

my copy

- [Home](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Staff](#)
- [Titan To Go](#)

TITAN TIMES

THE NEWS SITE OF HIDDEN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL



Search Search

- [News](#)
- [Student Life](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [A & E »](#)
- [Senior Superlatives](#)
- [Teachers of the Year](#)

Cheating continues to plague academic careers

Tanner Smith

[Tanner Smith](#), Staff Reporter

May 2, 2013

Two students achieve the same grade. One student studied and paid attention in class while the other played an online video game and slept. There are two words to describe how this happened: either luck or cheating, but likely cheating. Cheating is like a virus within schools across America that is not going away; it is just infecting more people.

An [ABCNews poll](#) reveals that 36 percent of students aged 15 to 17 admitted to cheating themselves and 70 percent of students said that they have friends who cheat. In a miniature poll of Hidden Valley students, who's identities will be kept anonymous, one 11th grader estimated that in a class of 25 students taking a Blackboard test, ten to fifteen would be cheating. Another student, a 12th grader, believes that in the same situation, only two or three students would be cheating. Whichever version is true, students are still cheating on tests.

Cheating can come in many forms, but what is cheating and what is not can be a debate within itself. An 11th grade student said, "I think that doing homework together or copying homework isn't cheating. Copying answers on tests, though, is definitely cheating." A 12th grader said that cheating within our school was, "mostly on homework assignments. I don't see people cheating on tests very often, but I see people giving answers on homework all the time." Plagiarism is another form of cheating that is also prevalent within schools. According to John Barrie, founder of the anti-plagiarism website Turnitin.com, 30 percent of all papers turned in have significant levels of plagiarism.

Most students and teachers agree that it is easier to cheat on a Blackboard test than on a paper test. A 10th grade student said that it was easier to cheat on a Blackboard test because "you can switch windows while you are working on a test." An 11th grade student said that it is easier to cheat on a Blackboard test because of "search engines such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo."

Some students have witnessed so much cheating that they have become numb to it. One 12th grader said when he sees another student cheating, "I ignore it because it is not any of my business as long as they aren't cheating off of me." Other students aren't as callous, but are equally unwilling to take action. One 11th grader said that he feels that "It isn't right, but at the same time I don't want to tell because I am going to look bad to them and that is going to ruin my friendship with them." History teacher Ms. Deborah Sprenger said that when she sees a student cheating "it makes me crazy because I can't tell if I am doing my job if students are cheating. The way I can tell if I am doing my job is if students are succeeding on tests and quizzes and classwork. I can't tell if I have been successful if cheating is involved." English teacher Ms. Mara Pufko said that when she sees a student cheating, she is "disappointed at first and also kind of angry because there is a lot of work I have to do to prove that they were cheating and I have to confront the cheater."

The school's cheating policy is designed to discourage students from cheating and punish them if they do cheat. "Our cheating policy here at Hidden Valley is a little bit stricter than the Roanoke County Public School's cheating policy. Our consequences are a little bit greater and we are removing leadership positions, which is not done in the county policy," said Principal Ms. Rhonda Stegall.

Ms. Sprenger doesn't think the cheating policy is enough. "I think the cheating policy is ineffective. I think this because I see cheating on a regular basis," said Ms. Sprenger. Ms. Pufko doesn't think the policy itself is the problem. "I think the policy would be effective if all the teachers held up the policy the same way. Given that everyone does it differently, it is not very effective," said Ms. Pufko.

Stopping the cheating epidemic is a complex proposition. One 11th grader said, "Teachers can't do much to stop cheating. That all depends on the