Chapter XXI
Video Technology for Academic Integrity in Online Courses

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ABSTRACT

In addition to their traditional low-tech repertoire of cheating methods, students are now compromising academic integrity by utilizing sophisticated high-tech innovations to improve their grades. The inexperience of online faculty can also contribute to students' academic misconduct when instructors employ a course design and/or assessment measures that are more appropriate for face-to-face courses. This chapter discusses how easy it is for students to "fake a course" and earn a grade in an online class without acquiring knowledge if a combination of two factors are present: 1) Using pedagogical tools unsuitable for measuring online performance, and 2) Violations of academic integrity. The purpose of the chapter is to present new methods of utilizing multimedia technology, more specifically student video production, to reduce the possibility of academic dishonesty and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty is not a new phenomenon, although "the Internet and other technologies are presenting new opportunities for cheating" (McCabe & Drinan, 1999, p. B7). Since teaching online happens in a computer- and Internet-based electronic environment, "both faculty and students believe it is easier to cheat in distance learning classes" (Kennedy et al., 2000, p. 309). Online instructors deeply care about the academic rigor and academic integrity of their courses, but what can they do to prevent cybercheating (Connors, 1966, as cited in Campbell, Swift & Denton, 2000, p. 728) and grade inflation? The goal of this chapter is to raise awareness of a simple fact: If

technology offers greater possibilities to cheat, it will also offer possibilities for countermeasures to curb cheating. It offers some new technology-based strategies to evaluate students' online performance and to make sure that students do not get credit for work they did not do. It will also throw light on the importance of course design and how well-chosen assessment tools can promote student learning and academic integrity.

BACKGROUND

Based on several recently published studies (Gray, 1998; Olt, 2002; Shyles, 2002; Niel, 2004), it seems that "maintaining academic integrity"

continues to be a "challenge in both traditional and online education" (Heberling, 2002). "[A]cademic dishonesty is [not only] a relatively widespread practice" (Campbell, Swift, & Denton, 2000, p. 738), but it has also been "on the rise" (Ridley & Husband, 1998, p. 185) for several decades. Lanier's recent study confirmed that the "rate of cheating for online courses surpassed that of the traditional lecture courses" (p. 258). According to a widely held opinion, the increase in cheating is due to the rapid development of technology and belief that "the possibilities inherent in the Internet mean that engaging in academic dishonesty is easier, faster, and cheaper than in the past" (Campbell, Swift, & Denton, 2000, p. 726).

According to Eisenberg (2004), the number of students violating academic integrity has reached alarming levels (p. 164). "39 percent of students completing the 1963 survey acknowledged one or more incidents of serious test or exam cheating; by 1993, this had grown to 64 percent" (McCabe, 2005, p. 27). "A nationwide poll of 20,000 middle and high school students released last year [1998] by the Josephson Institute of Ethics in Marina del Rey, Calif., suggests the magnitude of the problem: Seven out of 10 high schoolers admitted to having cheated on an exam" (Buschweller, 1999). As anticipated, the problem is not restricted to lower levels of education. "Duke University's Center for Academic Integrity website reports that 75% of students across 21 higher education campuses nationwide admit to some cheating throughout their collegiate careers" (Baron & Crooks, 2005, p. 40). Also referring to the Center for Academic Integrity Web site on, NBC4 reports "that 70 percent of college students admit to some sort of academic cheating. And 37 percent have used the Internet to plagiarize" (2006, para 2). In an international study on cheating, Cizek (2001) found that "3-5% of exam candidates are likely to be cheating" (cited in BBC News, 2000). Davis et al. "reported that between 40% and 60% of their student respondents reported cheating on at least one examination" (cited in Kennedy et al., 2000). Eisenberg (2004) quotes several studies

in which the estimated percentage of cheating U.S. students is between 50% and 90% (p. 164). Equally alarming are the data that Rowe (2004) mentions in his article based on several studies between 1996 and 2003. Dick et al. report that 75% of college students cheated during their college years (Rowe, 2004, p. 1).

CREATIVE EXAM-ROOM CHEATING TECHNIQUES

No matter what type of assignment, students cheat on standardized tests, exams, term papers, and other homework assignments. They use various low-tech strategies and devices during exams, such as the somewhat old-fashioned "crib sheet[s] in [the] pleats of a skirt," or "on [the] underside of [the] brim of [a] baseball cap" (Schneider, 1999; BBC News, 2000), or on the inside label of water bottles (Delisio, 2003). They cheat by communicating through body language, hand gestures, facial expressions, and coughing. They signal to each other by "clicking pens" or by color-coded M&M sweets (BBC News, 2000).

If the above were not proof, Morse's list (n.d.) of "bizarre cheating methods" will surely prove that students' resourcefulness surpasses every stretch of the imagination when it comes to cheating techniques. With the advancement of digital technology, new gadgets such as palm pilots, cell phones, pagers, blackberries, and laser pens have been included in the already sophisticated repertoire of students' cheating devices. Utilizing e-mail and text messaging combined with taking advantage of time-zone differences, students can ensure an easy A on any exam. Hidden video cameras attached to students' bodies and undetectable earpieces connected to cheat stations are noteworthy examples of spy technology that students also take advantage of, not to mention "answer-encoded" pencils and infrared messaging between calculators (Morse, n. d.). Those who need to have access to an even more exhaustive list of cheating techniques might join CheatHouse.

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