Professionally speaking

CHEATING
How to stop the plagiarism plague

Good Teaching
Remember the three R’s

School libraries
Not just optional
The last quarter has witnessed the development of a significant foundation for ACER to assist educators in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, where we've been busy working with school leaders and teachers to understand and identify areas of concern in order to better support educators in their common aim: improving learning.

The focus for improving learning at ACER, however, is not only on school leaders and teachers. Student success was celebrated at a special award ceremony chaired by Vivek Bharadwaj, IAS, Director with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, in August. The highest-scoring students in the ACER Higher Ability Award Test, pictured at left and on page 12, sat ACER's globalAchieve international testing program in Mathematics, English and Science, each receiving a financial reward.

In this issue we bring you two articles on plagiarism and the authentication of student work. Clive Logan from The King's School in Sydney explains there's plenty teachers can do to address the problem, while Steve Holden, the Editor of Professionally Speaking, explains exactly what plagiarism is, and how to help your students to avoid it.

Paul Hamilton from Immanuel College on Queensland's Sunshine Coast explains the importance of the three R's in the classroom: respect, recognition, rapport. Anita Choudhary from New Delhi’s Bluebells School goes in search of successful learning environments in schools and finds effective school libraries – or resource centres – at their heart.

Professionally Speaking is really your newsletter, which is why I again invite you to share your thoughts. It’s your contributions from across India that identify the areas of concern, the issues of the day, the programs that work. It’s not just your content that matters, it’s the preparedness of educators to speak professionally – to share, to discuss, to stimulate debate and to act collegially. Professionally Speaking is your means to exchange views. Write to us at dhamija@acer.edu.au or post a note to me at 304, Greenwood Plaza, Greenwood City, Sector 45, Gurgaon, Haryana.

Wishing all of you a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Cheers

Ratna
Research and literature on plagiarism, as well as anecdotal evidence, indicate that the incidence of academic misconduct in high schools has increased significantly in recent years. (Underwood and Szabo, 2003; Ercegodac and Richardson, 2004; Conrado and Hernández-Ramos, 2004) In fact, the evidence suggests several disturbing trends which indicate that cheating at the secondary level is not only occurring more frequently, but also that students are using much more sophisticated methods in attempting to get away with academic dishonesty.

Any longstanding teacher would know that students are quite perfectly clear about what is right and what is wrong. The majority of students do what is right and their work is the result of responsibility, respect, character and integrity. Those who do cheat do so because they believe that the use of dishonest means can be justified by the high-stakes end result, such as the need to gain a high university entry score. The academic curriculum, policies and procedures in place in every school in every state won’t solve the problem of plagiarism, nor will the bureaucratic strategies of the relevant state curriculum authority, nor will the requirement that civics and citizenship be taught in a school.

What’s required is a foundational ethical approach to learning based on honesty and integrity, which must be clearly articulated within the school and which must be backed up by the ethos, mission statement and goals of the school. In my case, that’s to do with the desire to see continued success in the development of Christian character, an effective pastoral care program and academic achievement. From an academic viewpoint, policies have been introduced and implemented which reinforce the values of the school and which are looking to address some of the issues that are presently being debated throughout the country, and overseas, regarding honesty and academic integrity. You’re more likely to get honesty and academic integrity when there’s a strong relationship, essentially a partnership, between the school, the student and the parents.

In New South Wales, in an educational system where standards-referenced and school-based assessment forms a major part of the grading for the School Certificate and assessment for the Higher School Certificate, teacher judgements are used to determine achievements for students. It’s therefore essential that these judgements be based on accurate and authentic assessment information. As the Queensland Studies Authority ‘Strategies for authenticating student work for learning and assessment document’ suggests, ‘one challenge to the authentication of student work for learning and assessment is the availability of electronic resources and technology. At issue is not that students use these resources but how they use them and acknowledge them in the construction of new knowledge.’ (2005, online)

At the end of last year, a number of issues emerged which contributed to the development of the Academic Integrity Policy at The King’s School. In my role with the Board of Studies NSW as a Coordinating Supervisor of Marking for the HSC, a number of issues were debated, including:

- teacher certification of students’ work in subjects requiring practical submission
• the supervision of projects as observed by teachers for HSC projects
• the wholesale plagiarism from websites in projects submitted for marking.

The Board of Studies NSW has in place a number of sound initiatives in order to monitor the development of externally marked works, clearly set out in the requirements and guidelines in the Assessment Certification and Examination (ACE) Manual including such issues as:
• students signing a declaration that they have read and understood the content of the rules and procedures for HSC candidates
• the certification of submitted works by principals and supervising teachers
• the completion of the HSC Confirmation of Entry Form where students are aware that submitted works must be supervised by their teacher and certified, and
• the completion of a non-certification form, where a student’s work is unable to be certified, which is ultimately referred to the Non-certification Panel.

The teacher’s own integrity regarding this process is essential. The Board of Studies must rely on the integrity of the process to ensure that there is equity and fairness for all students undertaking tasks being marked for the HSC. Recently, the Board of Studies distributed three pamphlets on HSC Assessments and Submitted Works, one as advice to students, one as a guide for teachers and one as advice to parents. These pamphlets have been produced to assist students, teachers and parents in the completion of assessment tasks by students doing the HSC honestly and with confidence that the process is fair and equitable. They provide advice on preparing for and managing assessment tasks, students’ rights and responsibilities in relation to HSC assessments, and preventing cheating in HSC assessment tasks and examinations, including measures to prevent malpractice and strategies for dealing with cases of suspected cheating.

The information age means students have a greater access to a wider range of information, facts and knowledge than ever before. That means that the old approaches to learning, and the skills associated with those approaches, are now outdated and so schools, like the workforce, need to learn and use new skills in order to succeed. It’s now thought that technological changes have rendered traditional methods of teaching and assessment in education less effective and less relevant – not only from the perspective of many students, but also quite a few educators as well.

There’s little dispute that the accessibility of computers, the internet and other electronic resources such as CD-ROMs have made cheating quicker and easier for our current generation of technology-savvy teenagers – it’s now called cybercheating.

Previously, we’d referred to plagiarism as a form of cheating, but provided very little information as to how to prevent it. In fact, little advice was given to ensure that students understood the conventions when using others’ intellectual property to avoid ‘unintentional plagiarism.’ As a result of all the preceding research and literature, information and concerns, the task was clear – how to indicate clearly to students how best to achieve academic integrity. After researching and studying other schools’ policies, as well as university sites, our policy, originally referred to as a Plagiarism Policy, took shape. After consultation with a number of school colleagues, particularly from the library whose expertise was in information literacy, however, the policy took a new name – the Academic Integrity Policy. The advice I received was invaluable in assisting me to develop a policy which was educational, instructional and procedural. As well, the Board of Studies NSW indicated fifteen points which they felt needed some clarification to ensure that the policy fitted with the published documents from the Board to teachers, students and parents. The final area of assistance was from a lawyer whose main area of expertise was, in fact, plagiarism. He was able to give me some valuable insight particularly into some copyright issues.
So what needs to be included in a policy concerning academic integrity?

The key sections should be:

- an introduction stating that academic integrity is grounded in the school’s Mission Statement and Goals
- the purpose of the policy, which is:
  - to outline the school’s commitment to academic integrity; to identify the responsibilities of the school’s teachers, parents and student; to provide advice for academic staff and students; and to outline procedures and identify the range of penalties that may be applied
- definitions of some of the key terms associated with the policy – such as academic integrity, plagiarism and collusion
- policy principles with clear links to the school’s Assessment Policy Procedures and Guidelines and to the relevant education board, such as the Board of Studies NSW Assessment Certification and Examination (ACE) Manual (2005)
- responsibilities of the school
- responsibilities of teachers
- responsibilities and rights of students including the completion an Assessment Cover Sheet signed by the student declaring that all work is their own except where there is clear acknowledgement of and reference to the work of others
- procedures for suspected plagiarism and collusion
- an appeals process and procedure, and
- an outline of possible penalties.

Students have a right to be informed of the policy, to seek assistance with appropriate forms of referencing, to receive practical comments which assist them to review their work, to expect fair warning in any case where a teacher believes there may be a suspected breach of the Academic Integrity Policy, to expect students in a task, where they could locate information, how to record information found on the internet or in databases, magazines or books, how to acknowledge the information used, how teachers check that students’ work is academically honest and what they do when a student does not acknowledge sources. Emailing the policy and the Assessment Cover Sheet to each student is an effective way of ensuring that all students have access to it. This should be followed by a full explanation to each year level.

Academic integrity comes from a clearly articulated set of values. The King’s School believes in the inherent honesty and integrity of students and wants to start from a positive experience, not from a negative one. That’s why we developed an Academic Integrity Policy, not a Plagiarism Policy.

For teachers, the motivating challenge should not be figuring out how to catch students who plagiarise but to frame assignments in such a way that students won’t see the need to plagiarise and cheat.

Establishing clear principles for academic integrity, as well as having backup from commercial offerings such as www.turnitin.com to detect suspected cases of plagiarism, establishes a strong community of self-discipline and learning.

High-impact schools have a culture of high expectations. Change doesn’t happen overnight, but as we demonstrate and instruct our students in the practices of academic integrity, thereby inculcating the values of responsibility and honesty, the expectation will be that the school will continue to engage with students in meaningful conversation about intellectual property, authorship and ‘respect and responsibility.’ That aims to prevent cheating. And the broader aim? To assist students to become better prepared for technology-based demands in the workplace of the future.

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Clive Logan is Director of Studies at The King’s School, Parramatta, Australia. He has been on staff at King’s in various leadership roles for over twenty years and has been involved in HSC Marking for twenty-four years. He is currently Coordinating Supervisor of Marking for the Board of Studies NSW assisting the Director, Examinations in the management of the marking operation. As a mentor, the role is to provide assistance and advice to Supervisors of Marking.

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For references go to www.acer.edu.au/professionaleducator/references.html
Inadvertent plagiarism is one of the biggest problems, especially when you’re using the web, mainly because it’s so easy to cut and paste slabs of text and lose track of the source, as some popular novelists, ahem, might agree. If you don’t take clear notes, you can inadvertently pass off someone else’s work as your own without even knowing.

Steve Holden is the Editor of Professional Educator. This article first appeared in Professional Educator 5(3), August 2006. Visit www.acer.edu.au/professionaleducator
It sounds like the plague.
What is it and how can I avoid it?

Steve Holden has some answers.

Plagiarism means copying the intellectual work of others either by reproducing their ideas, opinions or theories entirely; that is, word for word, or by paraphrasing, without acknowledging, or citing, the source of that information. If someone else produced an idea, opinion or theory that you want to discuss, refer to or use, give them the credit. You can do that by:

• directly quoting relevant material and citing the original to let others know who was the original author or source of the information – citation involves acknowledgement of the original author or source, and page numbers where the information appeared, either in the text or a footnote or endnote.

• substantially paraphrasing in your own words – because if you merely change a few words or juggle phrases and sentences in a cosmetic way to pass off someone else’s work as your own, you’re still cheating – and still citing the original.

Giving credit where it’s due shows respect to the original author or source and also shows the reader that you’ve done your research.

Are the rules the same for printed materials and the world wide web? Essentially, yes. The only difference with the web is that you should record the website address or URL, and the date of your website visit, as well as the author and title of the work you’ve referred to in your own work.

Are the rules the same for all intellectual work or do they just apply to words? The rules apply to any intellectual work – words, diagrams, images, graphics, designs.

What if I can’t find information about the author, title or date that a work first appeared? Say so.

What if I’m trying to paraphrase something I’ve just read but can’t prevent myself using the same words and phrases from the original? Put the original text to one side and write in your own words to distil the essential ideas, then check back to the original for any phrases that still appear – these will probably be so essential that there’s no way of rephrasing them – then indicate that you are quoting these directly from the original by putting them in quotation marks and citing the original.

Do I have to quote or cite information that is common knowledge? ‘Common knowledge’ is any information that a person might reasonably be expected to know or that is referred to in a large number of places. It’s common knowledge that the Second World War began in 1939, and you don’t need to cite a source for that information.

The following sentence on the cause of the Second World War is much more specific, and it’s not reasonable to assume it might be common knowledge. Even though Japan had been fighting in China since 1937, the conventional view is that the War began on September 1, 1939, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. That’s why it appears in quotation marks, and why it needs to be acknowledged. (It’s from the Wikipedia entry on the Second World War; no author attributed, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II – retrieved online 29 May 2006.) Because common knowledge is something that’s well known, it would be onerous, pointless or even impossible to track it back to an original source.

Inadvertent plagiarism is one of the biggest problems, especially when you’re using the web, mainly because it’s so easy to cut and paste slabs of text and lose track of the source, as some popular novelists, ahem, might agree. If you don’t take clear notes, you can inadvertently pass off someone else’s work as your own without even knowing. To avoid the problem, every time you use any information – texts, diagrams or images – from the web:

• note the author or source

• note the title of the work

• note the date of publication, that is, any recorded date on which the page was posted, as well as the date on which you retrieved the texts, diagrams or images

• note the website address or URL

• put every pasted piece of text in quotation marks.

Your aim is to make it clear that the text is not your own work. If that’s not clear to you, it’s going to be very hard to make it clear to someone else.

Links:
www.plagiarism.com
www.plagiarism.org
www.turnitin.com
The three R’s
Remember the significant teachers in your life who made a difference, the ones you had a special connection with, the ones you actually listened to and learned from? My guess is that the ones that sprang into your mind are the ones that established a rapport with you.

The rapport between teacher and student is something that should never be underestimated. Sure, the world of teaching and learning is changing, faster in some places and slower in others, but behaviour management remains one of the major challenges for all educators, which is why building a positive relationship with our students remains vitally important. The following checklist offers some simple steps to help you develop a positive relationship with the students in your classroom. These probably affirm what you’re already doing in the classroom.

**Initiate social interaction**

Ask yourself, at the end of a school year, how many students you’ve not spoken to one-on-one or in a small group in a social setting? Before school, during recess and after school are all great opportunities to have a quiet chat to students to demonstrate that you are interested in them as human beings and that what they have to share is important.

**Public praise**

Publicly acknowledge the good things students do in and out of your classroom. Make a big deal about the little things at a class assembly or at the start or end of each

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**How can we expect our students to use our name and demonstrate good manners if we’re not modelling it ourselves with our students?**

*Respect is a two-way street.*

Paul Hamilton is Head of House and Year Four teacher at Immanuel College on Queensland’s Sunshine Coast, Australia. Email hamiltonp@immanuel.qld.edu.au

day. Allow students time to publicly praise each other for the great things that occur in and out of the classroom.

Share your life
Know your kids, but just as importantly let your kids get to know you. Let them realise that you’re a real person. You don’t sleep under the desk; you have hopes, dreams and faults. Acknowledge the gifts you have and the mistakes you make. Tell stories that have life messages.

Relate to your students in a different setting
Coaching or tutoring your students away from the classroom is also a great way of building positive relationships. It’s a time when classroom rules are forgotten, when the roles and skills of you and your students might be a bit different, and there’s a chance for a more relaxed form of interaction. Tutoring or coaching can also be a great opportunity to teach life lessons that don’t fit easily into the curriculum.

Earn respect, don’t expect it
As a first-year-out graduate I remember finding out, to my dismay, that my students didn’t initially show me any respect. It took some time to realise that little things – like using the children’s name on a regular basis, instead of saying ‘hey, you’ – had a huge influence on my behaviour management and the respect I was hoping for. How can we expect our students to use our name and demonstrate good manners if we’re not modelling it ourselves with our students? Respect is a two-way street.

Body language
Sometimes a smile or a thumbs up can be just as effective a tool for praise as public words of acknowledgement. Those special, memorable moments can break down barriers that may have been built in previous years.

Discipline is not the enemy of enthusiasm
Setting and following classroom rules that have been created by the entire class is pivotal in building relationships within the classroom. A structured classroom that promotes and gives an opportunity for students to develop self-discipline can still allow enthusiastic contributions from its members and create an approachable teacher that students respect rather than fear.

Laugh with your students
Introduce a joke of the week. Tell humorous stories. A classroom without laughter is a classroom without life. Camps can be a terrific opportunity to enjoy one another’s company through drama, skits and jokes at an evening concert or performance.

Evaluating our efforts
How do you know you’ve been successful in building positive relationships with your students? For me, the results don’t become truly evident until the following year. When we come across our students in the years to follow, what do they do? Do they smile? Do they say hello? Do they have a chat with you? It doesn’t have to take an entire year to develop these relationships with our students. The results can be far more immediate and often are. But becoming an approachable teacher is surely what we are all striving for. Sometimes we get so caught up in curriculum and the daily rituals of teaching that we forget what the students want most of all – a teacher that they can approach, talk to and learn from. I’m always surprised at the students that come back and visit me the following year – they’re often the ones I thought I hadn’t reached.
India’s National Curriculum Framework, 2005, outlines four crucial prerequisites for social transformation:

• access to schooling
• an adequate teaching-learning environment
• an appropriate school curriculum, and
• an empowered and inclusive teaching community.

Implicit in that framework is the belief that the purpose of education is to produce young men and women of character, ability and intellect, in possession of moral values and the ability to make balanced decisions. Implicit in that belief, in turn, is an understanding that education is about the development of the self. In the school scenario, the library is central to that.

The school library is a place, typically, where children can experience freedom from the four walls of the classroom. It’s also a place that awakens and fosters reading habits among children, where they can exercise their choice of book selection to enlighten their minds.

At the school library at Bluebells School, New Delhi, the aim is to provide a rich learning environment for children. That’s reflected in a change in nomenclature from a library to an ‘Information Centre,’ a change that came into effect since the Curriculum Design and Resource Centre was established in the 2005-2006 academic year. The school’s library services and curricular development are now closely aligned. As Bluebells Principal Suman Kumar puts it, ‘Faced with mixed ability classes, we were driven to contemplate a higher degree of resource-based learning, and this in turn compelled us to consider a resource centre.’

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By requiring students to use their school library or resource centre for at least one period a week, as suggested by the Kothari Commission, schools will go a long way in encouraging reading. A major problem, however, is that while school libraries or resource centres have been a subject of policy recommendations for a long time, a functioning library in a school continues to be a rarity.

A school library or resource centre should provide the following services:

• expertise and space for the display of materials and information
• organisation of story hour, book talks, book debates, essay competitions, letter writing competitions, quizzes and the like
• a reader advisory service
• systems for reservation and circulation of materials
• assistance in the use of catalogues, reference books, and in the search for and location of curriculum materials and other resources
• the provision of information on request, as well as maintenance of vertical files containing pamphlets, prospectuses, reports, press clippings and the like
• the preparation of reading lists and lists of new acquisitions, and
• interlibrary loans.

Vertical files containing pamphlets, prospectuses, reports, press clippings and so on form the basis of reference services by school libraries or resource centres and local public libraries. Keep in mind, libraries located in Delhi can borrow from the Delhi Public Library and the British Council Library. Beyond Delhi, interlibrary loans can be a boon for both teachers and students, while a website maintained by the librarians of a neighbourhood cluster of schools could share best practices and new materials developed by different schools.

Story telling, especially for small children, can be done by the librarian or the teacher. If done well, it can stimulate the interest of children in the world of books, book talks, book debates, essay competitions, quizzes and so on. Such events can be part of a school’s morning assembly too.

There is also a growing need for users to be informed about the resources available in the library or resource centre. User education consists of user awareness, interest profiling and library orientation as
planning should amalgamate these in a
exist in many district headquarters. Future
in rural areas and government libraries
country, community libraries are functioning
level, with a library. In many parts of the
equipping every school, irrespective of its
essential component in schools at all levels.
This stresses the need for future planning to
treat the library or resource centre as an
important aspect of schools at all levels.
In the initial stages of planning, block-level
or cluster-level libraries can be mooted and
function, the aim being systematically to
teach the user how to use a library or
resource centre including use of documents
and services. Library instruction is a learning
process. Students and indeed teachers
might need assistance in use of catalogues;
use of information technology and access
to the internet; searching for and locating
documents; and use of reference books.
Informative literacy sessions for students
new to the school should also be initiated
by the librarian and should include
instruction about and exposure to the
computer technology available in the school.
Every classroom should have a library of
materials that is large and diverse enough to
provide daily opportunities for students to
read self-selected materials.
Essentially, the library or resource centre
should be the nodal centre in your school,
and library or resource centre staff should
work in coordination with all faculties,
building linkages to guide staff in the
selection and ordering of new books and
other curriculum resources.
The National Curriculum Framework 2005
stresses the need for future planning to
treat the library or resource centre as an
essential component in schools at all levels.
In the initial stages of planning, block-level
or cluster-level libraries can be mooted and
enriched. In future, India must move towards
equipping every school, irrespective of its
level, with a library. In many parts of the
country, community libraries are functioning
in rural areas and government libraries
exist in many district headquarters. Future
planning should amalgamate these in a
school library network in order to maximise
available resources.

Schools that already have a functioning
library should set up a curriculum design and
resource centre, and ensure that lessons
are so designed that this becomes the focal
point of all learning in school.

Ideally, a library or resource centre is as a
self-access centre where students can study
independently, using a quiet reading area
with comfortable seating, or using areas to
work as a group for speaking activities, or
for video watching and the like.

Teachers have known for years that the
more contact children have with books,
the better readers they become. For
that reason, all teachers need their own
classroom library, which depends on the
loan of materials from the main library or
resource centre, in order to maintain vital
learning environments in schools.

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and the like.

Innovative practices at Bluebells School
• Members of staff at the school understand
  the importance of an activity-based
curriculum and believe in the ethos
  that children learn by doing and are co-
  constructors of knowledge. The school
  enables an activity-based curriculum by
  making linkages across the curriculum.

Middle School students work across
the curriculum by writing, scripting
and dramatising plays based on their
Supplementary Readers, which are a part
of their English Language Curriculum.
Roald Dahl's Matilda was enacted as a
library enrichment program, with further
interdisciplinary linkages demonstrated by
the students studying Multimedia as an
SUPW option who made films of Matilda,
as well as Qutub Minar and Humayun's
Tomb, which linked to Social Science and
were publicly screened at Indian National
Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage – an
organisation working to promote and
conserve art and culture.

• Members of staff at the school believe
  a reading culture is just as important for
  teachers as it is for students. Accordingly,
  all teachers have one period in their
time-table for library reference work.

• The school has a partnership with the
  Newspaper in Education Program of
  English dailies like the Hindu,
  Hindustan Times, the Times of India and the Hindu.
  The librarian coordinates competitions
  featured in the School Times and is
  responsible for collecting entries by
  students and having them checked by
  subject teachers before dispatching
  them to the press.

Anita Choudhary is the head of the department
of humanities at Bluebells School, New Delhi.

Links:
For more on Bluebells School, visit www.
bluebellsinternational.com or email bluebells@
rediffmail.com For more on Indian National Trust
for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), visit
www.intach.org
Winners, guests and officials at the ACER Higher Ability Awards Test ceremony hosted in August by ACER and chaired by Vivek Bharadwaj, IAS, Director with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.