Helping Ensure Academic Integrity in an Online Learning Environment

The First Step

The first step in a strong academic integrity policy is setting appropriate expectations for students in writing. Both parents and students should sign an online learning honor code, and consequences for violating the code should be serious. If consequences are too light (e.g., "If you cheat on a quiz, you'll have to take it again") the reward of getting away with cheating simply doesn't outweigh the risk of getting caught.

All educators at the school site—from principals to teachers—should align on the seriousness of the honor code and should communicate this seriousness to students.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. **Open Ended Questions:** Teachers should set expectations, especially around open-ended questions. Whether in an online or traditional learning environment, it is common for teachers to assign short written assignments (like journals) and not assign grades to every entry. We suggest that teachers spot check low-stakes written assignments and make successful efforts part of a participation grade. Students who don't properly participate should be required to repeat the entire lesson, and this policy should be communicated in advance so that students understand their full effort is expected.

2. **Grade Weight:** The next consideration is how much of the grade weight is allocated to activities that are tightly monitored. For example, if unit tests and cumulative exams make up 50% or more or the course grade, students know they must focus on learning the material in the online lessons. There is less motivation to mute the video and watch a movie or cheat on quizzes if students know they will be held accountable for the content at the end of the unit and at the end of the semester.

WHAT DISTRICTS CAN DO

1. **Implement IP Registry:** We encourage districts to implement IP Registry, which prevents students from accessing assessments outside of the school network. Edgenuity has several settings embedded to allow teachers to proctor assessments, ensuring that students cannot cheat and are doing the work themselves. With this setting, students can work on instruction and assignments from home but must take assessments in school (they will skip over the assessments at home and then be directed to them automatically when they get to school).

2. **Implement Teacher Review:** We also encourage districts to implement Teacher Review in Edgenuity for tests and exams. This feature alerts a teacher when a student has reached a test or exam, allowing the teacher to check the student's work before unlocking a high-stakes assessment. Districts have used a number of strategies to check for understanding before unlocking assessments, including:

    ◆ Reviewing students' eNotes.
    ◆ Interviewing students about the key content, including asking them specific questions they have already answered in the lessons to ensure they really did the work.
    ◆ Spot-checking open-ended questions in the assignments to ensure students truly answered the questions.