

Digital Technology Brings New Challenges To The Fight Against Cheating

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Cheating in the classroom is hardly a new challenge for schools, but with the advent of miniaturized technology, detecting it and stopping it is becoming much harder. Even when the methods are not particularly high-tech, social media and video sharing sites like YouTube reach an ever-wider audience of potential rule-breakers.



Researchers began sounding the bell on the growing threat that high-tech cheating represented as early as 2004 – the era that T.H.E. Journal’s John K. Waters calls “the digital Stone Age.” A study out of Santa Clara University first presented evidence that technology-abetted cheating was growing, especially at the secondary school level. Five years later another study –

this one from Common Sense Media – showed that more than 30% of students between the ages of 13 and 19 used personal digital devices and the internet to cheat in their academic work.

If the primary instrument of high-tech cheating is the smartphone, why not simply ban the devices during exams? A growing number of schools around the country are taking that approach. Along with banning cell phones from test environments, the state of California has gone so far as to deploy a team from the state education department and the national Educational Testing Service (ETS) to scour social media sites “every 15 minutes” to see if students have snapped pictures of tests and posted them online. Last year, 36 questions from standardized exams in the state showed up on social media sites, the Los Angeles Times reported.

A Southern California high school junior who asked not to be identified says that her experience suggests that a ban alone won’t do much to curtail cell-phone-enabled cheating if the teachers aren’t paying attention. “I have a lot of teachers who say, ‘Put your cell phones in your backpacks,’ but then just sit at their desks when we take the tests,” she says. “And they never look up. It’s just really easy to cheat in those classes. You just keep your cell phone in your lap under your desk and look down. I don’t see people doing it all the time, but it definitely happens.”

Testing is hardly the only frontier on which the battle against technology-assisted cheating is being fought. Thanks to Google’s search, which puts the web at anyone’s fingertips, the incidents of plagiarism – copying work without attribution – are on the rise too. As a result, schools are turning to companies like Turnitin, which offers a service that will quickly scan students’ submitted work and highlight instances of suspected plagiarism.

As an additional service, Turnitin also runs a meta analysis on the papers it received. Last year it scanned 38 million, and found within them more than 150 million instances of material being copied from elsewhere. According to Waters, Wikipedia proved to be the most common source. “Think about that!” says Jason Chu, senior education manager at Turnitin. “You have students who are writing papers, and their version of doing research, which is really informed by their social habits, is to go to a social sharing site. What’s the credibility behind Yahoo Answers? It doesn’t make any sense, but it sheds light on the challenge students are facing when it comes to research online.”

For many students born in the digital age, Chu says, research means search. “The irony, of course, is that there’s so much information available to students online that they don’t know how to parse,” Chu says. “They don’t know how to interpret it, how to evaluate it, how to make sense of it.”

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards adapted from floridastandards.org. Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with state standards and annotated adjacent to the respective inquiry.

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1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the pros and cons synonymous with the utilization of digital technology of students in the secondary educational classroom environment. Incorporate a series of proactive measures teachers and administrators may employ to ensure responsible use of smartphones by students in the classroom. Provided extensive research conducted by John K. Waters, Santa Clara University, Common Sense Media, and information reported via Educational Testing Service (ETS), do you personally believe smartphones are appropriate for classroom use? Thoroughly explain your reasoning and provide specific artifacts and evidence not limited solely to passage above to support your response. Create and illustrate a Venn Diagram to effectively explore relationships and patterns and to make arguments about relationships between sets. **(LA.910.3.2.2; LA.910.1.6.2; MA.912.D.7.2; MA.912.A.10.1)**
2. Define a variable, write, and solve an algebraic equation for the following scenario: AT&T has counterpunched Verizon's heavily promoted Share Everything Plan with a shared data option of its own, the cleverly named Mobile Share plan. On the surface, the two offerings seem very similar, even in pricing; however, there are minor variations. The plans from both AT&T and Verizon sport the same basic structure, dishing out unlimited talk and text along with a central pool of data that several devices can sip from. The cost of the plan depends on a few specifics; the base cost depends on the size of the data pool (NBC News, 2012). Each monthly smartphone device is \$40 per month; however, provided a local state employee discount – AT&T is \$6 less. Additional data consumed with AT&T is approximately \$15 per GB whereas on average subject to the number of devices, Verizon is \$10 per GB. For what number of GB of data use will each plan cost the same? What factors might one want to consider prior to entering into a 2-year cell phone plan? Explain your reasoning in paragraph form. **(MA.912.A.10.1; MA.912.A.2.13; MA.912.A.3.5)**
3. AT&T Inc. is an American multinational telecommunications corporation headquartered in Whitacre Tower, downtown Dallas, Texas. AT&T is the largest provider both of mobile telephony and of fixed telephony in the United States, and also provides broadband subscription television services (The Dallas Morning News, 2008). Interestingly enough, Verizon was founded in 1983 as Bell Atlantic Corporation as one of the "Baby Bells" that were formed because of the anti-trust judgment against the American Telephone & Telegraph Company and adopted the name "Verizon", a portmanteau of *veritas* which is Latin for "truth" and *horizon* (Verizon Company Profile). Verizon headquarters is located in Manhattan, New York or approximately 1554 miles northeast of AT&T. Provide and plot the two points (x_1, y_1) and (x_2, y_2) , necessary to render the appropriate distance between these points. Solve provided by the applicable Distance Formula. Illustrate a coordinate plane. Apply the Midpoint Formula and confirm the location on the map. Determine whether a solution is reasonable in the context of the original situation.

$$\left(\frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}, \frac{y_1 + y_2}{2} \right) d = \sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2}$$
(MA.912.G.8.2; MA.912.G.8.3; MA.912.G.8.6; MA.912.G.1.1)
4. Identify and thoroughly support your reasoning regarding which of the following that best describes the author's attitude toward the subject matter discussed: flippant disregard, mild frustration, passive resignation or an informed citizen. Explain the primary purpose of this passage and identify any indicators, which suggest the author may possess a bias for or against students utilizing smartphones in the secondary educational institutions of learning. What is the central idea and what conclusion might one obtain from this passage? Provide an inference parents, students, and teachers may derive from this passage. Explain your reasoning. **(RI.9-10.1 – 10.6)**
5. Using contextual clues only, determine the most complete and accurate definitions of following italicized terms: *irony*, *parse*, *plagiarism*, *attribution*, *curtail*, *abetted*, *advent*, *miniaturized*, and *ban* as obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(LA.910.1.6.3; LA.910.1.6.1)**
6. **SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY WORD-OF-THE-WEEK** Create a concluding paragraph aligned with the passage above using the following italicized word: *Cower* v. To cringe in fear; to shrink away. **(LA.910.1.6.1; LA.910.1.6.5)**

Due Monday, September 2, 2013

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