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An Examination of the Frequency of Unethical Practices in High School Among 9th Grade Science Students

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE FREQUENCY OF UNETHICAL PRACTICES IN HIGH SCHOOL AMONG 9TH GRADE SCIENCE STUDENTS

By: Russell Joseph Chudy

MASTERS THESIS
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty of the School of Education
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Grand Valley State University
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This truly is not an end of a journey begun long ago, but rather a new beginning; a foot step to a path never traveled. Words can no longer express the love and gratitude I have for those who have been part of my life.

Russell Joseph Chudy
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ABSTRACT

This research is a study of 147 high school freshman science students at Forest Hills Central High School. A survey was given to each student regarding academic dishonesty in science classes. This survey was taken voluntarily and each student was given identical surveys. The data was then collected, combined and analyzed. Results indicated that cheating among 9th grade science students occurs every day at Central High School, regardless of sex or academic achievement, and is common practice. Freshman students participate in academically dishonest behavior less currently than they did a year ago. Although they are afraid of getting caught, most freshman science students have not been caught cheating. Those that have witnessed another student engaging in unethical behavior in science class have not told the teacher. Furthermore, the freshman science students at Forest Hills Central High School feel that cheating is ethically wrong. Lastly, male students and students with lower grade point averages have a greater propensity to engage in academically dishonest behavior.

This thesis also offers suggestions on how to eliminate the temptation a student may have to cheat in class. Furthermore, this thesis provides a list of helpful hints, tips, and strategies to minimize a student’s opportunity to cheat or consider other acts of academic dishonesty inside and outside of the classroom.
CHAPTER ONE: THESIS PROPOSAL

PROBLEM STATEMENT

We live in a world of potential academic dishonesty, from the school yard to corporate and government offices. Research indicates that cheating seems to not have any racial, ethnical, political or religious boundaries. It is a part of our social and educational lives early on and continues to influence and flirt with us through our professional careers.

Studies reveal that academic dishonesty is commonplace at both the national and state levels. It is practiced at college, high school and middle school levels. Unethical academic behavior is also a problem at a local level and, specifically, at Forest Hills Central High School.

It is accurate to say that every student has either cheated or will cheat in some way in high school. Ironically enough, many students are not even aware of when they cheat. A high school student’s perception of cheating and understanding of what it really is and what types of things constitute cheating are often very simplistic and obscure. During my tenure of teaching high school science in Michigan, I have observed several instances when students were cheating in my classroom. All too often a child has said to me upon getting caught that this was their first time, they didn’t know that what they were doing was really considered cheating, and that they would never do it again. All teachers, whether they are regular education or special
education instructors, need to be aware of the frequency of cheating that goes on every day in both their classrooms and in the classrooms elsewhere in their school.

Sohn (2001) in The young and the virtueless, U.S. News & World Report, reports an astonishing 3 out of every 4 high school students admit to cheating on a test at least once in the past year, says Rutgers University professor Donald McCabe, who has surveyed 4,500 students at 25 high schools. A comparable percentage say they have handed in work written by someone else. Beyond those outright cheaters, nearly 1 in 4 students admits to comparatively minor infractions, like working with others when teachers wanted each student to work alone.

There are several ways academic dishonesty presents itself and at different levels of severity. According to High school honor code curbs cheating, Brossard and Golson (2000), The Education Digest, state that in many schools, cheating was not limited to the occasional ‘cheat sheet’; it was common to see students copying the previous night’s homework from a buddy. Walking down the halls, one could hear students asking about a test their friends had already taken.

In The New Crisis in Education: Who is Cheating Whom?, (2000), Tikkun, Shapiro mentions studies made within the last five years of nearly 21,000 middle and high school students that found 70 percent of the students admitted to cheating at least once on an exam. In another survey of high school students conducted nation wide, 80 percent admitted to cheating in order to get to the top of their class.
IMPORTANCE AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Academic dishonesty in high school has reached alarming proportions according to recent studies conducted in schools around the nation. Kleiner and Lord (1999) writing in *The cheating game*, *U.S. News & World Report*, discuss a recent survey of American high school students in which 80 percent admitted to having engaged in educationally unethical behavior at least once. Even more shocking, what we as educators know as a fact to be forms of cheating are not acknowledged or even considered by many teenagers. A high school student’s perception of cheating may be very different and more abstract than we ever imagined.

Not every student in high school partakes in academic dishonesty. However, Bushweller (1999) mentions in the article *Student cheating: A morality moratorium?*, *The Education Digest*, surveys of high school students suggest that up to nine out of ten said cheating is a problem in their schools, and half said they encounter students cheating in most of their classes. Several polls given nationwide suggest that seven out of ten high schoolers admitted to having cheated on an exam. As for copying each other’s homework, today’s children say: That’s all the time. That’s every day. It has become a plague on the American school system. It really is an epidemic. In *Why cheating is wrong*, *Current Health 2*, Abramovitz, (2000) reports that on a poll of more than 3,000 high school honors students, 80 percent admitted that they cheated their way to the top of their class. Bell (1998) in *Cheating minds, ‘Teen*, suggests that perhaps one of the biggest reasons for the cheating epidemic is that it is so easy. Almost all students who cheat are not caught. Students say that during tests, some
teachers turn their backs, read, ignore whispering and even leave the room.

In *Putting the shame back in student cheating*, Gomez, (2001) *The Education Digest*, shares some of the results of his investigations. "Cheating is definitely at a level that's discouraging", says Donald McCabe, a Rutgers University professor and a leading authority on academic dishonesty. For 30 years, McCabe has conducted exhaustive research on cheating, much of it through the Center for Academic Integrity, a consortium of 200 U.S. colleges and universities where he is a member of the board of directors. Recent research from the Center shows that 70% of college students admit to cheating on tests and 84% admit to cheating on term papers. Those numbers mirror what researchers are finding at the high school and even middle school levels. Bell, (1998), further explains that a whopping 76 percent of the nation's best students have cheated on schoolwork, according to the 28th Annual Survey of High Achievers conducted by Who's Who Among American High School Students. Another recent survey of high schoolers, conducted by the Joseph & Edna Josephson institute of Ethics, puts the number of cheaters at 65 percent. Yet 87 percent of the respondents believe honesty is the best policy and three out of four said it is always wrong to cheat on an exam.

Has a good grade become more important than a good education? You might be surprised at just how many students think so. According to recent research, students from middle school to medical school are cheating more today than ever before (Gomez, 2001). According to Evans and Craig, (1990) *Teacher and student perceptions of academic cheating in middle and senior high schools*, Journal of
Educational Research, the primary reasons for cheating include fear of failure, desire for a better grade, and pressure from their parents to do well in school. Kerkuliet and Sigmund (1999) in Can we control cheating in the classroom?, Journal of Economic Education, point out that others say that student’s behavior is a result of a general decline in public morality and ethics. Students also cite famous cheaters as examples of what it takes to succeed. As one student wrote: “This world is full of cheaters because cheaters are the ones who most often get to the top. News flash: Cheaters do prosper!” U.S. News & World Report (Sohn, 2001).

It is necessary for all teachers to realize that despite their attempts to control it, cheating does and is occurring at some level within both their individual classrooms and their school. The fact that we sit around casually in the teachers lounge with other educators and share stories of students who were caught doing something educationally unethical is a testament to the previous statement. In conversations with my colleagues, the researcher has found that unethical educational practices are not an exception in my school, but a societal and social “norm”. In fact, many forms of cheating are spotted every day. Whether it be writing vocabulary terms on a desk before a quiz, students telling each other answers to test questions in the hallways, or plagiarizing information off of the internet, these things are happening at Forest Hills Central High School.

It is up to the teacher to recognize students’ temptation and eagerness to cheat and guide them away from such actions by eliminating the opportunities to cheat. In doing so, students will be better prepared for a life of ethical and moral integrity in
which they will rely on their own hard work and not on that of others. This thesis is
designed to be an "eye-opener" to the types and frequencies of cheating in science
class by freshman high school students, and ways to eliminate their temptations of
cheating in the classroom.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I have been teaching high school science at Forest Hills Central High School for
eight years. It is located in a very wealthy, affluent suburban school district
consisting of approximately 95% white students of mostly Christian religious
affiliation. The school is ranked at the top within the state in terms of academic
achievement on standardized tests, graduation rates, and student attendance of four
year universities. I am very pleased with my students' successes and
accomplishments. However, I am concerned with the frequency of cheating at the
high school level, especially within and outside of my classroom. This includes both
outside of my individual classroom and the school building. Quite often teachers find
themselves not wanting to catch someone cheating just to avoid the headaches of the
confrontation with the students, administrators, and the parents. Consider the
following scenario: Mike and Terry's homework answers are identical. Even the
improper punctuation and misspelled words are consistent. They were reminded
before leaving class yesterday that their homework needed to be done by themselves
and put into their own words. That is just an unstated understanding. The students
expect to each be graded fairly, but that may result in giving them both a zero. The
students need to realize and understand that this is a form of cheating.

An increasing number of high school kids desperate for better grades or simply too tired or too lazy to study harder are cheating to get ahead. To many, cheating is simply a survival skill in a competitive world. The fact that many schools are raising academic standards is likely to pressure more students to cheat (Bushweller, 1999).

Recent news from the media is flooding us with stories of corporate ethics violations. Relin (2001) in *Truth or consequences*, *New York Times Upfront*, states that we are made more aware of public role models who have been caught performing unethical practices today and there actions seem less and less abnormal in today’s society. Bell (1998) supports this idea. In *Cheating Minds* the author states that cheaters are made, not born, and some experts believe the impulse to cheat starts at home. He states that many children hear their parents mention how they fudged on their income taxes or kept the extra change they received at the market. Without realizing it, parents teach their children to be duplicitous.

Forget for a minute just how many high school students cheat. Let’s talk technique. Ivan Baumwell watched one friend print out the answers to a history test in tiny type and tape them inside her water bottle. Devon Watts pried apart her watch before an exam and slid a cheat sheet in front of the watch face. Lindsey Keidman’s classmates took tissues from their teacher’s desk during a math test, so they could read the answer key upside down. But one method may set a new low in cheating creativity: Trevor Snell said he watched another student take advantage of his school’s liberal eating-in-class policy by hollowing out an apple and stuffing the
answers to a physics test inside (Relin, 2001).

At Forest Hills Central High School, some teachers want to ignore the dishonest practices of the students suggesting that catching a student cheating is more work for the teacher in the long run than for the student. They claim that it ends up being more of a punishment for the teacher because of the paperwork and documentation, the meetings with administrators and parents after the incident, and so on. Be that as it may, our professional and ethical duty as educators is to hold each child accountable for their own actions and their work alone. Recently, the researcher observed two of his own students in the library copying each others answers to a homework assignment that was due the following hour. Needless to say, they were held accountable for their participation in academic dishonesty.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to determine the frequency of unethical educational practices among ninth grade high school science students at Forest Hills Central High School. First, total results will be tabulated and reported for the freshman science students as a whole group. Secondly, a comparison between male and female students will be made. Thirdly, how the frequency of cheating differs among different grade point average groups will be studied. Fourth, the survey will discover the students' feelings of guilt associated with cheating. Lastly, the research will indicate what the students think that cheating as an ethically wrong issue is all about.
In an effort to better understand these premises, this research will find the perceptions and frequencies of academic dishonesty at Forest Hills Central High School. In addition, this thesis will suggest helpful hints, tips, and strategies to minimize a student’s opportunity to cheat or to consider cheating in the classroom.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The goal of this study is to determine the frequency of unethical educational practices among high school ninth grade science students at Forest Hills Central High School. One of the first objectives in this study is to categorize the students into separate groups based on sex and academic achievement. The second objective is to reveal the frequency of cheating as defined in the survey and whether or not the students feel that cheating habits will change as they get older. Next, the survey will reveal the students’ perceptions of cheating. The fourth objective is to determine whether or not cheating was more acceptable in certain situations. Lastly, the research will detect any guilt associated with cheating and whether or not students feel that it is ethically wrong to cheat.

The outcomes achieved will be knowing how many students, both male and female, have cheated in some way in the past in science class. Secondly, a comparison of male survey results with that of female survey results will be made. Lastly, comparisons between low grade point average (G.P.A.) and high G.P.A. survey responses will be made.
With the sample size chosen, there will be enough data to reveal accurate, dependable and reliable results and interpretation of the data.

LIMITATIONS OF THE THESIS

This thesis will be limited to ninth grade high school science students at Forest Hills Central High School which is one of two existing high schools in the district. Surveys were given to students in this grade because that is the population I service most at my school. Students’ ages range from thirteen to fifteen years old. Both boys and girls participated.

Responses or opinions from other teachers were not collected or documented. They agreed to participate only in the capacity of administering the surveys to the students.

Most of the students are from a very wealthy, affluent, suburban, white collar district. They are from a very high socioeconomic class. Very few students are minorities or from middle to lower level societal status. Many families have both parents working in highly successful positions and their average yearly income is well above the middle class worker. It is not uncommon to have one or both parents working as lawyers, doctors, or C.E.O.’s of successful companies. Parents tend to be extremely supportive of school activities (both sporting events and academics) and of the teachers. Contact and communication with students’ parents is strongly encouraged by administrators and desired by parents. Getting to the top of societal hierarchy and inheriting the family’s wealth may be a strong influence on whether or
not students chose to cheat and their moral and ethical perceptions of it.

The survey results do not show why students cheat, the methods and techniques they use, when cheating starts, causes of temptation, consequences of cheating, the benefits of cheating, or comparison between upper and lower classmates. It also does not show social, economic, religious or ethical factors that can effect cheating. This thesis does not address where cheating is learned or when it starts.

Generally, the students have been exposed to technology and are literate in basic computer use. However, the availability of technology and individual technological literacy is not consistent among all students.

There are limitations on the length of time of this research. All student survey responses were gathered in one day. Analysis of the data and additional research occurred during the four-week time period following the administering of the survey.

SUMMARY

As described in this chapter, cheating is commonplace in our high schools. Quite often, teachers are not aware of the frequency and severity of academic dishonesty among high school students. Students' perceptions of cheating are also misinterpreted and misunderstood.

The importance of this research is focused on the lack of proper identification of the academic cheating phenomena, how often it occurs, and how educators cannot effectively offset the temptation students have to cheat. Perhaps a student's awareness that a teacher knows that cheating occurs in their classroom can act as a
deterrent.

As you have seen in this chapter, the sources will present data related to the frequency of cheating among high school students. They will also suggest some possible reasons for cheating. A literature review of significant sources will be presented in the following chapter.
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a literature review of sources pertaining to academic dishonesty at both the high school and college levels. The following are the three topics of organization: Overall Frequencies of Cheating in Schools investigates and analyzes the number of students whom, when surveyed, admit to cheating in their school, Gender Differences and Cheating discusses how male and female students may perceive cheating and how frequencies of cheating may differ between them, and Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) Comparisons focuses on how a student’s academic success may influence the frequency of unethical behavior in the classroom.

OVERALL FREQUENCIES OF CHEATING IN SCHOOLS

Professor Fred Schab (1991) of the University of Georgia, in Schooling without learning: thirty years of cheating in high school, Adolescence, has studied cheating in American schools for the past several decades and has found that the rate of academic dishonesty has climbed in each decade. He also found that students cheat more often in mathematics and science than in their other academic classes.

Anderman, Griesinger, and Westerfield (1998) writing in Motivation and cheating during early adolescence, Journal of Educational Psychology, found that between 25% and 30% of middle school students in Kentucky admitted to cheating in the previous academic year. Similar findings were reported in Predictors of

This thesis will reveal the frequency of cheating among high school freshman students in science class. It was difficult to find research specific to frequencies of cheating among freshman students alone. However, given the similar age of middle school and freshman high school students, the research should lead to some interesting comparisons.

It will be interesting to compare the results of this particular thesis’ research survey to the previous works mentioned and also to research discussed in Student cheating in high school: a case of moral reasoning versus ‘fuzzy logic’, McLaughlin & Ross, (1989), High School Journal, where the researchers conducted a large scale study and found that 55 percent of high school students admitted to frequent cheating.

Having knowledge of the research conducted on high school cheating will be beneficial to the researcher for comparisons to “national averages”. However, many discrepancies exist and national “averages” are not necessarily unified from one study to the next. For example, in a study conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, (http://www.josephsoninstitute.org/), 7 in 10 high-schoolers (70 percent) admitted to cheating within the 2000 academic school year. Similarly, Bell mentions research in Cheating Minds, (1998), in which the number of cheaters is 65 percent. Perhaps more interesting, 87 percent of these respondents believe honesty in the best policy.
There is no doubt that academic dishonesty is practiced at this age level in school. The frequencies, however, appear to differ among each unique case study. The results obtained from this survey will be compared to both the middle school and high school research results to see if any generalizations can be made regarding the frequencies of cheating among freshman high school students.

In *Academic dishonesty among high school students*, McCabe (1999) *Adolescence*, researched a focus group of thirty-two high school and college students in northern New Jersey. His findings were that some students "believe cheating is a normal part of life, and there is little, if anything, that can be done about it". McCabe also stated that, "Studies show that students who cheat are likely to make it a way of life. So it's no surprise that today's workplace is full of adults who lie about everything from job experience to company earnings."

This research is important because the survey asks if the students agree with the notion that everybody cheats some time in their lives. Also, the students will be asked if they feel they will engage in dishonest behavior later in life, at college and at their future place of employment. The results will be interesting to compare with the perceptions and responses of some of the students in previous research.

In a comprehensive study of 10,000 American high school students described in Steinberg's (1996) book, *Beyond the classroom: Why school reform has failed and what parents need to do*, the following results were obtained. "Over two-thirds of the high school students surveyed admitted that they had copied someone else's homework within the past year. Teachers go to great lengths, try new activities, new
approaches and new strategies to limit a student’s opportunity or temptation to cheat. Nevertheless, there always exists the temptation and opportunity to be less than honest on homework, tests, quizzes, daily work, and in practically every aspect of education."

Sohn (2001) mentions in *The Young and the Virtueless*, a survey conducted at 25 high schools of 4,500 students by Rutgers University professor Donald McCabe, that 3 out of every 4 high school students admit to cheating on a test at least once in the past year.

In *High school honor codes curbs cheating*, Broussard & Golson, (2000), *The Education Digest*, the researchers describe that cheating had grown to such epic proportions at a Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana that student leaders decided something had to be done. They believed that cheating begun in high school would continue into the adult world. They did not want a doctor operating on them who cheated through medical school, for example. Because of this, a school honor code was established by students, staff, administrators and parents. This code had reduced cheating drastically in the school within the following years and has awakened many students to the seriousness of cheating.

Although an honor code of this type or magnitude has not been established at Forest Hills Central High School, the school district does have a cheating policy (see Appendix P) outlined in a student handbook that each student, freshman through senior, receives on their first day of each new school year. Even though students know that cheating is unacceptable behavior in school, the researcher is not
convinced that the students at Central High are aware of the cheating policy nor the protocol that is to be followed when a student is caught. This is significant because it may contribute to the overall frequency of academic dishonesty among all students, specifically freshman students.

Relin (2001) discusses a national survey of 8,600 students which reveals what a cheating-happy culture high school has become. He found that 71 percent of American teenagers admitted cheating on at least one exam within the last year.

Furthermore, Bushweller (1999) writing in *Student Cheating: A Morality Moratorium?*. The Education Digest, discusses a 1998 survey of 3,123 teenagers in a high school in Illinois in which 80% of the students admitted to cheating on an exam, a 10 point increase since the question was first asked 15 years earlier. Recently, in a 2002 nationwide poll of 12,000 high school students by the Josephson Institute of Ethics (JIE), (http://josephsoninstitute.org/) in Marina del Rey, California, 74% of high schoolers admitted to having cheated on an exam, a 13 point increase in the last ten years. In 2000, 71% admitted cheating.

The frequency of cheating on homework, tests and quizzes will be obtained and compared to the prior research mentioned above. Although the freshman students will not have taken an exam yet in their academic career, this thesis will reveal a freshman student's perceptions of cheating on an exam. This could reveal some interesting insight as to whether or not the students feel that cheating on an exam is less acceptable than cheating on a test or homework assignment. Also, this thesis will show if students who have not taken an exam feel that it is okay to cheat on one.
Relin (2001) later mentions that the institute that conducted the survey, the Josephson Institute of Ethics, has issued a report card every two years, and the percentages have risen every time. One question on the survey will ask the students to indicate whether or not they are engaging in academic dishonesty more or less than they did last year as middle-school students.

GENDER DIFFERENCES AND CHEATING

Research on male versus female academic dishonesty frequencies, especially at the high school level, proved challenging to locate. The researcher could find few references related to the specific topic of male and female high school students, specifically 9th grade science students. However, the following sources have been included in this research literature review for the purpose of providing a background on the research that has been conducted regarding male versus female perceptions and frequencies of unethical practices for they are applicable to this study.

Leming (1980), and previously Tittle and Rowe (1973), found that females were more influenced by threat of sanction than were males. They attributed this to female role socialization, in that the females feared a reduction in status and damage to their reputation for engaging in dishonest behavior. Heilman & Martell (1986), and Powell (1990), both agreed with this assessment. Their research suggested that because of sex role stereotypes, male and females have different learning experiences. According to the stereotypes, males tend to be more persistent and aggressive, whereas females tend to be more passive and dependent.
These apparent differences between the two sexes may influence the temptation to engage in unethical behavior. This research implies that males would be more prone to committing acts of academic dishonesty than would females. When the influence of these stereotypes starts affecting educational practices is not the focus of this research. However, results of the academic dishonesty survey will show a comparison of results between both male and female freshman science students and will reveal any discrepancies.

In *An investigation into the dimensions of unethical behavior*, Buckley, Wiese & Harvey (1998), *Journal of Education for Business*, conducted a study in undergraduate business classes at a large southwestern university in the United States of more than 200 undergraduate students. The 90-item questionnaire investigation revealed that gender appeared to be a predictor for the propensity to engage in unethical behavior. The female respondents' probability of engaging in unethical behavior was uniformly less than that reported by the male respondents. Also, males in this study believed more than females that people engage in unethical behavior. Maass & Volpato (1989), also agree that women are less likely than men to engage in self-serving behavior.

Studies performed prior to this research showed that differences in moral behavior can be partially explained by gender (Eisen, 1972; Mussen, Rutherford, Harris, & Keasey, 1970). Each of these studies used sex role socialization as either the direct or indirect cause of these differences. In *Gender and dishonesty*, Ward & Beck (1989), *Journal of Social Psychology*, described that females in our society are
expected to be dependent, affectionate, respectful, permissive, conforming and obedient, whereas males are expected to be aggressive and independent. Feminine characteristics include compliance with regulations, whereas masculine characteristics include independence of thought and action. Thus, women are more prone to obey the rules of society regardless of the situation, and males are more apt to examine the situation in terms of how their actions will affect others and themselves, sometimes engaging in unethical behavior if the ends appear to justify the means.

Differences that may exist among the frequencies of academic dishonesty between male and female 9th grade science students will be revealed as an entire group. Similarly, whether or not gender has an effect on the likelihood of participating in academically dishonest behavior will be discovered.

Ward and Beck (1989), further explained why some females engage in academic dishonesty. Individuals are psychologically able to engage in unethical behavior if they successfully use excuses that allow them to evade obligations to societal norms and laws. This includes believing that the situation facilitated the action, that no one was hurt by the action, or that a greater good was served by the action.

The results of the previously stated research could very well apply to male students as well. It will be interesting to see if results do in fact differ between the sex groups and if so by what factor. Although it is not the design nor the intention of this particular research to reveal why gender influences cheating, the cited resource
does provide some intriguing information into the psychology of academic dishonesty.

Stern and Havlicek (1986), reported results in Academic misconduct: Results of faculty and undergraduate student surveys, Journal of Allied Health, that indicated that males were more prone to engage in academic dishonesty than were females. Similarly, as stated in Profile of college examination cheaters, College Student Journal, Tang, Shengming, Zuo & Jiping (1997), mention a survey of almost 300 college students in three Midwestern states which found that cheating is more commonly reported from males than females. In fact, more than ten percent of all male respondents indicated that they had engaged in unethical academic practices.

Gender differences, perceptions and their influences on cheating among 9th grade science students will be displayed for comparison to previous research related to this topic. This will provide some helpful insights as to whether or not gender differences and the frequencies of academic dishonesty begin at an early age.

Research on this topic dates back to College cheating as a function of subject and situational variables, Journal of Educational Psychology where Hetherington and Feldman (1964), used student plants in classrooms to observe cheating behavior. They found a significantly higher incidence of cheating among men than among women.

Although student plants are not used by the researcher to obtain results pertaining to unethical educational behavior, survey results will be compared to both current research and historical research.
Not all research has supported the assumption that female students are more likely to engage in academically dishonest behavior than males. In *Can we control cheating in the classroom?*, (1999), the researchers surveyed over 500 students at two public universities and found that gender did not influence cheating.

Regardless of the outcomes of the research of this thesis pertaining to gender and academic dishonesty, the information obtained will still be an important aspect of the study.

**GRADE POINT AVERAGE (G.P.A.) COMPARISONS**

Little research, current or dated, could be found by the researcher regarding Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) and its’ affects on unethical educational practices pertaining to the researcher’s specific survey group. However, several articles are cited from studies of both college and adult education studies. These sources will provide a foundation for the results obtained in the 9th grade survey that is administered to the science students at Forest Hills Central High School.

Research from as far back as four decades to the present have found that a student’s grade point average is an important determinant of academic dishonesty within the classroom. In *Can we control cheating in the classroom?*, (1999), Kerkvliet and Sigmund surveyed over 500 students at two public universities in the United States. Among their findings, they concluded that students with higher grade point averages had a lower probability of cheating. They also found that the further along a student is in their academic career, the more likely they are to cheat.
Many studies dated well before the previous research mentioned yielded similar results. Hetherington and Feldman (1964), Kanfer and Duerfeldt (1968), Vitro (1971), Johnson and Gormly (1972), Kelly and Worrell (1978), and Baird (1980) all reported that individuals with lower intelligence and lower grade point averages have a greater propensity to engage in unethical behavior, inside and outside the realm of academics.

This research will not only reveal how grade point average effects the frequency of unethical educational practices, but it will also determine if the students are cheating more or less than they did in the previous school year. This could be a significant predictor of future behavior in the classroom.

In *Profile of college examination cheaters*, (1997), over 200 students were surveyed. The results of this study indicated that grade point average is negatively related to cheating. In other words, the higher a student’s grade point average, the lower their tendency to cheat. It was also noted that in terms of personal characteristics of cheaters, grade point average is one of the most important predictors of cheating singled out by previous literature. The general finding is that high academic achievers are less likely to commit acts of academic dishonesty. Also, Kerkvliet and Sigmund (1999), surveyed over 500 college students ranging from freshman to seniors in the 1993-1994 academic school year. Their results indicated that students with higher grade point averages had a lower probability of cheating. This research also suggested that the further along a student is in his or her academic career, the more likely they are to be academically dishonest.
Similarly, research is discussed by Mixon (1996) in *Crime in the classroom: An extension*, *The Journal of Economic Education*, whom administered a survey to 157 students in economics courses in the College of Business Administration at a large state university in the South. This was a very short five question survey pertaining to the frequencies of academic dishonesty. The results of this study suggest that habitual unethical academic behavior is inversely related to grade point average.

This research will reveal whether freshman science students with higher grade point averages have a lower, higher or similar tendency to engage in unethical behavior in the classroom. These results could further expose trends in academic achievement versus academic dishonesty.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter presents abstracts from literature written on overall frequencies of cheating in schools, gender differences and cheating, and grade point average comparisons. First, evidence was presented describing how widespread and variable academic dishonesty is in schools around our nation. Also, previous research suggests that there are significant differences in both the perceptions and frequencies of cheating between male and female students. Lastly, grade point average appears to be one of the most significant factors in determining an individual student’s propensity to engage in unethical academic practices.
Chapter Three will focus on both Bell’s (1998), research in *Cheating minds* and Steinberg’s (1996), research of American High Schools found in *Beyond the classroom: Why school reform has failed and what parents need to do*. Gender comparisons will be made with the help of research stated in *An investigation into the dimensions of unethical behavior*, (1998), and the work of Ward & Beck, (1989), in *Gender and dishonesty*. The work of Kerkvliet and Sigmund, (1999), writing in *Can we control cheating in the classroom?*, and results reported in *Profiles of college examination cheaters* (1997), will be used with the results of this survey’s grade point average comparisons.

Chapter Three will present the findings from a survey on the frequencies and perceptions of cheating that was administered to 159 9th grade science students at Forest Hills Central High School and discuss the results of the questionnaire in further detail. Conclusions will include a more extensive discussion of classroom academic dishonesty based on the research and results of collected data. This research will also suggest a list of helpful hints, tips, and strategies to minimize a student’s opportunity or consideration to partake in academically dishonest behavior.
CHAPTER THREE: THESIS DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

In doing research on this topic, the researcher found that practices of academic dishonesty in school is indeed a reality and problem of great magnitude in our countries educational institutions from grade schools to high schools, and from universities to the workplace. The problem is so profound that it has aroused the attention and concern of different groups in our society, including educators, parents, administrators and researchers. Each of these groups have made observations or studied this topic and all agree it is important that measures are taken to reduce its incidences. Exactly how to effectively deter unethical behavior inside and outside of the classroom remains a difficult task for both educators and administrators. Academic dishonesty is a part of our social and educational lives, and for educators it is an issue that needs to be addressed continually throughout their professional careers.

The goal of this study is to determine the frequency of academic dishonesty among all ninth grade high school science students at Forest Hills Central High School as a representative group. The objectives are as follows. First, the entire surveyed freshman population at the high school will be separated into two main groups based on sex. Second, these groups will each be divided into one of two sub-groups based upon academic achievement (G.P.A.). Next, a comparison will be made between these major groups. Then, the survey will reveal whether or not students feel
that cheating habits will change as they get older. The research will also reveal the student's perceptions of cheating and whether or not unethical academic behavior is more acceptable in certain situations. Lastly, the study will detect any guilt associated with dishonest behavior in the classroom and whether or not students feel that it is ethically wrong to cheat.

The achieved outcomes will be knowing how many total students have engaged in academic dishonesty in some way in the past in science class. Secondly, a comparison of male and female survey results will be made. Lastly, grade point average comparisons will be made based on survey results among both sex groups.

This chapter will be organized in the following way. First, this thesis will be described in Thesis Components. In this section, all of the component parts of research study will be discussed. Second, Thesis Methodologies will explain in detail exactly how the study was conducted. Thesis Results will outline the goals, objectives and outcomes that the research has achieved. Fourthly, information that is obtained through this research and a summary of the thesis will be described in the Conclusions section. Lastly, plans for how the information obtained in this research will be used and disseminated will be outlined in Recommendations.
THESIS COMPONENTS

The goal of this thesis is to provide information to the Forest Hills Public School District and the educational faculty at Central High School regarding the frequency of unethical academic dishonesty among ninth grade science students. In order to effectively accomplish this, a standard definition of what "cheating" is and what situations constitute it was developed. Next, students from eleven separate ninth grade introductory science sections where given a survey pertaining to academic dishonesty, specifically, within their science classroom. Then, data was collected as an entire group and analyzed. Separations of smaller groups within the one large group of data were made and their individual results were compared to each other. Conclusions were then drawn based on the analysis of the data and then reported.

THESIS METHODOLOGIES

Selecting Students for the Study

This research project was approved by Grand Valley State Universities Human Research Review Committee (see Appendix A). Further permission was sought and approved by Forest Hills Central High School's building principal (see Appendix B).

Due to the scope of my research, selecting an effective method of determining the frequency of academic dishonesty among ninth grade science students for the study proved to be a difficult process. The idea of using teacher or student "plants" in the classroom to observe unethical behavior proved to be too difficult, cumbersome and impractical due to the size of the sample. Also, if a student had the slightest
inclination that their behavior was being observed, especially during test or quiz situations, they would most definitely refrain from any suspicious behavior remotely related to cheating. Also, cheating may be hard to detect. Students can tamper electronically with grade records, transmit quiz answers via pagers or cell phones, and lift term papers from hundreds of Web sites. Reasonably priced surveillance equipment, including hidden cameras and tape recorders, is taking cheating to a whole new level (Kleiner and Lord, 1999). As strategies have become more sophisticated and creative, simply observing students would have been a tedious, tiresome and perhaps ineffective procedure for both myself and my colleagues. Not to mention, we are not strictly observers of the classroom students. We are their teachers; teaching lessons, initiating discussions and performing laboratory activities.

Based on those obstacles, administering a survey to every freshman student in the school during their science class, which is a mandatory class for all freshmen, was a more logical and realistic choice. This was a one day event coordinated by myself and three other science teachers with no surveys given to students in the days to follow if they were absent on the day of the survey. The total number of students surveyed was 159. Each student was told that their anonymity would be preserved, and they were asked to be completely honest when answering each of the survey questions. The assumption is that these students answered the survey questions honestly and the results reflect an accurate representation of the freshman student’s thoughts regarding this intriguing issue. From personal observations and observations of my colleagues, the students answered the questions honestly. The
Inquiry Before the Study

It became apparent early on in this research that in order to determine how commonly students in the freshman science classes at Forest Hills Central High School participate in academically dishonest behavior, there must first be a uniform definition of what cheating is. In May of the 2002 school year, approximately two weeks before the end of the school year, the researcher asked the students in his 7th hour chemistry class consisting of 11th grade juniors to fill out a questionnaire inquiring what they considered “cheating” was. The intent was to get an idea of what students think cheating is and what were some of the methods they were aware of or had used or seen used in the past. This was a completely voluntary act on the student’s part, had no effect on their class grade, and was completely anonymous. Nineteen students from a class of twenty one chose to participate in the brief questionnaire (see Appendix C).

Next, from the nineteen worksheets, a single list consisting of all of the different forms of cheating the students had offered was compiled. These worksheets provided twenty different forms of academic dishonesty. A survey containing the twenty different forms of academic dishonesty was then created (see Appendix D). Then, the researcher’s 4th hour chemistry class of juniors were asked to rank each forms of cheating on a scale of one to four, one indicating that they strongly agree that the statement was a form of cheating and four representing a strong disagreement. The
survey was taken anonymously by 18 of my 22 students. The results of each survey question can be found in Appendix E.

Results of the Inquiry

Overall conclusions indicated that the majority of surveyed juniors in the chemistry science class considered all twenty statements forms of academic dishonesty. However, some unexpected results were also discovered. For example, over 38% of the students either disagreed or strongly disagreed that telling friends in a later hour of the same class what was on a test was academically unethical. In fact, approximately 20% of the students in 4th hour thought that each of the twenty statements was not a form of cheating. However, based on these results, a standardized definition of "cheating" for my survey that would be administered to the freshman science students the following school year was developed. Also added to this standardized definition were ideas from both personal experience as an educator, from other colleagues at my school and from research of this topic.

Design of the Study

This study was performed in the fall of 2002. The settings were my 9th grade introductory science class and my three colleagues' 9th grade science classes. The total number of classes in which the survey was administered was eleven. The total number of students surveyed in those classes was 159. The students completed a survey called Academic Honesty Survey – Honesty in Academics at the High School
Level (see Appendix F). They answered the 27 question survey by circling the appropriate choice which consisted of the words “yes”, “no”, “more”, “less”, “agree”, “disagree”, “somewhat”, “not at all”, “am”, “am not”, “have” and “have not”. Also, the students indicated their sex, age and their perceived self-reported grade point average (G.P.A.).

Conducting the Study

The formal part of the study, administering the survey, began at the end of the first marking period, approximately nine weeks into the 2002-2003 school year. At this time, each of the eleven separate ninth grade science classes had taken at least six quizzes each, two major tests, and had several homework assignments. Each student had enough assignments during the past nine weeks to provide them with an opportunity to consider or engage in academically dishonest practices. Note: these assignments were not created to nor intended to provide a student with this opportunity, but they were part of the science departments normal yearly lesson plans and activities.

The survey was completely voluntary even after receiving written permission from their parents to participate in the research survey (see Appendix G). Each teacher gave a verbal reminder that the survey they were about to take was strictly voluntary, that they were to no where on the survey write their name, hour or any other information that could lead to the identification of the student and breach in animosity, that their grades were in no way affected by the results of the survey, and
that no one student or class would be singled out (see Appendix H). At the top of the survey, cheating was defined for the students but not limited to the actions listed. Each student was directed by the survey to consider each of the above stated incidences when responding to the survey questions that followed.

**Organization of the Survey Questions**

The following is a description of the survey and how it was organized and analyzed. The statement listed before the survey questions was necessary in order to standardize a definition of what constitutes cheating and list some academically dishonest practices. This list was created from the student results of the inquiry before the study regarding what students' perceptions of cheating were. This was imperative because some students, for example, may not have realized that talking about test questions to another person during passing time between classes in the hallway who has not yet taken the test is technically cheating. With the help of this list, the students all had the same perception of what cheating is and some of the unethical practices that constitute academic dishonesty both before and while filling out the survey.

The first set of questions numbered 1-3 were designed to categorize the students into separate groups based on sex and academic achievement. The mean age of the entire student population surveyed was also determined.

The second set of questions numbered 4-15 were designed to reveal the frequency of cheating occurring in different situations in science class and whether or
not the students felt their cheating habits would change as they get older.

The third set of questions numbered 16-22 were designed to reveal the students’ perceptions of cheating and to determine whether or not cheating is more acceptable in certain situations, ranging from casual homework assignments to quizzes and tests, and if so, which.

The survey questions numbered 23-26 revealed how many students had been caught cheating in the past, whether or not they had observed someone cheating in science class this year, and if so, if they ever informed the teacher. It is a safe assumption to say that most cheaters don’t get caught. In fact, perhaps the major reason students cheat is because they get away with it, time and time again. Numerous studies show that students almost never tell on a classmate who they see is cheating (Kleiner and Lord, 1999).

The last question on the survey, numbered 27, was perhaps the most significant. This question was designed to reveal the students’ opinion of the ethical and moral aspects of participating in academically dishonest deeds, despite any of their answers to the previous survey questions.

**Collecting the Data**

Data collected from this study came in one major form. At the end of the class period on a school day of the researchers choice, the survey was administered to all of the available ninth grade science students at Forest Hills Central High School with the help of my colleagues. The 27-item questionnaire was distributed during regular
class hours. Each classroom teacher emphasized that the responses would be
anonymous and in no way affect their current grade in science class. A total of 159
surveys were returned, but 12 had missing data that rendered the survey unusable.
Thus, the analysis involved complete information on the remaining 147 respondents.
Within the sample, the mean age of the students surveyed was 14 and 54% were
females. Any students absent that day were not given a survey.

Results of the surveys allowed me to get an idea of how cheating was perceived
by the freshman science students as a whole. I was then able to compare these results
to results of previous research mentioned earlier. Checking their survey responses
against prior research results lent to interesting comparisons.

DATA RESULTS

This section is separated into the following groups. **Total Survey Results**
shows the results of the entire surveyed population of freshman boys and girls in the
science classrooms at Forest Hills Central High School. **Gender Comparisons**
indicates how the survey responses varied among males and females. Finally, **G.P.A.
Comparisons** reveals how grade point averages of the students surveyed may have
caused a variation in the responses to the survey questions. Analysis of the survey
results yielded the following results.
Total Survey Results

The total number of freshman science students surveyed which yielded usable data was 147. This represents approximately one half of the total freshman student population at Forest Hills Central High School. Of those surveyed, 96% agreed that everybody cheats in some way sometime in their lives, with approximately one half (48%) indicating that they have cheated in some way in science class in the past. Bell (1998), had the number of cheaters at 65%. The most common place cheating is occurring in science class according to those surveyed is homework (50%). These results closely match that of the work of Steinberg (1996) in which two-thirds of the 10,000 high school students studied admitted to cheating on their homework. Lesser amounts of academic dishonesty were occurring on quizzes (12%) and tests (7%). These results are not surprising as there is a greater opportunity to cheat on homework than on either quizzes or tests which are much more closely monitored by the classroom teacher. Although the freshman students have not yet taken a high school exam, 8% reported that they may consider cheating on their science exam. This was encouraging compared to Relin’s (2001), reports where 71% of the 8,600 students surveyed nationally admitted to cheating on an exam and Bushwellers’s (1999), report of 80% of 3,123 high school students admitting to cheating on an exam. Bell (1998), reported results that were similar to this thesis’ research data. His studies indicated that 75% of the students thought that it is wrong to cheat on an exam.
Sixty-three percent of the respondents indicated they had cheated in more than one class this year. McLaughlin & Ross (1989), reported similar results when their research revealed that 55% of high school students admitted to frequent cheating. Whereas only 44% said they would cheat in science class in the future, 77% indicated they would probably cheat in another class in the future. This discrepancy is possibly due to the fact that the students were taking the survey in their science classroom which creates a bias in this respect.

The majority of the students (93%) indicated that they engage in academic dishonesty less in science class this year than they did last school year. This is significant because previous research by Relin (2001), indicates that cheating frequencies usually increase as a student advances through their academic career. Likewise, Schab (1991), found that academic dishonesty in American schools has increased in each of the past three decades.

Although most students cheat in high school, less than half (44%) indicated they would probably cheat in college and 28% at their job when they are employed. However, Bell (1998), suggested earlier that children see their parents making unethical decisions in their social lives and at their place of employment and that this behavior is perhaps learned by the child and repeated later in life inside and outside the realm of academics.

Even though 99% of the respondents agreed that cheating occurs every day in school, 42% indicated that if not done too frequently, it is okay every once in a while. Also, 69% agreed that teachers should be concerned with academic dishonesty among
the student body. Similarly, McCabe’s (1999), findings were that cheating is a normal part of life in today’s high schools.

More than one half (55%) agreed that cheating can significantly improve an overall grade in a class and, therefore, 4% agreed and 55% somewhat agreed that cheating on homework in science class is acceptable. Evans & Craig (1990), reported that among the primary reasons for cheating was desire for a better grade. Not surprisingly, only 2% agreed and 14% somewhat agreed that cheating on a quiz was okay, the lowest percentages, 0% and 7%, applying to tests respectively. Cheating appears to be more acceptable in certain situations. What factors may influence this was not the design of this research.

Sixty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they are afraid of getting caught in an unethical act of academics even after indicating that they would probably cheat again (77%). Seventy-six percent of the students have not been caught cheating in the past. These findings are similar to Bell’s (1998), research that indicated most students who engage in academic dishonesty are not caught. Similarly, sixty-seven percent of the students have noticed someone cheating in science class this year, but 98% of them did not tell the teacher. Earlier, Bell (1998), suggested that perhaps this is a reason why students engage in academic dishonesty in the first place.

Despite any of the freshman science students’ previous responses, the last survey question revealed that 81% of all the respondents think that cheating is ethically wrong. Similarly, Bell (1998), found that 87% of the respondents believe
that honesty is the best policy. Total results of the survey can be found in Appendices I and J.

Gender Comparisons

Boys indicated they cheat more in science class (56%) than did girls (42%). These results are supported by Stern & Havlicek (1986), whose results indicated that males were more prone to engage in academic dishonesty than were females. This idea held true for quizzes (16% versus 8%) and tests (9% and 6%), also. However, females reported that they cheat more on homework assignments (51%) than did males (49%). Twelve percent of the male respondents considered the probability of cheating on their science exam versus the females’ five percent. When asked if they have cheated in more than one class, males reported 57% and females a shocking 68%.

Asked whether or not they would cheat in science class again, 53% of the males said yes and 37% of the females said yes. Males also indicated a stronger affinity to cheating again in other classes (81%) than did the females (73%). Buckley, Wiese & Harvey (1998), administered a 90 item questionnaire to more than 200 students and found males had a higher propensity to engage in unethical academic behavior than did females.

Boys are much more under the impression that cheating can significantly improve an overall grade in a class, 60% versus 51% for girls. Perhaps this is why they are less afraid of getting caught (57%) than are females (70%) and are more
prone to take risks even though they indicated 28% had been caught cheating compared to 20% of the freshman girls. Ward and Beck (1989), indicated that males are less prone to obey rules of society and more likely to behave unethically more often than women if the ends appear to justify the means.

Both gender groups agreed (99%) that cheating occurs every day in school. Eighty four percent of the female respondents think that it is ethically wrong to cheat, and 78% of the male respondents think that it is ethically wrong. Ward and Beck (1989), previously explained that students are academically dishonest if they believe that no one was hurt by their actions or that a greater good was served by their action. Complete gender comparison survey results can be found in Appendices K and L.

G.P.A. Comparisons

Grade point averages were self-reported on the survey by each of the freshman science students. Due to the uneven numbers of respondents in each four major G.P.A groups (grades A through D) that were indicated, grade point averages ranging from 1.0 to 2.5 were considered “low” for purposes of this thesis study. Grade point averages ranging from 3.0 to 4.0 were considered “high”.

Results indicated that on quizzes and tests, the lower grade point average student was twice as likely to engage in academic dishonesty. Mixon’s (1996), research results supported these findings. On homework assignments, low grade point average respondents were also more prone to cheating (56%) than were high grade point average respondents (46%). However, when asked in a previous question
whether or not they had cheated in science class this year, low G.P.A. students reported 43% yes and high G.P.A. students reported 53% yes. The reasons for these inconsistencies are not known by the researcher.

Low grade point average students also reported a greater probability of cheating on their science exam, of cheating again in both their science class and in other classes, and also at their future places of employment. Furthermore, a higher percentage of them indicated cheating in more than one class. Kerkvliet and Sigmund's (1999), survey of 500 public university students reported that students with higher grade point averages had a lower probability of cheating.

One half of the low G.P.A. respondents reported that cheating, if not done too frequently, is okay every once in a while compared to 38% for the high G.P.A. group.

Thirteen percent less respondents of low grade point average indicated that they thought teachers should be concerned with cheating. Twelve percent more of them also thought that cheating can significantly improve an overall grade in a class.

More than three times as many low grade point average students thought that it was somewhat okay to cheat on a quiz. Furthermore, more than four times as many low G.P.A. students reported that it was somewhat okay to cheat on a test. In Profile of examination cheaters, (1997), the researchers found not only is grade point average negatively related to cheating, but that G.P.A. is one of the most important predictors of academic dishonesty.

Consistency existed between the two grade point average groups regarding the ethical issues of academic dishonesty. Eighty-two percent of high G.P.A respondents
and 80% of low G.P.A. respondents indicated that cheating is ethically wrong. Detailed survey results for grade point average comparisons can be found in Appendices M and N.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of this study and statements in Chapter one, cheating is common place in ninth grade science classrooms at Forest Hills Central High School. The majority of the surveyed freshman students engage in academic dishonesty and believe it occurs everyday in their school. Cheating occurs in homework assignments, on quizzes and on tests. Even though students perform academically unethical actions less than the previous year, most of them indicated that they would probably cheat again in both science class and in other classes in school. More than one half of the students felt that cheating can significantly improve their overall grade in a class and believe that cheating on a homework assignment is more acceptable than on either a quiz or test.

Most of the ninth grade science students are afraid of getting caught engaging in academically dishonest acts, but more than three quarters of them have not been caught.

Of the students that have seen someone cheating in science class this year, almost all of them have not told the teacher.

Despite all of the previous statements, the majority of the freshman science students at Forest Hills Central High School believe that cheating is ethically wrong.
Gender appears to be a factor in a student’s propensity to engage in unethical educational practices. Males cheat more in science class, have cheated more in other classes, will more likely cheat again in both science class and other classes in their school, and believe more so that academic dishonesty can significantly improve their overall grade in a class than do females. Males are also less afraid of getting caught cheating even though more of them reported having been caught cheating in the past.

Grade point average also appears to be a major factor in a student’s participation in academic dishonesty. Lower grade point average students cheat more on science homework, quizzes and tests and in other classes than higher G.P.A. students. Higher percentages of low G.P.A. respondents indicated the likelihood of cheating again in both science class and other classes in the future. One half of low G.P.A. students think that cheating is okay and almost two-thirds of them feel that it can significantly improve their overall grade in a class.

The objectives and outcomes of this thesis research project as described in Chapter one have been achieved. Based on the results of this thesis study, the strategies the researcher used were effective. Likewise, the data is reliable and the results and conclusions of the survey are valid.

RECOMMENDATIONS / PLANS FOR DISSEMINATION

This section includes a list of suggestions for the use of the information obtained from this study. It also suggests some additional steps that should be taken as a follow up to this research and also additional research that should be done in
order to properly grasp in a global sense the true influence and impact academic dishonesty has on all students at Forest Hills Central High School. Lastly, plans for the dissemination of the research results and findings will be discussed. This will include how this work will be shared with colleagues at both Central High School and the other high school in the Forest Hills district, and also with other professionals in academic teaching careers.

The information and data gathered from this research would very easily be used by other high schools of the neighboring school districts within our region of the state of Michigan as well as among high schools in neighboring states which have demographics similar to that of Forest Hills Central High School. It is comforting to believe that this information will be useful to many school districts around the country and be helpful to educators, administrators and parents as an insight into the potential propensity our nation’s students have of engaging in unethically dishonest educational practices, particularly at the high school level.

The following is a list of possible research questions derived from this thesis study that could be used for future investigations. How would the information obtained from the thesis survey results differ among:

- students of upper class (ie. Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors)?
- male and female students from each upper age group?
- boys and girls of upper classes from each G.P.A. group?
With a larger sample population, the survey questions would be able to address each of these situations, leading to a much larger collection of data and insight into the level and frequency of cheating among all high school students at Forest Hills Central High School.

It would also be interesting to conduct the same survey with the same group of students through the next three years of high school. A comparison of these results with the results from each previous year could then be made and analyzed. This may lead to some interesting observations and possible changes in the frequencies and perceptions of cheating among different sex and academic groups as they advance through their high school careers. It would also be interesting to note how and possibly why this particular freshman classes' frequencies of academic dishonesty in science class changes or remains consistent with previous year’s data.

Another point of consideration for future research pertaining to this topic is something the research either purposefully did not addressed, or chose not to expound upon. These items include why students cheat, the methods and techniques they use, when cheating starts, causes of temptation, consequences of cheating, or perceived and actual advantages and disadvantages of performing academically dishonest acts. The research also does not show social, economic, religious or ethical factors that can effect cheating. Differences that may exist between these extremely varied groups could lead to some very insightful research and development of an understanding of the reasons children engage in academically unethical behavior. Also, this thesis does not address where cheating is learned, at what age it begins, or how long it endures.

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Further research could be done to investigate how effective teachers are at deterring cheating and whether or not teachers are actively trying to prevent it from happening in their individual classrooms or their schools. If so, a helpful list of methods proven to be effective and ineffective in certain situations could be produced. The answers to these intriguing questions could help educators in schools around the nation get a better understanding of academic dishonesty and the many complex aspects of this intriguing issue. From the results obtained during the course of this study and personal and casual interviews with fellow colleagues at Forest Hills Central High School, a list of helpful hints, tips and strategies to minimize a student's opportunity to cheat or consider cheating has been included at the end of this research document (see Appendix O).

A copy of this thesis will be given to the science department at Forest Hills Central High School. Every teacher within the department, and especially those who teach freshman science students, will be encouraged to read and explore the results of this study. Another copy of this document will be given to the high school principal and made available to other administrators within the building. It will be strongly encouraged that they share the results of the survey contained in this thesis with the administrators and teachers of the second high school in our district. Furthermore, with the construction of a third high school within our district now underway, this research could prove not only to be extremely helpful, but perhaps invaluable to the development of curriculum and effective teaching strategies that instill academic honesty within the mindset of our students and faculty members.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

Disclaimer

The sources cited in this document, An Examination Of The Frequency Of Unethical Practices In High School Among 9th Grade Science Students, have been checked for copyright. Some of the materials used are from public domain, some are the creation of the author, and some are copyrighted; for the latter, letters of permission have been attached to the Appendices section. To my knowledge, I have not infringed on any copyrights of the sources cited.
Appendix A  HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE
FORM

5th Edition, 11/01

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
Human Research Review Committee

Principal Investigator(s):  RUSSELL J. CHYDI  Telephone: (616) 493-3720
Address Principal Investigator(s):  7291 WESTCLAYE AVE. TENISON, MI 49428

Department of School: Advanced Studies in Education
Title of Project: AN EXAMINATION OF THE FREQUENCY OF CHEATING IN HIGH SCHOOL 9TH GRADE SCIENCE STUDENTS
Summary of the Project: I AM INVESTIGATING THE FREQUENCY OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY THAT OCCURS AMONG 9TH GRADE SCIENCE STUDENTS AT FORREST HILLS CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.

In what capacity does this project involve human subjects? (E.g., surveys, interviews, clinical trial, use of medical records, etc.)
THE ENTIRE FRESHMAN CLASS WILL BE ASKED TO COMPLETE A 29 QUESTION SURVEY. THE PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. NO CAPACITY AFFECT THEIR CURRENT GRADE AND EACH STUDENT WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS. LIKEWISE, NO ONE INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP WILL CHECK ONE (A.S.E. projects are typically eligible for the exempt review) AS SINGLED OUT.

This is a request for expedited review as described in 46.110 of the Federal Register 46; 4/1/1993, January 14, 1992. (Refer to instructions on the reverse of this form.)

This is a request for full review. (Refer to instructions on the reverse of this form.)

ANTONIO HERRERA
Name of Project Supervisor:

Project Supervisor's Signature:

(616) 771-6673
Project Supervisor's Phone Number:

Email: 

NOTE: Proposals which do not include a summary of the project and which fail to address to the requirements stated in the instructions for applicants (a separate final printed instructions or applicants) will not be considered and will be sent back to the author.

10/5/93

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Appendix B

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM BUILDING PRINCIPAL TO CONDUCT SURVEY

Mrs. Westdorp,

I am working on my thesis in partial fulfillment of my Master's of Education degree from Grand Valley State University. For this program, I must conduct some research and survey students on a topic related to education. The topic I have chosen is cheating; the frequencies and perceptions.

At this time I am requesting permission to survey all of the freshman students in their Introductory Science classes. The survey will only be used for my graduate studies and all information gathered will remain anonymous. I will be surveying the entire freshman class at Forest Hills Central High School and the data will be collected as a group. No one individual will be singled out as an example. No student names will be used in my report or presentation.

Attached is a copy of the permission letter I will be sending home to the freshman parents upon your permission. Also, I have included a copy of the survey I will be administering to the students sometime at the end of October or early November.

If you will grant me permission to conduct my survey this year, please sign this letter below. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Russ Chudy

I grant you permission to conduct your survey and continue your research in pursuit of your master's degree from Grand Valley State University.

Signed
Principal

Date 11/24/02

Printed Name Kathe Westdorp
Appendix C  ACTIVITY TO DEFINE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Dear 7th Hour,

I have a favor to ask you. This summer, I am starting a project that will eventually lead me to receiving my master's degree from Grand Valley State University this coming winter. My research is regarding high school cheating. The focus of my research will be on the frequency of cheating by freshman students. This is where I need your help, please. In order for me to find out how common cheating is here at Central High School, I must first define what cheating is. Is it simply bringing a "cheat sheet" into class with you on test day or is it more things such as copying a report off the Internet or telling other students what is on a test during passing time in the hallways?

Could you please list some things, actions, and occurrences that you consider being forms of cheating? This in no way is going to affect your semester grade. Do not write your name anywhere on this paper. Just give me some ideas if you can. The design of my research is not to try to stop cheating (which I do try), but to see how common it really is among freshman students.

Thank you very much. I really do appreciate it.

- Mr. Chudy
Appendix D  SERIOUNESS OF THE METHODS OF CHEATING
SURVEY

Dear 4th Hour,

I have a favor to ask you. This summer, I am starting a project that will eventually lead me to receiving my master's degree from Grand Valley State University this coming winter. My research is regarding high school cheating. The focus of my research will be on the frequency of cheating by freshman students. This is where I need your help, please. In order for me to find out how common cheating is here at Central High School, I must first define what cheating is. Is it simply bringing a “cheat sheet” into class with you on test day or is it more things such as copying a report off the Internet or telling other students what is on a test during passing time in the hallways?

Could you please list some things, actions, and occurrences that you consider being forms of cheating? This in no way is going to affect your semester grade. Do not write your name anywhere on this paper. Just give me some ideas if you can. The design of my research is not to try to stop cheating (which I do try), but to see how common it really is among freshman students.

Thank you very much. I really do appreciate it.

- Mr. Chudy

Could you please rank the following “methods” of cheating according to their “seriousness” using the following scale:

1 = strongly agree  2 = agree  3 = disagree  4 = strongly disagree

The following are all serious forms of cheating:

1. copying homework

2. copying tests from other students in class

3. using cheat sheets or hidden note cards

4. writing answers to a test on hands or other body parts

5. telling friends in a later hour of the class what was on a test
6. handing in older siblings' assignments as your own

7. going through teacher’s desk drawers or property to find test answers

8. conveniently laying out books or notes containing necessary materials while taking a test

9. copying reports off of Internet

10. skipping the day of a test so that you can obtain the answers from other students or overhear them when the class goes over them the next day

11. storing formulas in the memory of your calculator

12. writing answers to a test on your desk

13. discussing answers with other students during a test if the teacher leaves the room

14. using hand signals or sign language to communicate answers during a test

15. paying or bribing other students to write down test answers for you

16. turning in another person's homework if you forgot yours

17. peering at another student's homework, test, quiz or assignment during class or after class

18. unfairly changing answers after a test is over or already graded

19. using tape recorders, cds or silent pagers

20. "hacking" into school's computer systems and changing grades
## Appendix E  RESULTS OF METHODS OF CHEATING SURVEY

Results of Junior class inquiry regarding academic dishonesty  
\[ N = 18 \]  
Margin of error = +/- .5%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question Number</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F  ACADEMIC HONESTY SURVEY

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS WORKSHEET

ACADEMIC HONESTY SURVEY

HONESTY IN ACADEMICS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

SURVEY

The following actions are all forms of cheating. They include but are not limited to:
- "cheat sheets"
- copying another person's homework (even one answer)
- writing down a work or phrase on your desk, hand, etc. to remind you of other information
- downloading information on a graphing calculator
- talking about a quiz or test you have already taken with another student who has not (and vice versa)
- using the work of others in your own assignments / projects obtained from friends, siblings (brothers and sisters), books, internet sources, etc.
- peering at another student's homework, test, quiz, assignments during class or after class
- showing answers to questions on homework assignments, projects, etc.
- telling someone outside of class what is on an upcoming test or quiz
- using past assignments from students who took the course the previous year
- sign language, hand, face gestures
- tape recorders and silent pagers

Please consider each of the above incidences when responding to the survey questions that follow.

Directions: For each question or statement, circle the appropriate response. Choose only one response for each statement.

1. I am a male / female.

2. I am 13 / 14 / 15 years old.

3. My approximate Grade Point Average (GPA) in science class is: (circle one)
   1.0 / 1.5 / 2.0 / 2.5 / 3.0 / 3.5 / 4.0
   D    D+    C-    C    C+    B-    B    B+    A-    A

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4. Everybody cheats in some way sometime in their lives.  
   Agree / Disagree

5. I have cheated in some way in science class this year.  
   Yes / No

6. I have cheated on homework in science class this year.  
   Yes / No

7. I have cheated on a quiz in science class this year.  
   Yes / No

8. I have cheated on a test in science class this year.  
   Yes / No

9. I may consider cheating on my science exam.  
   Yes / No

10. I have cheated in more than one class this year.  
    Yes / No

11. I will probably cheat again in science class in the future.  
    Yes / No

12. I will probably cheat in some other class in the future.  
    Yes / No

13. I cheat (more / less) in science class this year than I did last year.

14. I will probably cheat in some way in college if I choose to attend.  
    Yes / No

15. I will probably cheat in some way at my job when I am employed.  
    Yes / No

16. Cheating, if not done too frequently, is okay every once in a while.
    
    Agree / Disagree

17. Teachers should not be concerned with students cheating because it is not that big of a deal if a student cheats once in a while.
    
    Agree / Disagree

18. Cheating occurs every day in school.
    
    Agree / Disagree

19. Cheating can significantly improve an overall grade in a class.
    
    Agree / Disagree
20. Cheating on a homework assignment in science is okay.
   Yes / Somewhat / Not at all

21. Cheating on a science quiz is okay.
   Yes / Somewhat / Not at all

22. Cheating on a science test is okay.
   Yes / Somewhat / Not at all

23. I (am / am not) afraid of getting caught cheating.

24. I (have / have not) been caught cheating in the past.

25. Have you noticed anyone cheating in science class this year? Yes / No

26. If you answered “Yes” to #25, did you ever tell the teacher?
   Yes / No

27. Is cheating ethically wrong? Yes / No

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND HONESTY.
Dear Parents or Guardians, 

My name is Russ Chudy and I have been teaching ninth grade Introductory Science for eight years. Currently, I am working on my thesis in partial fulfillment of my Master's of Education degree from Grand Valley State University. For this program, I must conduct some research and survey students on a topic related to education. The topic I have chosen is cheating: the frequencies and perceptions.

At this time I am requesting permission to survey your son or daughter in their Introductory Science classes. The survey will only be used for my graduate studies and all information gathered will remain anonymous. I will be surveying the entire freshman class at Forest Hills Central High School and the data will be collected as a group. No one individual will be singled out as an example. No student names will be used in my report or presentation. The survey will have no affect on their current science grade and will be completely voluntary.

If this survey raises some questions from either you or your child, I will be glad to meet with you to explain further my intentions. Also, if you or your child is curious about how the survey questions may be helpful to them or to teachers, I will be happy to explain. This could be a helpful insight into their attitude towards secondary education and their high school in general.

For questions pertaining to the rights of the participants, contact Professor Paul Huizenga, Chair, Grand Valley State University Human Resource Review Committee, at (616) 331-2472.

If you will allow me to survey your child, please sign this form. If you have questions before signing, you may reach me at school or during my conference hour as I will not conduct the survey until the last week of October or early November.

Thank you for your time. I hope your student has a wonderful and exciting year in science class.

Sincerely,

Mr. Chudy
493-8700 (school phone)
Prep. Hour 9:00 to 10:00

My child _______________________________ has permission to complete a survey for Mr. Chudy.

Parent / Guardian Signature _________________________________ Date _______
Appendix H  PROCTORING INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS
ON THE DAY OF THE SURVEY

Teachers: Please read the following statement in full before administering the academic honesty survey to your freshman students.

You are about to answer a 27 question survey pertaining to academic dishonesty both within science class and school. Only students for whom I have received a signed permission slip from their parents or guardians should participate in this survey. No where on the survey should you put your name, your teacher’s name, your class hour or any other distinguishing marks that could reveal your identity. Your surveys will be kept completely anonymous. No one individual or class will be singled out. This survey will in no way affect either your current grade in science class nor any future academic achievement. Students who have received permission to take the survey may still choose to opt themselves out. However, Mr. Chudy would greatly appreciate your time in filling out this questionnaire. Please be as honest and truthful as you can on all of the survey questions.

Thank you very much in advance to those of you who participate in this survey today.

Sincerely,

Mr. Chudy
Appendix I  TOTAL ACADEMIC HONESTY SURVEY RESULTS

Academic Dishonesty Results
(Total Science Class Results - male and female freshman)
(mean age 14 / N = 147  margin of error = +/- .5%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>% response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everybody cheats in some way sometime in their lives.</td>
<td>Agree = 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated in some way in science class in the past.</td>
<td>Yes = 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on homework in science class this year.</td>
<td>Yes = 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on a quiz in science class this year.</td>
<td>No = 88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on a test in science class this year.</td>
<td>No = 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I may consider cheating on my science exam.</td>
<td>No = 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated in more than one class this year.</td>
<td>Yes = 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat again in science class in the future.</td>
<td>No = 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some other class in the future.</td>
<td>Yes = 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cheat (more / less) in science class this year than I did last year.</td>
<td>Less = 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some way in college if I choose to attend.</td>
<td>No = 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some way at my job when I am employed.</td>
<td>No = 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating, if not done too frequently, is okay every once in a while. Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree = 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should not be concerned with students cheating because it is not that big of a deal if a student cheats once in a while. Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree = 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating occurs every day in school.</td>
<td>Agree = 99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating can significantly improve an overall grade in a class.</td>
<td>Agree = 55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Survey Question

Cheating on a homework assignment in science is okay.

Cheating on a science quiz is okay.

Cheating on a science test is okay.

I (am / am not) afraid of getting caught cheating.

I (have / have not) been caught cheating in the past.

Have you ever noticed anyone cheating in science class this year?

If you answered “Yes” to #25, did you ever tell the teacher?

Is cheating ethically wrong?

% response

Yes = 4%
Somewhat = 55%
Not at all = 41%

Yes = 2%
Somewhat = 14%
Not at all = 84%

Yes = 0%
Somewhat = 7%
Not at all = 93%

Am = 64%

Have not = 76%

Yes = 67%

No = 98%

Yes = 81%
Appendix J  BAR GRAPHS FOR SELECTED QUESTIONS
FOR TOTAL SURVEY RESULTS

1. Cheating occurs everyday in school
   - Agree
   - Disagree

2. Number of "Yes" responses
   - Have cheated in science class
   - Have cheated on science homework
   - Have cheated on science quiz
   - Have cheated on science test

3. Cheating is okay or somewhat okay
   - On Homework
   - On Quizzes
   - On Tests
Percent of Students

- Have noticed another student cheating
- Have informed the teacher

Percentage of respondents

- Have been caught cheating in school
- Will cheat again in science class
- Will cheat again in school
- Believe cheating is ethically wrong
Appendix K  GENDER COMPARISONS FOR ACADEMIC HONESTY SURVEY RESULTS

Academic Dishonesty Survey Results Gender Comparisons
(Number of males surveyed = 68)
(Number of females surveyed = 79)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>% of total males</th>
<th>% of total females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everybody cheats in some way in their lives.</td>
<td>Agree = 93%</td>
<td>Agree = 99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated in some way in science class this year.</td>
<td>Yes = 56%</td>
<td>Yes = 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on homework in science class this year.</td>
<td>No = 51%</td>
<td>No = 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on a quiz in science class this year.</td>
<td>No = 84%</td>
<td>No = 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on a test in science class this year.</td>
<td>No = 91%</td>
<td>No = 94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I may consider cheating on my science exam.</td>
<td>No = 88%</td>
<td>No = 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated in more than one class this year.</td>
<td>Yes = 57%</td>
<td>Yes = 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat again in science class in the future.</td>
<td>Yes = 53%</td>
<td>Yes = 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some other class in the future.</td>
<td>Yes = 81%</td>
<td>Yes = 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cheat (more / less) in science class this year than I did last year.</td>
<td>Less = 90%</td>
<td>Less = 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some way in college if I choose to attend.</td>
<td>No = 51%</td>
<td>No = 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some way at my job when I am employed.</td>
<td>No = 71%</td>
<td>No = 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating, if not done too frequently, is okay every once in a while.</td>
<td>Disagree = 60%</td>
<td>Disagree = 56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Question | % males | % females |
--- | --- | --- |
Teachers should not be concerned with students cheating because it is not that big of a deal if a student cheats once in a while. | Disagree = 71% | Disagree = 68% |
Cheating occurs every day in school. | Agree = 99% | Agree = 99% |
Cheating can significantly improve an overall grade in a class. | Agree = 60% | Agree = 51% |
Cheating on a homework assignment in science is okay. | Yes = 6% Somewhat = 56% Not at all = 38% | Yes = 3% Somewhat = 54% Not at all = 43% |
Cheating on a science quiz is okay. | Yes = 3% Somewhat = 15% Not at all = 82% | Yes = 1% Somewhat = 14% Not at all = 85% |
Cheating on a science test is okay. | Yes = 0% Somewhat = 7% Not at all = 93% | Yes = 0% Somewhat = 6% Not at all = 94% |
I (am / am not) afraid of getting caught cheating. | Agree = 57% | Agree = 70% |
I (have / have not) been caught cheating in the past. | Have not = 72% | Have not = 80% |
Have you ever noticed anyone cheating in science class this year? | Yes = 69% | Yes = 66% |
If you answered "Yes" to #25, did you ever tell the teacher? | No = 96% | No = 100% |
Is cheating ethically wrong? | Yes = 78% | Yes = 84% |
Appendix L     BAR GRAPHS FOR SELECTED QUESTIONS
FOR GENDER SURVEY RESULTS

For survey results:

1. Have cheated in science class
2. Have cheated in more than one class
3. Agree cheating can improve overall grade
4. Are afraid of getting caught cheating
5. Will cheat in science class again
6. Will cheat in another class again
7. Agree cheating is ethically wrong

Bar graphs showing:
- Percentage of males and females
- Comparisons between gender responses

Bar graphs include:
- Horizontal and vertical axes
- Categories and corresponding data points
## Appendix M  G.P.A. COMPARISONS FOR ACADEMIC HONESTY SURVEY RESULTS

### TOTAL SURVEY RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>1.0 - 2.5 GPA</th>
<th>3.0-4.0 GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everybody cheats in some way in their lives.</td>
<td>Agree = 100%</td>
<td>Agree = 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated in some way in science class this year.</td>
<td>Yes = 43%</td>
<td>Yes = 52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on homework in science class this year.</td>
<td>Yes = 56%</td>
<td>Yes = 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on a quiz in science class this year.</td>
<td>No = 81%</td>
<td>No = 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated on a test in science class this year.</td>
<td>No = 89%</td>
<td>No = 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I may consider cheating on my science exam.</td>
<td>No = 85%</td>
<td>No = 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have cheated in more than one class this year.</td>
<td>Yes = 70%</td>
<td>Yes = 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat again in science class in the future.</td>
<td>Yes = 50%</td>
<td>Yes = 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some other class in the future.</td>
<td>Yes = 89%</td>
<td>Yes = 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cheat (more / less) in science class this year than I did last year.</td>
<td>Less = 96%</td>
<td>Less = 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some way in college if I choose to attend.</td>
<td>No = 52%</td>
<td>No = 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably cheat in some way at my job when I am employed.</td>
<td>No = 65%</td>
<td>No = 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating, if not done too frequently, is okay every once in a while.</td>
<td>Disagree = 50%</td>
<td>Disagree = 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should not be concerned with students cheating because it is not that big of a deal if a student cheats once in a while.</td>
<td>Disagree = 61%</td>
<td>Disagree = 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating occurs every day in school.</td>
<td>Agree = 98%</td>
<td>Agree = 99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Question</td>
<td>1.0 – 2.5 GPA</td>
<td>3.0–4.0 GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating can significantly improve an overall grade in a class.</td>
<td>Agree = 63%</td>
<td>Agree = 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on a homework assignment in science is okay.</td>
<td>Yes = 4%</td>
<td>Yes = 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat = 59%</td>
<td>Somewhat = 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all = 37%</td>
<td>Not at all = 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on a science quiz is okay.</td>
<td>Yes = 2%</td>
<td>Yes = 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat = 28%</td>
<td>Somewhat = 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all = 70%</td>
<td>Not at all = 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on a science test is okay.</td>
<td>Yes = 0%</td>
<td>Yes = 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat = 13%</td>
<td>Somewhat = 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all = 87%</td>
<td>Not at all = 97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (am / am not) afraid of getting caught cheating.</td>
<td>Agree = 61%</td>
<td>Agree = 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (have / have not) been caught cheating in the past.</td>
<td>Have not = 72%</td>
<td>Have not = 78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever noticed anyone cheating in science class this year?</td>
<td>Yes = 69%</td>
<td>Yes = 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you answered “Yes” to #25, did you ever tell the teacher?</td>
<td>No = 67%</td>
<td>No = 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is cheating ethically wrong?</td>
<td>Yes = 80%</td>
<td>Yes = 82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix N  BAR GRAPHS FOR SELECTED QUESTIONS FOR G.P.A. TOTAL SURVEY RESULTS

- Have cheated on science homework
- Have cheated in more than one class
- Will cheat in science class again
- Will cheat in another class again

- Believe cheating is okay
- Believe cheating can improve overall grade
Appendix O  

HINTS, TIPS, AND STRATEGIES TO MINIMIZE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN THE CLASSROOM

How can I keep students from cheating in my classroom?

A list of helpful hints, tips, and strategies to minimize a student’s opportunity to cheat or consideration of cheating.

For Test and Quiz situations:

The most obvious and best way to deter cheating is by simply having two, or three, or.....? versions of a test or quiz. Although relatively effective, this method puts an added workload upon the teacher as now two or more answer keys are needed and two or more separate methods of grading are required. The following is a list of other ideas I have either used or heard from my colleagues that may be just as effective and save you time.

1. On the top of a test or quiz, write “Form A”, “Form B”, “#1”, “#2”, etc. They are actually all the same assignment and questions.

2. Hand out the same test or quiz on different colored paper.

3. Pass quiz and test papers out to students from the top and bottom of the stack of papers, alternating between students.

4. Put answer blanks to test or quiz questions on the right hand side of one version, and on the left-hand side on the second version.

5. If students are sitting next to each other in tables (two students per table) have one of them place their book bag between them. Wandering eyes will have a difficult time seeing beyond the barrier.

6. Do not allow food to be eaten (writing answers on wrappers and labels) or walkmans to be listened to (recorded audio answers).

7. Require that all mathematical work is shown. The answer may be worth one or two points, the work worth three or four points.

8. Print test and quiz copies on one side of each paper at a time. That way, when a student turns a page, the answers to that page are not displayed on their desk.
9. Monitor the test or quiz from the back of the room. When students know you’re watching (or assume you are watching) it’s harder for them to turn their heads, since they do not know when you are looking.

10. Provide students with a classroom calculator to eliminate the opportunity to download information using their graphing calculators.

11. Remind students to do their own work, keep their eyes on their own paper, and do not engage in any activities (such as talking during the quiz/test) that would cause a teacher to become suspicious of them.

12. It is very tempting to use quiz and test time to get other work done (i.e. grade papers, lesson planning, etc.). You must monitor all students during these times.

13. Have and enforce a strict cheating policy in your classroom.

14. Standardize a definition of what cheating is with your students so that there is no gray area of confusion. Provide examples of behavior in the classroom that are unacceptable.

For Homework Situations:

Cheating on homework is probably the toughest situation to regulate since the majority of the work is done outside of the classroom. However, here are a couple of ideas that might be useful.

1. Identical homework copied several times over can be handled in this way. Mark one of the papers, give it a grade, and divide the points equally among the students involved. No lecture, no moralizing required.

2. Assign odd numbered problems to one class, and even numbered problems to another.

3. Do not count homework assignments for more than 5-10 points and limit the amount of assignments there are per marking period. Also, collect some homework assignments for points and do not collect others, simply discuss them. This will make their individual performances on quizzes and tests the major contributors to their overall grade.
For Assignments requiring the Internet:

Eliminating the possibility of plagiarism from the Internet is difficult to do. Plagiarism itself is sometimes difficult to identify because of the vast amount of information available to students in our information society.

1. Insist the students only use specific web sites for their project.

2. Require that the students list all internet sources of information they used.

3. Have all work done at school during your class period only.

4. Collect their work at the end of each period and return it the following day.
Appendix P  CHEATING POLICY FOR FOREST HILLS  CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Cheating Policy
Forest Hills Central High School
(Taken from the 2002-03 Student Handbook & Calendar)

The administrative and teaching staff believe that it is the student’s responsibility to maintain integrity and honesty in the academic setting. Teachers will do all in their power to eliminate cheating within their classrooms.

Although teachers have a certain amount of discretion in implementing their own policy on cheating and plagiarism within their classrooms, they MUST report substantiated cases of cheating or plagiarism to an administrator. Upon notification by the teacher, the parents or guardians must be notified either verbally or in writing within 48 hours of the incident. A conference with the parents or guardians, the student, teacher and administrator may be established to discuss the matter, and hopefully to prevent any such action by the student in the future.

The following disciplinary actions will occur:

1. The student will receive a grade of zero (0) on the test, assignment, paper, or project on which the cheating or plagiarism occurred.

2. The student will receive a grade of “E” for the semester in the course for the second occurrence of cheating or plagiarism within that semester.

Definition of CHEATING:

1. Copying answers from another student’s homework, test, quiz, or other assignment.

2. Plagiarism on a term paper or other written project.

3. Using notes, cheat sheets or other devices (i.e. hands, clothing, etc.) on a written response without the instructor’s express permission.

4. Taking a copy of a test or quiz from the room without the knowledge or permission of the instructor.

5. Knowingly supplying another student with responses to an assignment or quiz/test questions.
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
ED 695 Data Form

NAME: Russell J. Chudy

MAJOR: (Choose only 1)

_____ Ed Tech
_____ Elem Ed
_____ Elem LD
_____ Ed Leadership
_____ G/T Ed
_____ Sec LD
_____ Read/Lang Arts

_____ Sec/Adult
_____ Early Child
_____ SpEd PP

TITLE: An Examination of the Frequency of Cheating in High School Among 9th Grade Science Students

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1)

_____ Project
_____ Thesis

SEM/YR COMPLETED: Fall, 2002

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL: 12/7/02

Using the ERIC thesaurus, choose as many descriptors (5 – 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your paper.

1. academic
2. dishonesty
3. unethical
4. high school
5. grade point average
6. gender
7. behavior

ABSTRACT: Two to three sentences that describe the contents of your paper.

The freshman students at Forest Hills Central High School were surveyed regarding academic dishonesty in science class. Results indicate that cheating is common practice regardless of sex or academic achievement. A list of helpful hints, tips and strategies to minimize the temptation and frequency of cheating is included.