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Better Learning Through Better Exams

by ron thompson
the carillon

I want to call for an organized conscious campaign of cheating for the upcoming examinations.

You see, I used to think that the examination system should be abolished. And a suitable protest would be that no one would write exams. And I did that, but they still tried to give me a degree.

So I gave up on that type of protest.

Now, I've sold out. All I want to do is to make the examination system better. I mean, you know the old schtick: If you can't beat them et cetera.

I sat down for two weeks all by myself in a closet with an armload of books and candles.

And I thought and read and thought and read and I didn't sleep much and after thirteen and a half days I said, "Ahh!" and I came out and here is what I had learned.

The examination is supposed to measure how much you have learned about the subject material being questioned via the examination, up until the time you write your answers.

You would not be able to figure out any (or at least not very many) of the answers just by thinking about them in your virgin head.

So what the society does for you is give you a place (the university) to learn in, and books (the library) full of information, and people (the teachers) who know all sorts of goodies that they were examined on and that they read and were taught. And if you want to, and are brave or friendly or pretty enough, there are even other people around whom you can talk to and listen to and learn good stuff from.

And if you've really been lucky, the books you bought were used and written in (in ink so you were not tempted to erase) and that was still

another person to talk to, or at least listen to and learn from.

Now as a psychology professor said to his class while they were writing his Xmas exam, "Don't guess, because the exams is rigged and I'll find out and it'll cost you."

And that's reasonable, because the exam is only supposed to measure what you've learned and guessing would be cheating.

But if you're not going to cheat, there are only a few ways to get good marks.

Sleep with the professor (cheating in more ways than one).

Know ahead of time what's going to be on the exams (called cheating unless the professor hands it out in some form of protest) and even then it becomes a matter of how well you can write or something like that.

Guessing what the professor wants to hear (Cheating - see above).

Having the exam only on what the individual student learned from the course and the reading and his life (but that's not an exam in the accepted sense).

Having the exam on what all the students have learned (impossible).

So I fall back on cheating as the only way to pass the average exam. But not everyone wants to cheat, or does it well, or has a conscience that will let them do it at all. And anyway the results would be better if everyone responded and did it together.

So what I propose is that when the exams are passed around that the examinees get together and discuss the questions and decide on the answers. If there are two or more solutions to one problem, then you divide up the work load among yourselves.

And this hardly even seems to be cheating, the more I think about it. Because what you put down is what you have just learned through discussion, and that's what the

examination is supposed to be measuring.

It would be even better if you convinced the professor (or maybe a couple of others who know good things) to come into the discussion, and if you brought your books and if you sent people out to the library for more books, and if someone went for coffee and cigarettes or whatever makes you learn.

And if it took too long, like maybe a week or two and you went home at night and thought and dreamt about it and maybe discussed it with your parents, that would be okay because the whole purpose is for what you write down in the end (or even in the meanwhile) to indicate what you've learned about the material under question.

And in the end, all the answers

would be right if they were the answers of everyone in the class including the teachers, so that marks would be high.

And high marks are the point of the thing are they not. I've seen that. I've come back.

Maybe they'd have to move the exams ahead a week or two or maybe thirteen, but this seems to be perfectly good way to write exams.

If we worked hard enough at it, it would be a good way to learn and everyone could teach everyone and be a teacher.

And that would certainly improve the faculty/student ratio, would make even the government love us and would make the budget rational.

And if everyone were a teacher, then the students could begin to set their own exams. And to give themselves enough time they should do it at the start of the semester.

And that could be the course. And for teaching and examining themselves (at least in part) the students in those classes could be exempted from tuition, and that would make the Canadian Union of Students happy.

And some radicals would be happy because this would mean we could get rid of some of the administrative crap because all we'd need would be some of those people to keep exam records - not collect tuition.

And when they realized that everyone always got good marks they could do away with the record-keeping and they wouldn't need the computer for that and we wouldn't have to throw it through a window.

We'd just have parties for everyone who had been here a few years and had learned a lot and put flowers around their necks and call them BA's.

(Or maybe we could even think of something more pleasant to call each other).



VIEWPOINT

by tom wallace
brunswickan staff

What do you think of unb students?



martin budovitch
manager
shoestore

"I get a lot of nationalities in the store and my opinion is most favorable."



peter manataho
manager,
shoestore

"Don't know what we'd do without them."



bob gibson
clerk, nblcc

"They're alright to get along with generally."



joyce veysey
student
albert street
school

"Some turn me on; some turn me off."



jim bolden
land surveyor

"The students themselves contribute a lot to the community. They make people stop and think."



doug gibson
english dept.
fhs

"The students generally, I feel, are an asset to the community. The SDS, I think, are typical of the general student body."



**premier
robichaud**

"All students are, and should be, welcomed citizens of the community. They bring a new, youthful and necessary outlook to the life of the community."

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Gary Cogle
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