

Academic Honesty @ York

Maya's Scenario: Unauthorized Collaboration

Welcome to Academic Honesty at York: Maya's Scenario (Unauthorized Collaboration).

Meet Maya! Maya was given an assignment to develop code for her computer science class.

She understood most of the lesson but doesn't know how to translate the lesson into the code the prof wanted to see in the assignment.

Maya talked to one of her friends about it, and he said that there was a group chat where people were working on the code together. Maya was thrilled. By the time she joined the group the code had been finished!

She was able to cut and paste it and submit it as her assignment the next day. Sure, she didn't complete it herself but why did that matter? Everyone would have the same answer, and she understood enough of the lesson to understand how the code was correct. She finished the assignment and could focus on her next class.

Did Maya make an academically honest choice?

Reflection Point: Take a moment to reflect on Maya's scenario and what you already know about academic honesty. What does academic honesty mean to you?

Whether Maya's prof or TA caught it or not Maya and her classmates were cheating. They were being academically dishonest, which can have an impact on their assignment, class grade, or transcript. Unauthorized collaboration is working with a classmate(s) on work that was meant to be an individual effort. Working together on assignments without your instructor's approval is considered to be cheating.

But more than that, because York students are here to learn:

- Maya and her classmates were engaging in behaviors that lessen the value of the degree and learning experience.
- By copying the answers, they would be entering the workforce without the knowledge and skills employers are looking for.
- They would be entering the workforce in a dishonest way because they had not actually learned the material they simply copied it.

Now that we know what Maya did is academically dishonest, let's think about why Maya used the code from the group chat. For one, it was already completed. Secondly, Maya was able to connect and bond with her classmates through the group chat. She didn't have to spend time on this assignment, and could move on to the next one. Maya didn't think it was cheating or even that big of a deal. And finally, she didn't really understand how to do the task. These are all understandable reasons to make that choice, but they still result in academically dishonest behavior.

Academic honesty is a set of practices that academics follow in their work, and which generates credibility, trust, and respect within the academic community. Knowing this, how can Maya move forward to make more academically honest choices?

- *It was already completed:* The code may have been completed, but Maya needs to realize that the learning was the process of completing the code not the code itself. If you wanted to become a baker you wouldn't go to a bakery and buy a cake. You need to understand the elements of baking and how to put the ingredients together. Assignments like this work the same way. It's also important for Maya to know that if an assignment is assigned individually, working together is academically dishonest.
- *Maya was able to connect and bond with her classmates:* It is really easy to feel isolated as a student. Maya should look for other opportunities to connect with her classmates. Joining a club or starting a group conversation based on shared interests is a great place to start.
- *Maya didn't have to spend time on this assignment and could move on to the next one:* Students have so many pressures on their time. If you're balancing a lot, try working in small chunks.
- *Maya didn't think it was cheating or even that big of a deal:* Maya didn't think she was being sneaky or harmful, but it doesn't matter what her intent was. Cheating is still cheating. Now that Maya knows this she can match her actions to her intentions.
- *She didn't really understand how to do the task:* As a student you're constantly learning new things and may not feel comfortable asking questions, but that's what your prof and TA are for.

If you get into Maya's situation, here are some academically honest solutions you could try.

- Contact the professor or TA for the course for assignment clarification and help.
- Get help from Learning Skills Services to develop time management skills.
- Get tutoring help outside of class if extra support is needed.
- Connect with classmates through clubs or by starting conversations based on shared interests.
- And help your classmates to understand the importance of doing individual work when it is assigned.

Working with others or taking others completed work and saying you did it by yourself is academically dishonest. This can result in academic consequences.

Because York students are here to learn, don't cheat yourself out of an opportunity to learn!

Reflection Question:

If you were in Maya's position, how would you move forward?

- a) By working in small chunks or using other time management techniques.
- b) By finding other ways to connect with your classmates.
- c) By contacting the Professor or TA for the course for clarification.
- d) By finding tutoring outside of class to get the extra support you need.

Responses:

- a) Yes, because working in small chunks will help you stay on top of all your assignments and help prevent you from feeling overwhelmed. The other choices are also good options for moving forward.
- b) Yes, because connecting with classmates is important and other ways of connecting will be more fun and interesting! The other choices are also good options for moving forward.
- c) Yes, because Professors and TAs are there for you to ask questions. The other choices are also good options for moving forward.
- d) Yes, because sometimes you need some additional help building understanding of a topic. The other choices are also good options for moving forward.