

## Minimizing Cheating

According to Phillip C. H. Shon (2006), whether students ultimately decide to cheat depends on 4 factors. What follows is derived from Shon's work.\*

### 1. Possibility of detection

What students do:

- Note professor's behavior patterns (including classroom habits and physical limitations)
- Develop a sort of instructor profile before deciding to cheat

Strategies you can use:

- Be aware of your own patterns of behavior—Do you circulate throughout the room? Do you allow students to ask you questions during tests/quizzes (thereby allowing you to be distracted)?
- Recruit proctors to help you to fill surveillance gaps where you are unable to be especially vigilant.

### 2. Strategies for escape

What students do:

- Tactical deployment (deliberate and strategic seating near students with knowledge, students who may be either confederates in the scheme or unwitting victims)
- Semiotic methods (using signs to communicate during a test)—Students use strategies such as coughing or sneezing (loudly, softly, or a certain number of times), tapping pencils or knuckles, to communicate answers to others
- Distract the professor
- Creative smuggling—Using body parts, clothing, and other objects (e.g., pens, calculators) to smuggle notes into the exam session

Strategies you can use:

- Pay attention to group dynamics in class (i.e., Who sits together?).
- Be aware of patterns in noises and recurring student behaviors like touching one's chin during exams).
- Know where the 'good' students sit, and watch that area.
- Be aware of (and even consider inspecting, if appropriate) items that may be hiding notes.

### 3. Projection of normalcy

What students do:

- Give the impression during classes that the student is attentive, interested in learning, participatory
- Give the impression of being "good" students in the hope of reducing suspicion at test time

Strategies you can use:

- Be vigilant at all times.
- While not being hyper-suspicious, don't rule out the possibility that anyone might cheat.

### 4. Minimization of culpability

What students do:

- Cheat in collaboration with others; Often each person has his/her own role to play.
- This structure of cheating, often facilitated by the environment inherent in large classes, minimizes any one person's culpability.

Strategies you can use:

- Create a culture of academic integrity and demonstrate a commitment to vigilance.

\*Shon, P. C. H. (2006) How college students cheat on in-class examinations: Creativity, strain theory, and techniques of innovation. *Plagiarism: Cross-Disciplinary Studies in Plagiarism, fabrication, and Falsification*, 1(10), 1-20.