behavior is in the public, published document outlining the standards for achievement; if it is not in the standards, it is not achievement and is a reporting variable, not a grading variable. For example, in the Grade 9 curriculum in Ontario, teamwork or cooperation is mentioned in the "Expectations" (as the standards are called) for 12 subjects, including music and English, but it is not mentioned in the other 9 subjects, including mathematics and geography. In the 12 subjects, then, it is legitimate for teamwork to be a (small) part of the grade, but in the other 9, the only place teamwork should be considered is in the Learning Skills part of the report card (see Figure 11.4a).

This guideline does not imply that grading is simply a clinical, objective procedure. A great deal of professional judgment is involved in grading, as teachers develop an assessment plan and choose or develop the assessment instruments (Guideline 7), evaluate the process and product components of grades (Guidelines 4 and 5), and record the results after deciding how to combine the scores and determine grades (Guidelines 1, 2, and 6). These aspects are considered in discussions of these guidelines.

A critical aspect of Guideline 3 is this: Grades are limited to achievement and should not be used as punishment for poor attendance, inappropriate behavior, or lack of punctuality. These are discipline problems, and although they usually impact achievement, they should be dealt with as such. Most schools have rules or student codes of behavior that set standards and penalties; penalties for rule or code infractions should not be academic penalties. Lowering grades simply because of poor attendance, misbehavior, or lateness distorts achievement; grades then do not have clear meaning. Bobby’s C may reflect his consistent achievement at that level, whereas Ann’s C, although she consistently achieves at an A level, may result from her many absences, frequent lateness, and misbehavior. This mixed result is inconsistent with this guideline; schools or districts that have such penalties in their grading policies need to move them to their discipline policies and ensure that their formal and informal communication vehicles allow them to report poor behavior, attendance, and lateness in an accurate and timely manner. An excellent example of this is provided by Eleanor Burket (2002) in her book Another Planet in which she shares her thoughts on a year spent observing in a suburban Minneapolis high school. She follows the principal, several teachers, and a number of students and shares their “stories.” One of the students is Nick Olson, who is brilliant but is continually on the verge of dropping out because he was “fed up with aching exams but getting Cs at the end of the trimester because he refused to do the worksheets assigned in order to help students study so they could ace exams” (p. 124).

**Attendance**

Hills (1991) provides an excellent analysis of how to deal with attendance:

If the desired behavior or competency is to attend class regularly, then have that as a written objective and base grades on it. (For most courses above the primary grades, this approach would be absurd.) If the
desired behavior or competency is a skill in the topic under study, such as effective behavior in an operating room, then base the grade solely on the level of skill achieved in that behavior. If a student is able to develop that skill without attending [classes], then his or her attendance is irrelevant as far as an evaluation of competence is concerned. If some students are truant, and if this situation influences the behavior of other students, then you have a disciplinary problem, and you should deal with it as a disciplinary matter, not as an academic matter. If the student cannot be evaluated on something like skill and effectiveness in the operating room because no one has seen him or her function in one, then no grade should be given at all. You have no basis for determining a level of competency, so you should not pretend otherwise. (p. 541)

School policies often go to great lengths to distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. This is legitimate and may be necessary for accountability purposes, but it is not appropriate for assessment and grading purposes because our only concern should be this: Do they know or understand or can they do, regardless of absence or whether the reason for the absence is good, bad, or indifferent. Gathercoal (2004) makes this very clear when he states "Excused and unexcused absences are not relevant to an achievement grade. There is no legitimate purpose for distinguishing between excused and unexcused absences. For educational purposes, therefore, there needs only to be recorded absences" (p. 163). He also describes an interesting exchange in a workshop he presented on this issue:

Teacher: "Are you telling me that if a student has been ill and another has been skipping, that they both should be able to make up the work missed?"

Gathercoal: "[Yes.] both needed an educator when they returned, perhaps the one who skipped more than the other."

**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is particularly difficult aspect of misbehavior, because it crosses the line between behavior and achievement, because it increasingly involves the use of technology that students often understand and use more effectively and appropriately than teachers, and because of the emotions involved in a breach of trust. Schools and districts need procedures to deal fairly and appropriately with academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism. This can be achieved best by having a clear district or school policy on academic honesty.

Archbishop Macdonald High School in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, offers one example of such a policy (2007, pp. 29–30; see also O'connor, 2007, pp. 36–42). Another useful example is provided by Lakeview High School, Battle Creek, Michigan (1998). In a very student-friendly manner, it provides a definition of cheating, examples of cheating, and sections on why students