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Cheaters Never Prosper - But That Doesn't Seem to Stop Them

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10/25

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Cheaters Never Prosper—But That Doesn't Seem to Stop Them

Last week as I was getting out of my car, I heard a student say to two other students, "A girl in my class cheated on a one-question quiz!" Then she added, "And it wasn't even that hard!"

I found this amusing, of course, but also disturbing, for several reasons. It's always disturbing to hear about students cheating, even though we know it happens all the time. The fact that the student talking about the cheating clearly did not have any intentions of reporting the cheating to the instructor or other authorities was disturbing, but also not that surprising.

It was her second comment that disturbed me the most. Would the cheating be acceptable if the test were hard? Her statement seemed to imply that.

That little incident got me thinking about academic honesty again. I decided to do some internet research, not for studies

about student cheating or academic articles about the subject; I wanted to find out about online resources for cheating. Boy did I get an eyeful!

I knew about paper mills, which were around when I was in college in the last century. In those days, there were little ads in the back of *Rolling Stone* for companies that would sell you pre-written papers, as well as write them for you on demand. All that is now digital, and nearly instantaneous. There are probably thousands of such paper-writing companies on the internet. One website I had not heard of was Cramster.com, which I saw referenced in an article. (It has changed its name to Chegg.com, but you can get to it either way.) This site has the teacher editions of nearly every textbook used in high school and college, and it will provide the answer key to texts and tests. Our students may be turning in homework and tests that they have plucked off the net.

At Virginia Tech, tests from the past have been called "koofers" for many years. Apparently someone from VT started a website, Koofers.com, which collects tests and posts them online. I registered as if I were a Winthrop student and searched for tests, but apparently none have been uploaded from us. (I am still registered, so I will check back and alert the community if I see WU pop up.) Still, the site has over 100,000 graded tests in a variety of disciplines. Fraternities and sororities have long maintained "test banks," but such collections are now viral and digital. (That site also has a collection of note cards that students have uploaded, which is an excellent study aid. Glad to see them doing something useful.)

I found lists of the top ten or twenty cheating sites, but nearly all of them are blocked on the Winthrop domain, already flagged as cheating sites. Hooray! But that would not stop a student from logging on

"I know what you are thinking: doing any of these cheats is harder and takes longer than it would just to study. But to paraphrase a current saying, cheaters gonna cheat. If surveys and studies are accurate, up to 70% of students. Keep your eyes open."



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through another internet portal, so here is a partial list: Course Hero, Oppapers, Schoolsucks, Cheathouse, Bignerds, 123helpme, and echeat. I want to check these out from home, just to see.

I found an article from ZDNet on high tech cheating, which led me to Spycheatstuff.com. They have a section called "Exam Equipment," offering for \$150 or so tiny Bluetooth earpieces that can connect to an MP3 player or pick up broadcasts from an accomplice, and Bluetooth pens that can do the same. If you see a student staring intently at his pen during the final exam, check to see if he is getting broadcasts from a fellow cheater.

I am always amazed and happy at the wealth of content and information I can find on YouTube. Nearly any song I want to learn on guitar, piano, and even mandolin is on there—not just a performance, but usually somebody who is teaching me how to play the song. But type in "how to cheat in college" and start watching. Many of the videos just tell me about tricks that were already old when I was young: writing the

answers on your hands or arms; writing the answers on paper and taping them to your legs (works best for women in skirts); hiding the book in the bathroom, then asking to be excused (I learned that one from an episode of *Leave It To Beaver!*); going to class early and writing answers on the top of the desk. But some of them were tactics I would never have thought of.

Get a water bottle and cut off the label. Write the answers on the label, then tape the label back to the bottle.

Unwrap gum, write the answers on the inside of the wrapper, wrap the gum again, then unwrap, chew, and cheat during the test.

Then there is the MacGyver method, involving labels and Photoshop. For example, take a plastic Coke bottle. Cut the label off with an x-acto knife, scan it, then use Photoshop to remove large areas of writing on the label. Type in your cheat notes, then print out the label on a color printer with glossy paper. Cut out the label and glue it to the bottle. Take the pause that refreshes as you cheat during your exam.

I saw versions of this for chewing gum packs,

candy bars, and potato chip bags. I guess we are going to have to be the snack police during tests.

Here's a good one: type your cheat notes, reduce the font and center on a sheet of paper, then print the sheet. Take clear packing tape and press it onto the sheet, not too hard, but fully. Carefully pull off the tape, cut out the section with the cheat notes now embedded into it, then attach to the face of your watch. (Can also be printed directly onto a clear shipping label.) Hey, I'm just checking the time! But my watch is telling me the capital of Abyssinia, all the formulas for CHEM 101, all the periods we covered in Art History. How many times has this video been viewed? 943,313.

I know what you are thinking: doing any of these cheats is harder and takes longer than it would just to study. But to paraphrase a current saying, cheaters gonna cheat. If surveys and studies are accurate, up to 70% of students. Keep your eyes open. And think about enforcing that no food and water policy in the classroom...

XXITE 2.0 ----- The Virtual Gathering Place for WU (The Reboot!)

Jo Koster and I invite you to join XXITE (Twenty-first Century Teaching Excellence)—or if you have already joined, to check it out again as it grows and develops. Maybe you have not been there in a long time—if not, you will see many changes in look and content. For example, XXITE now has groups dedicated to HMXP and CRTW, with

those of us who teach those courses sharing ideas and materials. Talk to Jo about setting up your own interest group. Jo is particularly interested in recruiting a few people to blog regularly about their teaching.

Jo set up this interactive site to give Winthrop faculty a virtual gathering space to share ideas about teaching and

technology. You'll find blogs and discussion forums on various topics—and we urge you to add your own ideas. Visit again at <http://wuxxite.ning.com/> Or email Jo Koster for an invitation to join: kosterj@winthrop.edu The TLC website also has links to navigate your way there or to join: <http://www2.winthrop.edu/tlc/>

A New Service From the TLC: Teaching Consultation

The Teaching and Learning Center is offering a new service: teaching consultation. At the instructor's request, I (or another agreed-upon person) will visit your class to observe and consult with you afterwards about your successes and challenges. This consultation has nothing to do with the tenure and

promotion process, and no reports will be made to department chairs or deans (unless you so request). The invitation to the consultant can only come from the instructor, not from a dean or chair or any other person. All conversations will be private and confidential. If you don't want me to visit your class and observe your teaching, we could

just meet and talk about your teaching. If I am not available to visit your class because of my schedule, I will find a qualified person to do the consulting. So please let me know if you would like to invite me into your class or for a consultation. Call or email me at (803) 323-3679 or birdj@winthrop.edu.

Go2Knowledge—Learning On Demand!

Go2Knowledge is a website that offers a variety of video presentations on faculty and staff professional development. You will find presentations by nationally-known experts in seven categories: At-Risk Populations, Campus Safety, Organizational Development, Student Success, Teaching and Learning, Technology,

and Open Educational Resources. Within each category, you will find a number of excellent and informative videos. The Office of Academic Affairs has provided us a one-year subscription to this service.

People often tell the TLC that they would like to go to sessions, but they don't have the time or they can't

at the times sessions are offered. With Go2Knowledge, you can attend sessions on demand, anywhere, 24/7. The TLC will also have frequent Go2Knowledge Groups, where we meet to discuss a presentation. Log in here: <http://www.go2knowledge.org/winthrop> See you there!

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BLOG POSTS

- NEW POSTS ON THE RENOVATIONS**
Posted by [Mark Y. Herring](#) on June 22, 2012 at 2:05pm
- CORE VALUES**
Posted by [Mark Y. Herring](#) on June 5, 2012 at 9:41am
- PLAYING TO TYPE**
Posted by [Blaiz C. Harding](#) on May 25, 2012 at 10:22am
- TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING IN THE CLASSROOM**
Posted by [Amanda Hiler](#) on March 15, 2012 at 12:11pm — [LUC](#)
- GONE WITH THE WIND...**
Posted by [Jo Koster](#) on March 6, 2012 at 10:33am — [2 Comments](#)

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NOTES

- DO COLLEGE PROFESSORS WORK HARD ENOUGH?**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 25, 2012 at 11:34pm. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)
- WHO OWNS YOUR COURSE?**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 19, 2012 at 12:07pm. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)
- STUDENT OWNERSHIP OF TABLETS INCREASES, PREFERENCE FOR GROWING**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 14, 2012 at 11:24am. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)

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Thought
for
The Week

*"Always do right; this will
gratify some people and
astonish the rest."* —Mark
Twain