



BOOK REVIEW

**Ronnie Amorado and Ramcis Vilchez. *Pedagogy of Fraud: Cheating Practices in Online Classes*.
Manila: C & E Publishing, 2024.**

Janice DC Peñaflor
De La Salle University, Manila
Email: janice.penaflor@dlsu.edu.ph

Christopher Ryan Maboloc, PhD
Ateneo de Davao University
Email: crbmaboloc@addu.edu.ph

Pedagogy of Fraud: Cheating Practices in Online Classes, by Ronnie Amorado and Ramcis Vilchez, is a thought-provoking, scientific, and practical book that documents, discusses, and challenges the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the delivery of instruction. Using qualitative analysis, the authors assert that online cheating is apparent because "students are attracted and even seduced by the availability of the information on the internet."¹ The authors are correct in this observation, although they also recommended what they labeled as the RIA (Remote Integrity and Accountability) framework in addressing the problem.

The authors blame the rush to do the online mode of delivery on the rise of cheating among students, an assessment that is supported by data gathered by the authors in surveys conducted in the US and Europe. One of the authors, Dr. Ronnie Amorado, is prominent for

¹ Ronnie Amorado and Ramcis Vilchez, *Pedagogy of Fraud: Cheating Practices in Online Classes*. (Manila: C & E Publishing, 2024) 8.

writing the manual of the *Ehem Project* of Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ. Ramcis Vilchez, meanwhile, is a data scientist and an expert in the field of IT education. This book is an important tool in the pursuit of academic integrity. The authors also questioned the call for leniency of the Commission on Higher Education in assessing student performance at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Luciano Floridi's work on information ethics would be helpful for the book in terms of expanding its ethical framework given the emergence of what the author calls an information society.² Floridi says that human beings are moral agents, and in this way, digital agents on the internet are also moral agents. For him, there is a corresponding ethical responsibility as well as accountability in the digital world. While there's a nagging question about the cheating culture among Filipino students, I wouldn't subscribe to such cultural labels. The book, however, would be a useful tool for educational leaders and government policymakers in terms of guiding them as to the matter, especially with the advent of ChatGPT.

A nationwide survey (Philippines) involving 11,005 respondents was conducted in 2022 to determine the prevalence of cheating. The authors also mentioned what they considered the modus operandi of students. This includes the following answers and percentage of the respondents: "I copied from internet resources" (5,823 or 35%); "I googled during quizzes and exams" (3,577 or 21%); "I copied another person's assignment" (2,240 or 13%); "I just logged on and left the online class" (763 or 5%); "I bought essays and projects online" (419 or 3%); "I paid and outsourced my assignment or projects" (172 or 2%).³

Nothing can replace the physical presence of the classroom instructor. This is critical to pedagogy.⁴ Cathy Toquero, for instance, has documented the effects and impact of online modules on the learning competencies of students and has called for proper training to effectively deliver online courses while acknowledging the barriers

² Luciano Floridi, "Foundations of Information Ethics." *The Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics*. Edited by Kenneth Himma and Herman Tavani. (New Jersey: Wiley and Sons, 2008), 3.

³ Amorado and Vilchez, *Pedagogy of Fraud*, 66.

⁴ Christopher Ryan Maboloc, "Critical Pedagogy in the New Normal." *Voices in Bioethics*, Volume 6 (2020): 1.

therein.⁵ Given the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has ended, there's no reason for the general population to revert to or even prioritize online modality since in-person teaching has been proven to be more effective. The book *Pedagogy of Fraud* reinforces the claim that not much can be achieved from online modules compared to classroom instruction. For instance, in the same nationwide survey above 58% admitted to cheating.⁶

One of the glaring claims of the book is that “corruption in government begins in the classroom.”⁷ Such appears apparent although it is important to look further into the data given the demographics involved in the issue. Nevertheless, they cited a 2021 study involving 639 undergraduate students in which 32% admitted to cheating.⁸ This doesn't mean that online education platforms are bad per se. Rather, the analysis is that if in-person instruction is widely available, then it should be preferred by stakeholders. It cannot be, however, used as a standard in terms of the delivery of a course because the same can be prone to fraudulent schemes, as suggested by Amorado and Vilchez. The book in this way is a critical tool as it also summarizes the types of tests that can be abused and taken advantage of by students, thereby jeopardizing the whole learning process.

References

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⁵ Cathy May Toquero, “Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education amid the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Philippine Context.” *Pedagogical Research*, Volume 5, Number 4 (2020): 3.

⁶ Amorado and Vilchez, *Pedagogy of Fraud*, 65.

⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁸ Ibid., 17.

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