

Cheating: An Epidemic

by Alexis Ortega

Over the course of many years, cheating has grown to become a worldwide phenomenon. It was reported by The Center of Academic Integrity that 80% of students have cheated at least once in their academic career. Seven thousand students have been expelled in Bangladesh because of cheating on final exams. Students feel the need to cheat because it allows them to take the "easy" way out to get the grade that they think they deserve. Cheating is a moral decision that could lead to a life of false achievements and dishonesty. Sophocles expressed, "I would prefer even to fail with honor than win by cheating." This should be the mentality of every human being living in this world. Cheating has become a very common issue that I believe should be stopped throughout schools across the world because of the harsh punishment and dishonesty.

Plagiarism is the deplorable result of continuous cheating throughout schools in the world. According to the University of Maryland, "Plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise." Plagiarism is a very serious matter that could potentially destroy a professional reputation. A person's name could be destroyed, provoking them from having a meaningful, worthwhile career. *Psychological Record* conducted a survey that showed 36% of undergrads confessed to plagiarizing written material. This survey displayed the percentages of cheaters and plagiarists in college life today.

Cheating is also erroneous because the people are blinded by consequences because they just want the proper grade. Neil Degrasse stated, "When students cheat

on exams it's because our School System values grade more than Students value learning." The honest respectable student earns their grades by working hard, whereas the cheater cheats only himself. By cheating, the value of the diploma diminishes since no hard work was put into it. Cheaters proceed with cheating because they believe that they will get away with it each and every time.

In a recent study, Jeffrey Kluger revealed, "The people who cheated on the math test did significantly better on the word test. Breaking the rules frees up the mind and makes it easier to be creative." When Kluger revealed his results, he must have forgotten that the more people break rules, the harsher the punishment becomes, from a detention, to an expulsion, and potentially behind bars. Someone could have broken rules to "win", however, they never truly won because they kept their eye on the prize without realizing what the possible turnout could be. Would a proper American citizen take pride in winning a game that they didn't play fairly in? No. All they did was prove himself to be a dishonest human being. A college student, Eshaghoff, who was paid to take the SAT for other students took the exam twice in one weekend. All people included in this scheme have been arrested. One man was sentenced in prison for four years [NBCNewYork.com reported](http://NBCNewYork.com).

Cheating should be ended because it causes cruel punishments and dishonesty that could destroy one's life. Anyone can guarantee that expulsion from school because of plagiarism will not look pleasing on a permanent record. Jessica Lahey, a serial cheater, stated, "I felt cheated of the education I deserved, and thus to earn the grade I knew I deserved, I had to cheat the system." Students often cheat without realizing what

they are actually doing. They steal what isn't theirs, and they use it anyway. It is a humorless matter, and I believe that it should be stopped because it damages a lot more than false grades. It is time for the world to learn that actions do indeed have serious consequences.

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