



## Activity 7.4

### Ethical and Unethical Test Preparation

#### Learning Target for the Activity

- I can evaluate test preparation strategies according to whether they are ethical or unethical and can explain my position.

#### Purpose

This activity gives school leaders practice in evaluating the ethicality of test preparation practices. In so doing, school leaders discern the line they would draw between ethical and unethical practices and get practice in articulating their reasoning.

#### Time

45 minutes

#### Materials Needed

- Chart paper and markers, pink and green sticky notes

#### Suggested Room Setup

This activity is designed for a small group. Arrange chairs in a circle or at a table and have available wall space for chart paper.

#### Directions

Complete each step in the order below:

1. Prepare a separate piece of chart paper for each of these eight statements. Put the statement at the top of the chart paper, leaving room for sticky notes or comments below. Hang the chart paper on a wall, from left to right, in the order the statements are given here. (5 minutes)
  - a. Familiarize students with different test item types and test-taking strategies.
  - b. Teach the curriculum as given.
  - c. In teaching emphasize curriculum objectives that map to the standardized test.
  - d. Give students practice tests and worksheets that use the same item formats as those on the standardized test.
  - e. Give students practice on published released items or forms of the standardized test.
  - f. Teach only curriculum objectives that map to the standardized test.
  - g. Suspend instruction two weeks before the test, and replace it with test practice.
  - h. Give students practice on the same test items that will be on the standardized test.

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2. Reread the section of this chapter titled "Preparation for Standardized Tests." Use the criteria implied in that section: ethical test preparation (a) does not narrow the curriculum or pollute the test score and (b) does not shortchange students. (5 minutes)
3. Individuals use sticky notes (or write with red and green markers directly on the chart paper) to apply these criteria to the statement on each sheet of chart paper. Remember that the evaluation task for each statement is to decide what should be considered ethical or unethical, not what is currently done in a specific school. Use green sticky notes for statements judged to be ethical practice and pink sticky notes for statements judged to be unethical, and write at least one sentence on the note explaining why you have made that choice. (5 minutes)
4. After each individual has placed sticky notes on all the statements, the group may do a brief gallery walk, depending on the size and wishes of the group. (5 minutes)
5. Group members reconvene as a small group for a discussion based on the following questions: (10 minutes)
  - Which statements drew general agreement that they were ethical? Why?
  - Which statements drew general agreement that they were unethical? Why?
  - Which statements drew mixed evaluations? Why?
  - Focusing on the statements that drew mixed evaluations, and assuming that they will be in the middle of the series of charts, see if you can come to a group consensus about where to draw the line between ethical and unethical test preparation practices. When you have drawn that line between two of the statements, the group should craft a one- or two-sentence rationale for the difference between ethical and unethical test preparation practices as illustrated in these statements.
6. After the group has crafted its rationale, school leaders may continue the discussion by describing test preparation practices they have observed or participated in in their schools. What is the relationship between the things you have observed and the rationale you have just crafted in this exercise? Be careful not to judge others, who may not know what you now know about test score meaning and student learning. The purpose here is to describe real scenarios that a school leader might encounter and to relate those to your growing understanding of ethical test preparation practices. (5–10 minutes)

## Closure

The group reaches closure by facilitating a discussion based on these questions: What did I learn from this exercise that will be important for me to know in my role as a school leader? What questions do I have? With whom might I share my insights and questions? (5 minutes)