

# Teacher enthusiasm: a potential cure of academic cheating

Gábor Orosz<sup>1,2\*</sup>, István Tóth-Király<sup>1</sup>, Beáta Bóthe<sup>1</sup>, Anikó Kusztor<sup>1</sup>, Zsuzsanna Üllei Kovács<sup>1</sup> and Miriam Jánvári<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary, <sup>2</sup> Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience and Psychology, MTA Research Centre for Natural Sciences, Budapest, Hungary, <sup>3</sup> Institute of Applied Education and Psychology, College of Nyíregyháza, Nyíregyháza, Hungary

In this research we claim that teachers' enthusiasm matters regarding student engagement in terms of academic cheating. Previous studies found that perceived enthusiasm of teachers is positively related to the intrinsic motivation of the students. However, it was less investigated how perceived enthusiasm is related to cheating. In the first exploratory questionnaire study ( $N = 244$ ) we found that during the exams of those teachers who are perceived to be enthusiastic students tend to cheat less. In the second questionnaire study ( $N = 266$ ) we took academic motivations into consideration and we found that the more teachers seem enthusiastic the cheating rate will be lower among university students. Aggregated teacher enthusiasm was positively related to intrinsic motivation, negatively related to amotivation, and not related to extrinsic motivation. Aggregated teacher enthusiasm was directly and negatively linked to cheating and it explained more variance in cheating than academic motivations together. These results suggest that teachers' perceived enthusiasm can be a yet unexplored interpersonal factor which could effectively prevent academic cheating.

**Keywords:** teacher enthusiasm, academic motivations, academic cheating

*The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which meant never losing your enthusiasm.*

Aldous Huxley

## Introduction

The word enthusiasm derives from the Greek expression *enthousiasmos* which means a divine inspiration. According to its interpretation it refers to the phenomena when a god invades someone and it fills this person's soul with energy who becomes inspired, and who is in rapt or in ecstasy ("en" means in or into, "theos" means god). Nowadays, effective teachers are described with this characteristic. In the field of educational psychology, teachers' enthusiasm can be approached at least in two different ways (Kunter et al., 2011): first, the behavioral approach refers to stimulating and energetic instruction practices from an external observer's point of view as gestures, vocal delivery, or facial expressions (e.g., Collins, 1978; Sanders and Gosenpud, 1986); the second emphasizes the internal, subjective experiences (as a personal characteristic) of teachers who are enthusiastic for teaching and which deals with the teacher's behavior as a consequence of this internal state (Kunter et al., 2011).

The diversity of the enthusiasm definition is salient. Considering ten definitions between 1970 and 2013, early authors grasp its behavioral manifestation in terms of demonstrative gestures, varied intonations, facial expressions, energetic instructions (Rosenshine, 1970; Collins, 1978;

## OPEN ACCESS

### Edited by:

Chris Howard,  
University of Derby, UK

### Reviewed by:

Jesús de la Fuente,  
University of Almería, Spain  
Carl Senior,  
Aston University, UK

### \*Correspondence:

Gábor Orosz,  
Institute of Psychology, Faculty of  
Education and Psychology, Eötvös  
Loránd University, Izabella utca 46,  
Budapest H-1064, Hungary  
orosz.gabor@ttk.mta.hu

### Specialty section:

This article was submitted to  
Educational Psychology, a section of  
the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*

**Received:** 01 December 2014

**Accepted:** 05 March 2015

**Published:** 31 March 2015

### Citation:

Orosz G, Tóth-Király I, Bóthe B,  
Kusztor A, Üllei Kovács Z and Jánvári  
M (2015) Teacher enthusiasm: a  
potential cure of academic cheating.  
*Front. Psychol.* 6:318.  
doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00318