

Position on Cheating.

There have been some clear instances of cheating (or attempted cheating) in my courses in the past and I have had to take some corrective action. I thought that students in my courses might be interested in knowing these actions and the thinking behind them

Premises

1. Most students do not cheat.
2. Cheaters are mostly cheating themselves. They are not getting the education they are here for.
3. Most cheating is relatively ineffective – copying is often done from a less than stellar student, with unsurprisingly poor results.
4. Cheating is rarely innovative or clever. Copying from neighbours exams, working from illicit keys, plagiarizing from the internet are all despairingly common ways of cheating.
5. Getting better marks than they deserve does not reduce the marks achieved by non-cheaters.

Why cheating is a matter of concern to me and students.

1. If cheating is a habit (or tacitly encouraged) then the cheater may adopt this style in their professional life. Where would you like to have to deal with them next? As your doctor? Lawyer? Politician? Civil servant? Car salesman?
2. Cheaters get a UVic degree just like yours. Would you like to apply for a job outside Victoria at a place that has just discovered that one of its recently hired employees who had a UVic degree was lazy, incompetent, uneducated and dishonest?
3. Cheaters make it difficult for everyone. They betray trust and erode or destroy that trust, especially between faculty and students, but also between students.
4. Cheaters take time and energy to catch and deal with. They make it necessary to implement anti-cheating measures that get in the way of fair learning and fair testing, and in general poison the atmosphere. Sometimes, cheating by some students results in innocent students getting wrongfully accused and put under suspicion and stress.
5. Cheating erodes your soul. You become a lesser person for doing it, eventually in your own eyes. Once you become known as a cheater, how do you ever prove your integrity again?

My actions:

Because most students do not cheat, I try not to implement measures that intrude on them, their education or their testing. However, it is in the interest of the majority of students who are honest to identify those who are not, and to try to deter them from continuing to cheat. Therefore, I watch for cheating and try to warn those I catch to not cheat any more. If I can identify marks gained through cheating, I will remove those marks from the student's record of achievement (e.g., marks on a midterm). Those I suspect of cheating are told and if I have strong suspicions, I inform the Chair of Psychology and the Dean. These two offices keep records of suspected and confirmed cheaters and should a suspect's name come up a second time, please of innocence are much less likely to be believed.

Personal remarks to cheaters (aka scumbags). Maybe you think everyone cheats – they don't – only you and your scumbag friends. You know it's wrong. If you doubt it then ask a few classmates who are not your friends if they think it's ok to cheat. If you are proud of what you do, be sure to tell them your name.