials, the students exploited a glitch on an Internet-based homework assignment for an introductory physics class. The school’s judicial affairs committee cleared eight other students. The students admitted to rigging WebAssign.net, a popular homework Internet site that colleges use. It promises to prevent cheating, reduce grading errors and eliminate monotonous work for professors.


A recent poll in Orange County, Calif., on academic cheating was more a reminder of a continuing problem than a shocking revelation. Many studies in recent years have reported that cheating in school is pervasive across the nation, and the survey conducted this fall found adults concerned with the pervasive culture of academic cheating that they believe exists around them. There also was evidence in the recent local survey research of a considerable gray area where students are helped by parents to help them get ahead.


A slew of recent reports suggests that cheating has become the rule, not the exception. A survey by *Who’s Who Among High School Students* found that 80 percent of high achievers have sneaked a peek during exams or otherwise turned in work that was not their own. And more than 75 percent of college students will make a similar transgression at least once during their undergraduate years, suggests a study by the Center for Academic Integrity, a consortium of colleges and universities founded in 1992 to address the issue.


A poll of more than 3,000 students listed in *Who’s Who Among High School Students* — the cream of our scholastic crop — revealed that 80 percent had engaged in academic cheating and thought cheating was commonplace. Moreover, most saw cheating as a minor infraction. “Surely this couldn’t be correct, I thought,” Raspberry writes.


Grappling for ways to halt the spread of plagiarism and other cheating in college, professors often get stuck on the idea that it’s too late to change students’ behavior by the time they reach college. But a growing number of campus, backed by new research, are out to prove otherwise. Education experts and other ethicists say students can change their ways if colleges clearly demand honesty, engage students in ethical issues and put them in charge of enforcement.

**The Internet and Cheating**


Gregg Colton likes to recall a minor case of dejá vu that he was forced to endure a couple of years ago. The private investigator and former director of test security for an examination firm was reading an advertisement that guaranteed a passing grade on a state contractor’s exam after just two days of study. He’d seen hundreds of similar ads from such “cram schools” but had to admit this one was special. The company could guarantee a passing grade because it could provide answers to every question on the test.


To some students, using the Internet to conjure up the evening’s homework isn’t a novel thing to do any more.
It isn’t even cheating. It has simply evolved into an institution, a pillar of education, a big study group and an endless archive of cut-and-paste essay components. To a generation coming of age in the opening years of an untamed new era, the ability to easily scoop a little flotsam from the vast oceans of the Internet doesn’t seem nearly as nefarious as pilfering a passage from a library book. Many students seem to almost reflexively embrace a philosophy rooted in the subculture of computer hackers: That all information is, or should be, free for the taking.

Fewer than 5 percent of college students have turned in a paper obtained from the Internet or a term-paper mill, and 10 percent have used the Internet as a source to plagiarize a paper, according to a survey of 2,100 students on 21 campuses. But Rutgers University Professor Donald McCabe, who has been tracking academic-integrity issues for years, says that it’s not clear how students define Internet plagiarism, and that few schools have developed policies on the issue.

College students who cheat have been around for as long as there have been schools, educators say. And cheating — which educators prefer to call academic dishonesty — might be more prevalent than people think. According to studies conducted by the Center for Academic Integrity, more than 75 percent of all students on college and university campuses surveyed have admitted one or more incidents of cheating. The studies also have shown that chronic cheating — when a student commits more than three instances — also is common.

Testing

Eight teachers at Woodland High School just outside Sacramento are under investigation after allegations that they shared a standardized state science test with students preparing to take the exam. The Woodland Joint Unified School District announced that the teachers have been placed on paid administrative leave while the charges are investigated. Pressure on teachers to produce higher test scores may have prompted the cheating, said Wayne Johnson, president of the California Teachers Association.

A dozen teachers at Banning High School in Wilmington, Calif., will be disciplined after school officials determined that they showed copies of the Stanford 9 exam to their students before last spring’s testing. Another teacher resigned after being confronted with evidence of the cheating on the standardized basic skills exam, Los Angeles Unified School District officials said. Testing experts have long warned that cheating can be an outgrowth of the pressure educators feel when standardized test scores are used to make important decisions about students and schools.

On one elementary student’s machine-scored test, an adult had apparently removed three wrong answers with one strong sweep of an eraser. At another school, the number of test erasures in one classroom was far above average. At a third school, erasures dropped sharply when a retest was closely supervised. The examples from unnamed school districts were offered by Michigan State University-based S.E. Phillips, a consultant practiced in determining whether the mottled smudge of an eraser is a sign that students changed their minds or that a cheater deliberately swiped out an incorrect answer.

Fifth-grade teacher Barbara McCarroll was already puzzled and a little upset about her students’ low test scores when her boss at Eastgate Elementary in Columbus, Ohio, approached her. How was it, the principal snapped, that the same children had done so much better on standardized exams the year before? After eight years of teaching, McCarroll knew it paid to be frank with children, so she put the question to them. She was not prepared for the answer: “Well, Ms. McCarroll, that’s because they gave us the answers and you didn’t.”

The principal of a top-ranked Montgomery County elementary school, admitting to “poor judgment,” said she takes full responsibility for the cheating scandal that has rocked the Potomac community and prompted her resignation. In her first public statement, Karen B. Karch, principal at Potomac Elementary School since 1993, said she will not respond to specific allegations that she and a teacher helped students cheat on a state assessment test because that would only “escalate a situation that is already out of control.”
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