ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Lessons for assessment in an online world

Heather Ranson and Kerstin Heilgenberg
Advertisement that appeared on the Facebook feed of a third year UVic Chemistry major.
WHAT IS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY?

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit or work on with others. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. As a student, you are expected to adhere to these ethical values. UVic website: https://www.uvic.ca/current-students/home/academics/academic-integrity/index.php
WHAT THE LITERATURE SAYS ABOUT CHEATING: WHY STUDENTS CHEAT

- Occurs when students are rushed and/or under pressure
- Peer behaviour
- Peer disapproval
- Sociability
- Extra-Curricular activities

CONTRACT CHEATING AND MORE

- Essay mills
- Chegg and other subscription services
- Group work on exams
- Last year’s notes and other stories…
BEST PRACTICES IN STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Scaffolded assignments
Low-stakes tests
Applied questions that show work
Open book tests
WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

Talk to your classes about cheating
Build a supportive environment with strong communication
Honour Codes
Punish cheating behaviour
BREAKOUT ROOMS

In your breakout room, choose one participant to be the instructor and to facilitate a discussion using the Cheating Conversation Starter. The breakout rooms will close after 20 minutes.
AS A RESULT OF THIS PRACTICE …

I am more likely to talk to my students about cheating

YES  NO
AS A RESULT OF THIS SESSION…

I will try using scaffolded assignments

I will try small quizzes instead of a larger exam

I will try a pledge on the front page of my exam

I will try an open-book exam
BIOGRAPHIES

**Heather Ranson** has taught in the Gustavson School of Business for 16 years. She teaches Business and Sustainability, and Business Communications to undergraduate, graduate and executive students.

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ETHICS EXAM DISCUSSION

Ryan walked into his business ethics exam with a stomach full of butterflies. He took a seat at the back of the class and kept his head down. All he could think about was a conversation he had with Shauna, another ethics student before they walked in the door. “Be sure to look my way during the exam.” Shauna told him, “I might need help because I didn’t have time to study.” “What do I do?” Ryan wondered, as Shauna slipped into the seat beside him.

• Is this an ethical decision?
• What should Ryan do during the exam?
• What should Ryan do after the exam?
FINANCE EXAM PANIC

Alex was in a panic. She had left studying for her finance exam to the last minute because of three back-to-back assignments. Working through the chapter questions she knew she was in big trouble. She had to get 75% on the on-line homework questions in order for the exam to “open”. So far, at 9:00 pm she had only achieved a 65% on the homework questions and the exam was only open until 11:00 pm. She texted her friend Sophie, a finance whiz: “can u help me answer these homework questions?”

• Is this an ethical decision?
• What should Sophie do?
• What could Alex have done to avoid this situation?
EXAM PARTY

Matt texted Toni back “Sure, I’m in” he said. Toni had asked Matt if he wanted to participate in the Accounting Attack (AA) party. The AA group of five students would be online with each other during the Accounting final exam. They agreed to share answers and work on tough problems together. “It was only fair,” Matt reasoned. The accounting prof warned them that the exam would be harder than usual to account for all the resources they could use during an on-line exam. “Why not use each other?” He asked. Besides, if the group was working together and he didn’t participate, he would be at a disadvantage.

• Is this an ethical decision?
• What are Matt’s options if he chooses not to participate in the AA party?
• What risk is Matt taking by joining the AA party?
UNSIGNED PLEDGE/DECLARATION

Courtney dropped her exam on the pile at the front of the room and rushed out of the classroom. She had left the cover sheet unsigned and now she wondered what would happen. All Business students had to sign the front page of their exams to declare that they had not participated in or witnessed cheating in an exam. “I know what I saw” Courtney said to herself. I won’t tell though, unless they ask me why I didn’t sign my declaration. It is their policy, so they need to come find me and make sure I signed it.”

• Is this an ethical decision?
• Is Courtney’s method of reporting cheating the best solution to the problem?
• What should the professor do when they find an unsigned declaration?