

# Cheating Goes Digital

**New tools, new sites, make classroom dishonesty harder to squash.**

by [Tamar Snyder](#)  
January 21, 2009



Credit: Hugh D'Andrade

Cheating in the classroom is as old as the classroom itself. But teachers need to wise up to their students' technological savvy. Peeking over their shoulders to glimpse responses on a classmate's papers and coughing in tune with answers are old school. Today's students are cheating by programming answers into their graphing calculators and beaming them to friends, texting answers to exam questions -- or sending images of the answers -- and recording cheat sheets and playing them back on their iPods during exams.

YouTube, predictably, has morphed into a mecca of cheating tips and tricks. A popular video features a teenager explaining in painstaking detail how to scan the label from a Coke bottle and replace the ingredients list with a cheat sheet using photo-editing software such as Adobe Photoshop. The video has been viewed more than 44,000 times.

A ten-minute YouTube video titled *How to Cheat in School* (since taken down by the poster, "selfmadebillionaire") featured a teen cheating guru explaining the keys to becoming a good cheater in a gospel-like tone. "The first step . . . is to get to know your professors," he said, as jazzy, almost hypnotic music blared in the background. "You can get longer extensions for your papers; he'll grade easier on your tests." Other tips included hiding cheat sheets inside water-bottle labels or a baseball cap.

Steve Goffner, a high school math teacher in New York City, caught one student who had copied answers on his math Regents Exam from friends' text messages. "He did the entire multiple-choice section in pencil, most likely took his cell phone to the bathroom, wrote the answers on the back of his hand, went back to his desk, changed all thirty answers, and got thirty out of thirty right," Goffner says. "How do you like that?"

In a 2006 poll conducted by the Josephson Institute's [Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth](#) [1], 60 percent of the 35,000 high school students polled admitted to cheating during a test at school within the

past twelve months, and 35 percent of students said they'd cheated two or more times.

Why do students cheat? Because it's easy and fewer than 10 percent are caught, according to Ann Lathrop and Kathleen Foss, National Education Association members and authors of [Student Cheating and Plagiarism in the Internet Era: A Wake-Up Call](#) [2]. Students' attitudes, they say, have changed from "Don't cheat" to "Don't get caught."

So, what's an alert teacher to do? First off, empower yourself by visiting [Teachopolis.org](#) [3], a Web site created by Robert Bramucci, vice chancellor of technology and learning services for southern California's South Orange Community College District. There, in the [Halls of Justice](#) [4] section, Bramucci has compiled hundreds of common cheating techniques prevalent across the Web.

Some education experts, such as Howard Seeman, author of [Preventing Classroom Discipline Problems: A Classroom Management Handbook](#) [5], recommend that teachers do away with multiple-choice and true/false questions in favor of short essay responses. And some schools are cutting to the root of the problem by incorporating ethical and moral teachings into the curriculum.

"When you see others cheating around you, most reasons given not to -- 'You're only cheating yourself' -- seem very lame," says Michael Laser, author of [Cheater](#) [6], a novel about a smart high school student who gets sucked into a ring of high tech cheaters. "It comes down to a matter of integrity and self-respect." Teachers need to convey that message early on in the education process, Laser adds, by asking students, "What kind of person do you want to be?"

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**Source URL:** <http://www.edutopia.org/technology-student-cheating-prevention>

**Links:**

- [1] <http://charactercounts.org/programs/reportcard>
- [2] <http://doi.contentdirections.com/mr/greenwood.jsp?doi=10.1336/156308841X>
- [3] <http://www.teachopolis.org>
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