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Cheating In Examinations in Two Polish Higher Education Schools

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with cheating in examinations in two Polish higher education institutions, and is the result of Dr. Butler's discussions with learners at AGH University of Science and Technology and one graduate at the Jagiellonian University. Reasons are given as to why learners crib and why it is socially acceptable for them to do so. It is concluded that exam cheating leads to difficulties in assessing students. The conceptual framework for this article is supplied by the general idea of the school as an organization and social institution.

Purpose of this Article

This work deals with cheating in exams in two Polish higher schools, and is the product of Dr. Butler's discussions with students at AGH University of Science and Technology and one graduate of the Jagiellonian University. Drs. Hughes, Herrington, and Kritsonis provided helpful oversight.

Motivation for the Article and Theoretical Framework

It is advisable to examine cribbing in examinations in Polish higher schools now because of the new challenges that educators are facing in terms of quality control as a result of Poland's recent (April, 2004) entry into the European Union (EU).

The theoretical framework for this article is supplied by the general notion of the school as an organization and social institution

Higher Education Schooling in Poland

Poles have been interested in higher learning activities for many years. The Jagiellonian University (1364), where Copernicus once studied, is their oldest university (Liwicka, 1959, p. 10). Higher education is carried out in various types of state (public) and non-state institutions such as universities, technical universities and higher pedagogical schools and is regulated by the 2005 Bill on Schools of Higher Education. Besides, a number of ministries (for example, education, agriculture and transport) are involved in the administration of higher education.

Polish education higher schools are now subject to accreditation. Consequently, better equivalence of degree arrangements can be made with EU countries because there is an assurance of higher quality education. Earlier ones appear to be based on comparable study of organizational procedures and student exchange programs (Edmondson, 1998, 90).

Cheating in Examinations

Learners cheat in examinations for the following reasons:

1. Too many compulsory subjects;
2. Too many exams to prepare for at once;
3. Poor invigilation during examinations;
4. Poorly prepared exams;
5. Inconsistent grading practices;

Many of Dr. Butler's students have told him that it is all right for them to cheat in exams that we find is rather disturbing. Joanna, who is an English language learner at Warsaw University, presents an interesting reason (that Dr. Butler has heard before) as to why cheating is socially acceptable amongst Polish learners (http://woe.edu.pl/modules.php?sid=b50256cb54e1da4024ea3d90a43382b0&m=2&module=Articles&mode=show_article&art_id=314§ion_id=40&topic_id=8). Her reasoning is that Poles do not respect authority because in the past it was imposed upon them against their will.

Another reason as to why it is socially permissible for Polish students to crib was mentioned to Dr. Butler by one of his colleagues some time ago. She believes that the Polish educational system (in particular the primary school scheme) encourages student cooperativeness and that cheating may simply be viewed as an appropriate form of cooperative behaviour by students. It is difficult to determine whether or not her reasoning is correct.

Concluding Remarks

Cribbing in exams leads to difficulties in grading learners¹. A new way of thinking must be developed on the part of Polish higher education officials to encourage new ways of developing a culture for teaching and learning.

Note:

Grading system, AGH University of Science and Technology

Excellent	95-100%	6.0
Very Good	81-94%	5.0
Good +	74-80%	4.5
Good	66-73%	4.0
Satisfactory	58-65%	3.5
Pass	50-57%	3.0
Fail	0-49%	2.0

References

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