A Very Good Idea

An Honors Creative Project (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract

Academic dishonesty is present in all educational institutions, from college settings to elementary schools. Karel Montor found that cheating is more prevalent when teachers do not promote integrity in their classrooms (Montor, 1971). Students also claim that they have not been taught what constitutes cheating or why cheating is an unacceptable behavior (Montor, 1971). This creative project was designed as a children's book to be used in elementary school classrooms or at home. The book is to be used as a tool to promote integrity. It may be used as part of a classroom unit or simply as a bedtime story. The purpose of the book is to make children aware of what constitutes as cheating behavior. The book may be used to address different kinds of cheating behavior such as, stealing another individual's idea and using it as your own or destroying another individual's work.

In a study conducted by Victor Dmitruk found that competitive situations may increase the cheating behavior of some students (1973). It has also been found that children with a high need for approval are more likely to cheat than other children (Lobel & Levanon, 1988). In order to create a realistic setting, the main character in this story is faced with a competitive situation. He also had a high need for approval and is highly motivated to succeed.

Through the use of jungle creatures and a plot which includes a contest, this book tells a story while promoting integrity. The book may be used as a tool in order to start discussions about academic integrity in elementary schools. If integrity units are created to be taught in elementary schools, perhaps cheating will not be as prevalent in later grades.

Bibliography:


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Kristin M. Archer
To two very special women in my life:

My grandmother, Marie Dorris, who is my constant inspiration and Teri Hubbard for her endless flow of creativity, compassion, and friendship.
Scotchie scrunched and bunched his body in S-shaped curves toward the meeting tree. Nailed to the tree's bark was a large sign. It read, "Contest: The Animal who makes the best creation to improve our home will be crowned King of the Jungle." If Scotchie were named king, he would have the respect of all his fellow jungle friends. He must make the best creation and win the contest!
Scotchie slid into his favorite thinking spot, his tunnel. He thought and thought. Then, a brilliant idea came to him. He would make a digging machine so any jungle animal could make a tunnel like his thinking spot.

Scotchie left his tunnel in an excited rush. He needed supplies to build his digging machine. He knew he could find them deeper in the jungle.
Soon, Scotchie reached the river. Tommie Turtle was building something made of long wooden boards that had a metal propeller attached to one end. Scotchie was puzzled. He asked, "What are you building, Tommie?"

Tommie smiled proudly at his creation. "I'm building a ferry. I can swim easily across the river, but some of my friends cannot. A ferry can take any animal across the river," he explained.
A ferry was a good idea, maybe even better than a digging machine. Tommie's ferry was almost finished, too. It only needed a few more boards which Tommie soon swam off to find.

Scotchie liked Tommie's shiny propeller. It gleamed in the water like a brand new quarter. It would make a great digging propeller for his machine. He cut the propeller loose from Tommie's ferry with his teeth.

Scotchie traveled along the river bank carrying the propeller on his back. He heard splashing. It was Billy Beaver. Billy pushed a round log through the water with his nose. His flat tail hit the river like a large paddle, causing streams of water to spray around him.
Scotchie yelled to make himself heard over the splashing water. "Billy, what are you doing?" asked Scotchie.

Billy stopped pushing his log and turned his head in Scotchie's direction. "I'm building a dam to win the contest for King of the Jungle. The dam will keep the river from flooding. With a dam, all the land animals' homes will be safe," he explained. With that, Billy continued to bump his log with his nose and spray water with his tail.
A dam was a good idea. Scotchie thought about his own idea. He needed some logs to build his digging machine. Billy had many logs already stacked up on the bank and in the river. He wouldn't notice if Scotchie took a few.

Scotchie took some logs from Billy's pile and dam. He hoisted them upon his back with Tommie's propeller and slithered into the jungle.
A tree's leaves rustled. Suspended by her tail, Molly Monkey swung from one of the tree's tallest branches. "What are you doing up there, Molly?" Scotchie asked.

Molly looked down at her visitor. "I'm building a treehouse. If anyone is coming to the jungle to harm us, I will be able to see them from the treehouse. Then, I can warn the other animals," she explained.

"That's a great idea, Molly," Scotchie said.

Molly nodded, "I know. I'm going to win the contest for King of the Jungle. But first, I'm going to find some green paint. I'm painting my treehouse green so it matches the tree's leaves."
With a swing of her tail, Molly disappeared. Scotchie slid Tommie’s propeller and Billy’s logs off of his back. He climbed Molly’s tree to get a better look at her treehouse. The boards were held in place with nails and screws and fit together like a puzzle.

Scotchie needed something to hold the logs and propeller together on his digging machine. Molly’s screws would be perfect. She had so many, she wouldn’t notice if a few were missing.
Above his head, Scotchie heard sounds like paper fans flapping quickly in the wind. He looked up and saw Petey Parrot flying in a circle. "Petey, why are you circling the sky?" he asked.

"I'm going to enter the King of the Jungle contest. I'm making mailbags so we can start a postal service. With a postal service, animals will be able to deliver messages quickly to one another," Petey explained.
Scotchie removed several screws from spots he thought that Molly would not notice. Puffing his cheeks out like a kangaroo's pouch, he held the screws in his mouth and climbed carefully back down the tree. At the bottom of the tree, he spit Molly's screws onto the ground by the other supplies. He hoisted Tommie's propeller, Billy's logs, and Molly's screws onto his back and crept further into the forest.
Scotchie was still confused. "But why are you flying in circles? Shouldn't you be making your mailbags?" he suggested.

Petey laughed, "Wait here and I'll show you."

Petey disappeared, but soon returned carrying a bag made of leaves and twine. He dropped the bag in front of Scotchie. "See. I'm making my mailbags out of leaves and twine. I need more twine so I'm circling the jungle to find some," he explained.
Petey took to the air again leaving his mailbag in front of Scotchie's nose. Scotchie liked Petey's twine. It would hold together the parts of his digging machine that Molly's screws could not. Scotchie carefully removed pieces of twine from Petey's bag. Petey had the best eyes of any animal in the jungle. He would have no trouble finding more twine to replace the pieces that Scotchie took.

Scotchie hoisted Petey's twine onto his back with Tommie's propeller, Billy's logs, and Molly's screws. Then he left to return to his tunnel.

Scotchie was almost to his tunnel when he noticed a worn path. It felt smooth against Scotchie's belly as he slid over it. Scotchie followed the path for a long distance. Tommie's propeller, Billy's logs, Molly's screws, and Petey's twine rattled and bumped together as he slipped over it.
Suddenly, the path stopped. It led to a big pile of stones, and Blarry Bear. Scotchie dropped his supplies. He scrunched himself over to the place where Blarry stood. "Blarry, what are you doing?" he asked.

Blarry looked down at the ground in the direction of Scotchie's voice. "Hi Scotchie. I'm building a cave," he said.

Scotchie looked at the stones Blarry was using to build his cave. Blarry must have created the path Scotchie followed by pushing the stones across the ground.
"Why are you making a cave, Blarry?" Scotchie asked.

Blarry seemed surprised. "Don't you know, Scotchie? I'm entering the contest for King of the Jungle. My cave will provide shelter for the jungle animals when it rains," he explained.

Soon, Blarry ran out of stones. He looked at Scotchie. "Scotchie, I'm in a hurry. I have to finish my cave before the contest starts. I must go find more stones to build my cave."
Blarry bounded off into the jungle following his worn path. Scotchie slithered around his stacked-up stones. He found four circular stones that were all the same size. They would make nice wheels for Scotchie’s machine. With wheels under his machine, Scotchie could move it easily.

Scotchie took the four stones. Blarry was so strong. He could move new stones much easier than Scotchie could. Scotchie hoisted Blarry’s stones onto his back. Then he returned to where his other supplies were. To Blarry’s stones he added Tommie’s propeller, Billy’s logs, Molly’s screws, and Petey’s twine. Then, he returned home and built his machine.
The day of the contest had finally arrived. Scotchie slithered to the meeting tree where the other animals had gathered. Mr. Knowsall Owl stood in the middle of the animals. Every animal grew quiet and listened while he spoke.

"I will follow each animal to their creation. After every creation has been seen, I will choose the best one. The animal with the best creation will become King of the Jungle. Tommie, I will judge your creation first," Mr. Knowsall explained.
The jungle animals were excited to see all the creations and find out who had built the best one. But, something strange happened to each creation that Mr. Knowsall judged.

Mr. Knowsall tried to ride Tommie’s ferry across the river but it wouldn’t move. Tommie’s propeller was missing! Without the propeller, Tommie’s ferry would not work. Tommie was so upset that he slid into his shell. No one noticed that Scotchie’s face was beaded in sweat.
Billy tried to show Mr. Knowsall his dam, but when he touched one of the logs, the entire dam toppled into the river. Billy lowered his head and waddled away from the river with his tail behind him. He didn't know that his dam had collapsed because Scotchie had taken some logs. But Scotchie knew. His stomach began to ache like he had eaten too many jungle berries.
When Mr. Knowsall flew into Molly's treehouse, her boards fell from the tree. There were no screws to keep them in place! Molly covered her eyes in disbelief. Scotchie shrank behind a tree stump and hoped that no one would see him.
Petey filled his mailbag with letters and flew in large circles above the jungle. He wanted to show everyone how quickly he could deliver the mail. But while he was flying, leaves flew from his mailbag. There was no twine to keep them sewn together. Petey's letters scattered throughout the jungle. Scotchie wished he could sink into his skin and hide.
Blarry took Mr. Knowsall to his cave. He hadn’t noticed that stones had been taken from the cave’s walls. Mr. Knowsall tapped the cave with his beak. The cave crumbled into an uneven pile of stones. Scotchie wished that he could disappear under it.
Finally, it was Scotchie's turn to show Mr. Knowsall his creation. Scotchie tried to tell him why the digging machine was a good idea. But it didn't seem like such a good idea to Scotchie anymore. By taking supplies from other animals' creations, he had destroyed their work. Destroying someone else's work wasn't a good idea at all.

Scotchie felt his body trembling. He noticed that some of his friends were trembling, too. But they weren't trembling with fright like Scotchie. They were trembling in anger.
Tommie looked at Scotchie’s machine and realized why his ferry wouldn’t start. Pointing his nose in the air, he exclaimed, “That’s my propeller on Scotchie’s machine!”

After examining Scotchie’s machine, Billy thumped his tail hard and fast into the ground. “I bet I know where Scotchie found the logs to build his machine!” he grumbled.

Molly marched to Billy’s side and propped her hands firmly on her hips. “I can guess where he found the screws to hold his logs together!” she shouted.

Petey perched himself on top of Scotchie’s machine. “Scotchie took my twine, too!” he accused.

Blarry heard what the others were saying. He decided to take a closer look at Scotchie’s machine, too. “Those aren’t wheels on Scotchie’s machine. They’re stones from my cave!” he growled.
Tommie, Billy, Molly, Petey, Blarry, and Mr. Knowsall turned to face Scotchie. Scotchie felt their eyes upon him like big flashlights. He coiled his body into a circle and tried to hide his face.

Mr. Knowsall cleared his throat ruffling the feathers on his chest. “Scotchie, is this true? Did you take things from your friends’ creations to make your own?” he asked.

Scotchie slowly raised his head from his coiled body. Tears slid down the scales on his face. “Yes. I took my friends’ supplies and used them to build my digging machine. I didn’t think that I would destroy their creations by taking their supplies. I wish I had never taken anything,” he sobbed.

Mr. Knowsall shook his wing firmly in Scotchie’s direction. “Scotchie, what you have done is called cheating. You took someone else’s work and used it as your own. Your friends spent hours on their creations. Now their creations are ruined because you stole their supplies. I’m sorry, but I must disqualify you from the contest,” he scolded.
A murmur grew from the crowd of animals that had come to watch the contest. Scotchie had been disqualified from the competition and the other animals' creations had been destroyed. Who would be King of the Jungle?

As Mr. Knowsall was thinking of what should be done, Lincoln Lion stepped out from the crowd. "Mr. Knowsall, my I enter the contest?" he asked.

Mr. Knowsall looked puzzled. He asked, "Lincoln, did you build a creation?"

Lincoln nodded proudly. "Yes. I have an idea. An idea is a creation that you build in your head," he explained.

Mr. Knowsall smiled. "Yes, Lincoln. You're right. An idea is a creation. Please share your idea with us."
The jungle animals grew quiet and listened to Lincoln’s idea. Lincoln explained, “I don’t think that the jungle should be ruled by the king alone. He should have a council of advisors to help him make decisions. Every animal who entered the contest thought of a creation that would improve the jungle. They would make great council members.”

Mr. Knowsall agreed. So did the other animals. Then, someone asked, “What about Scotchie?”

Mr. Knowsall looked at Scotchie who was still coiled into a small circle. “I think Scotchie realizes that it was wrong to cheat. If he helps the others rebuild their creations, and promises to never cheat again, he may be a council member, too,” he announced.

Scotchie uncoiled himself and smiled. He promised to help his friends rebuild their creations. He knew that he would never cheat again. Cheating had definitely been a bad idea.
A murmur arose again from the crowd. Finally someone asked, "Mr. Knowsall, who will be King?"

Mr. Knowsall turned to Lincoln Lion. "Lincoln Lion is the winner of the contest. He had the best creation, a good idea. Therefore, from this day forward, he will be officially known as the King of the Jungle!" Mr. Knowall proclaimed.

Everyone cheered, even Scotchie. Scotchie knew that Lincoln deserved to be King. Lincoln had made the best creation. He had built a very good idea.
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