

## Perceptions of Academic Honesty in Online vs. Face-to-Face Classrooms

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### **Abstract**

*As online instruction continues to evolve, instructors continue to struggle with the perceived growing problem of academic dishonesty. This study will expand the literature regarding academic integrity, particularly in the online learning environment by examining student perceptions of academic integrity related to both online and face-to-face course formats. A survey was administered which measured the frequency students participated in academic misconduct and the instances in which students believed other students participated in academic misconduct. This study involved two research questions: 1) Do differences exist between online vs. face-to-face students' perception of the academic integrity of their own behavior based on course type? 2) Do differences exist between online and face-to-face students' perceptions of other students' behavior based on course type?*

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### **Introduction**

As online courses become more and more prevalent, a major challenge for faculty involves developing an online course that is as close to a face-to-face course as possible. It is important to create an environment that not only teaches the content of the course, but also accomplishes this in a manner that is as personal as a traditional course. While maintaining academic integrity is of utmost importance in any course of study, it often proves to be an even greater challenge within the online format. Online instructors are continually searching for various means to ensure that academic integrity is addressed and adhered to by all students in all courses.

The use of online course tools such as Blackboard and Wimba has improved the online format tremendously. These tools have helped instructors develop courses that are engaging, challenging, and personal in nature because of the various features they offer. However, with online courses come new versions of the age-old challenge of maintaining academic integrity in the course. Online instructors are constantly searching for the most effective means by which to accomplish this seemingly ongoing issue. While Blackboard offers safeguards to help eliminate some of the problems involving academic integrity, problems persist. Blackboard features such as Respondus that locks the user's browser and prevents any other connection with software or other browsers do offer some help with online testing by making it more difficult to utilize help

while taking an online test. Blackboard also contains plagiarism detection systems. Despite the assistance these systems provide, problems with academic honesty continue.

### Literature Review

Academic dishonesty in education is the topic of much debate among students and teachers at all levels. It is defined by Hard, Conway, and Moran (2006) as

providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation including papers, projects and examinations (cheating); and presenting, as one's own, the ideas or words of another person or persons for academic evaluation without proper acknowledgement (plagiarism) (p. 1059).

One question that continues to be asked is, "Exactly how much cheating is actually going on?" A study conducted by Mangan (2006), found that 56% of graduate business students had cheated compared to 47% of graduate non-business students. Furthermore, other research found that in general undergraduates, males, members of Greek social organizations, as well as those with low self-esteem tend to cheat more (Iyer & Eastman, 2006). Wajda-Johnston, Handal, Brawer, and Fabricatore (2001) found that although 28.7% of graduate students surveyed admitted cheating, the percent decreased each year with only 2.5% indicating that they cheat by their fourth year. Still previous research (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001) indicated that although cheating itself only moderately increased over a 30 year period there were significant increases in "collaborative cheating" (p. 221) and other more explicit forms of cheating.

In higher education much of the debate centers on where this behavior is most prevalent, in traditional or online courses. Although most will agree that any form of academic dishonesty should be eliminated, many speculate that the lack of face-to-face interaction in the online format contributes more to academic dishonesty among students in these courses (Rowe, 2004; Wang, 2008). Some researchers disagree. Grijalva, Kerkvliet, and Nowell, (2006) found academic dishonesty in online courses to be the same as in traditional courses.

Another area of debate centers on differences in the perceptions of students and faculty regarding academic dishonesty. Why are perceptions important? Perceptions are derived from a process through which the brain organizes and interprets what happens in one's environment (Kowalski & Westen, 2004). Perceptions are influenced by past experiences, memories, expectations, suggestions, and the context in which any given experience occurs (Schiffman, 2000). One reason it is important to understand perceptions is because perceptions provide a valuable reflection of the beliefs that individuals hold, in this case, a reflection of students' beliefs about academic dishonesty (Morton, 2004). Beliefs frequently lead individuals to action (Ajzen, 2002; Pajares, 1992).

The power of beliefs and perceptions to influence actions is strong. Kennedy, Nowak, Raghuraman, Thomas, and Davis (2000) suggested that because both teachers and students believe it is easier to cheat in an online course, more academic dishonesty is likely to occur. In order to find ways to influence their actions, it is helpful to first identify students' perceptions about academic honesty and to identify differences in their perceptions regarding academic honesty in face-to-face and online courses. Specifically, Ashworth and Bannister (1977)

emphasize importance of the awareness of ways in which students understand issues involving academic honesty in order to help faculty address these issues.

Schmelkin, Gilbert, Spencer, Pincus, and Silva (2008) found that although faculty and students somewhat agreed on the offences of cheating considered to be less serious, they differed greatly on which offences of academic dishonesty were actually considered to be more serious offences. Similarly, Jordan (2001) found that while the students in their study indicated a belief that only 26.2% of students actually cheated, the results indicated that the rate of cheating was actually significantly higher at 54.9%. This study also found that a student's attitudes toward cheating, their knowledge of institutional policy, students' motivation for taking the course, and the perceived social norms are all related to the student's decision to cheat (Jordan, 2001). Symaco and Marcelo (2003) found that in terms of academic dishonesty, faculty tended to perceive students in a negative manner. For example, in their study when asked if students would take a stolen copy of a test, 62% of faculty felt the student would do so compared to 42% of students who indicated that they actually would take it.

It is important for faculty to understand the differences in their own perceptions of academic dishonesty and the perceptions of their students because these perceptions influence behavior. Without this understanding, it is difficult to develop strategies that will successfully impact the problem of academic dishonesty.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The proposed study will expand the literature regarding academic integrity, particularly in the online learning environment. This study will examine student perceptions of academic integrity as it relates to both online and face-to-face course formats at an accredited mid-southern university that grants undergraduate and masters degrees. While this study is designed to expand the current research in the area of academic integrity, the findings will help to better educate faculty concerning the perceptions their students have regarding academic honesty in the various course formats. This, in turn, will help instructors better address this issue with their students as they attempt to further discourage academic dishonesty and better safeguard their courses against this growing problem. This research will also be useful for faculty as they attempt to reduce academic dishonesty in online, face-to-face and online courses they teach.

This study will examine students' perceptions of academic honesty and determine in which type of course (online vs. face to face) students perceive it is easier to cheat. The hypothesis for the proposed study is that students' will perceive more incidences of academic dishonesty in online courses than in face-to-face courses as reflected in their descriptions of their own actions and the actions of fellow students.

This research will be guided by two primary questions:

- 1) Do differences exist between online vs. face-to-face students' perception of the academic integrity of their own behavior based on course type?
- 2) Do differences exist between online and face-to-face students' perceptions of other students' behavior based on course type?

## Methodology

The first part of this study compared student perceptions of academic honesty as measured by a survey of students in both the online and face-to-face formats. Respondents were students in both face-to-face and online versions of an undergraduate technology integration course in the teacher education program. Both undergraduate course formats involve all the same assignments and the course tests will be administered through Blackboard for both courses. All undergraduate courses were taught from 2008-2009 at the same university, by the same instructor and used the same text.

### *Sample*

The face-to-face group included six different sections while the online included two sections of regular online and two sections of online students. The total number of participants was 103. The sample consisted of 76 face-to-face students while the online (face to face and online) sections consisted of 27 students. While the courses are the same, the face-to-face sections completed their assignments and tests in class while the online students completed all their assignments and tests outside of a classroom without a proctor. The structure and assignments for both traditional and online sections were identical.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Participants completed the Survey of Student Academic Misconduct (Hard et al., 2006) for both the face-to-face and online courses. The survey measured the frequency in which students participated in academic misconduct and the instances in which students believed other students participated in academic misconduct.

Construct validity was established for The Survey of Student Academic Misconduct by Hard et al., (2006). Questions were based on the research of Ashworth and Bannister (1997) concerning student perspectives on academic dishonesty. Ashworth and Bannister (1997) believed it is a mistake for faculty to presume that students understand questions about academic misconduct the same way researchers do. For example, allowing someone to copy test answers may be viewed not as academic dishonesty, but as an act of friendship and kindness.

Cronbach's alpha was used to establish internal reliability in the present study. Alpha coefficients ranged from .92 for the 'Frequency you have engaged academic integrity survey' to .96 for 'Frequency you have observed others engaging academic integrity survey.'

The survey consists of 24 items in which students identified how frequently they have engaged in various means of academic misconduct and how frequently they believe other students have engaged in various means of academic misconduct. The survey was based on a 5-Likert scale with the following responses: 1 = never, 2 = seldom (once or twice), 3 = occasionally (several times), 4 = often (5-10 times) or 5 = very often (more than 10 times). Analysis of Variance was used to determine if the mean scores from the face-to-face students' survey results are significantly different from the online students' results.

## Results

The survey included the responses from 103 participants. Of the 103 total participants, 88 were female and 15 were male. Only 19 indicated knowing a substantial amount about the university's academic integrity policy. Ninety-eight indicated that the knowledge they did have about the university academic integrity policy was obtained from the course syllabus, while 54 indicated that they obtained some knowledge from the university's Website.

Research Question 1: Do differences exist between online vs. face-to-face students' perception of the academic integrity of their own behavior based on course type?

Data was analyzed using Analysis of Variance and results indicated no significant difference ( $F(1, 101) = .31, p > .58$ ) in students' perception of the academic integrity of their own behavior based on course type (face-to-face or online).

Table 1

*ANOVA Results for Students' View of Their Own Behavior Based on Course Type*

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	67.75	1	67.75	.31	.58
Within Groups	22297.24	101	220.77		
Total	22364.99	102			

Research Question 2: Do differences exist between online and face-to-face students' perceptions of other students' behavior based on course type?

Again, data was analyzed using Analysis of Variance and again results indicated no significant difference ( $F(1, 101) = .004, p > .95$ ) in students' perception of the academic integrity of other students' behavior based on course type (face-to-face or online).

Table 2

*ANOVA Results for Students' View of Others Behavior Based on Course Type*

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.70	1	1.70	.004	.95
Within Groups	40983.74	101	405.78		
Total	40985.44	102			

The results disproved the hypothesis. However, the study did reveal some interesting results from the individual questions regarding academic integrity that are worth noting. Individual survey item response totals and percentages are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3

*Student Perceptions of Personal Integrity Behavior, Frequency (n) and Percent (%)**Face-to-face N = 76**Online N = 27*

<b>Category and Related Items*</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>1 = Never</b>		<b>2 = Seldom (once or twice)</b>		<b>3 = Occasionally (several times)</b>		<b>4 = Often (5-10 times)</b>		<b>5 = Very Often (10 + times)</b>	
		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>	
		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
		<b>You</b>	<b>Observed</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>Observed</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>Observed</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>Observed</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>Observed</b>
<b>How frequently have <i>You</i> engaged in or <i>observed</i> other university students...</b>											
1. Planned in advance and then copied from another person's paper or received unauthorized aid from another person during an examination.	80 (77.7)	24 (23.3)	20 (19.4)	23 (22.3)	1 (1.0)	35 (34.0)	0 (0)	15 (14.6)	2 (1.9)	6 (5.8)	
2. Did not plan to, but did copy from another person's paper or received unauthorized aid from another person during an examination.	57 (55.3)	20 (19.4)	40 (38.8)	22 (21.4)	4 (3.9)	39 (37.9)	0 (0)	12 (11.7)	2 (1.9)	10 (9.7)	

*(Table 3 continues)*

(Table 3 continued)

Category and Related Items*	Group	1 = Never		2 = Seldom (once or twice)		3 = Occasionally (several times)		4 = Often (5-10 times)		5 = Very Often (10 + times)		
		<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
		You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You
3. Did not copy from another student's exam when you could have (for example, another student's exam was visible).		17 (16.5)	16 (15.5)	13 (12.6)	27 (26.2)	14 (13.6)	30 (29.1)	21 (20.4)	17 (16.5)	38 (36.9)	13 (12.6)	
4. Planned to and then used unauthorized materials or devices during an examination or any other form of academic evaluation and grading; for example, used signals, notes, books, or calculators during an examination when the instructor has not approved their use.		78 (75.7)	24 (23.3)	18 (17.5)	21 (20.4)	4 (3.9)	32 (31.1)	1 (1.0)	16 (15.5)	2 (1.9)	10 (9.7)	
5. Did not plan to, but did use unauthorized materials or devices during an examination or any other form of academic evaluation and grading.		81 (78.6)	22 (21.4)	17 (16.5)	31 (30.1)	2 (1.9)	30 (29.1)	0 (0)	13 (12.6)	3 (2.9)	7 (6.8)	
6. Did not use unauthorized materials during exam when you had the opportunity to do so (for example, your notes were visible).		28 (27.2)	11 (10.7)	14 (13.6)	36 (35.0)	16 (15.5)	28 (27.2)	16 (15.5)	13 (12.6)	29 (28.2)	15 (14.6)	

(Table 3 continues)



(Table 3 continued)

Category and Related Items*	Group	1 = Never		2 = Seldom (once or twice)		3 = Occasionally (several times)		4 = Often (5-10 times)		5 = Very Often (10 + times)		
		<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
		You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You
7. Planned to and then allowed another person to copy from your paper during an examination.		80 (77.7)	21 (20.4)	19 (18.4)	26 (25.2)	2 (1.9)	34 (33.0)	0 (0)	14 (13.6)	2 (1.9)	8 (7.8)	
8. Realized during an exam that another student wanted to copy from your paper, and allowed that student to copy (or did not prevent the student from copying).		58 (56.3)	15 (14.6)	35 (34.0)	33 (32.0)	8 (7.8)	31 (30.1)	0 (0)	16 (15.5)	2 (1.9)	8 (7.8)	
9. Refused to let another student copy from your exam (for example, covered your exam so the other student could not see it).		7 (6.8)	10 (9.7)	24 (23.3)	35 (34.0)	14 (13.6)	30 (29.1)	16 (15.5)	16 (15.5)	42 (40.8)	12 (11.7)	
10. Improperly acquired or distributed examinations; for example, stealing examinations before the test period or taking a copy of an examination from a testing room without the permission of the instructor.		95 (92.2)	28 (27.2)	4 (3.9)	33 (32.0)	1 (1.0)	28 (27.2)	0 (0)	8 (7.8)	3 (2.9)	6 (5.8)	

(Table 3 continues)

(Table 3 continued)

Category and Related Items*	Group	1 = Never		2 = Seldom (once or twice)		3 = Occasionally (several times)		4 = Often (5-10 times)		5 = Very Often (10 + times)	
		<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
		You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed
11. Submitted another's material as one's own for academic evaluation.		86 (83.5)	22 (21.4)	9 (8.7)	20 (19.4)	5 (4.9)	34 (33.0)	0 (0)	17 (16.5)	3 (2.9)	10 (9.7)
12. Prepared work for another student to submit for academic evaluation.		76 (73.8)	18 (17.5)	16 (15.5)	29 (28.2)	8 (7.8)	28 (27.2)	0 (0)	23 (22.3)	3 (2.9)	5 (4.9)
13. Refused another student's request to prepare work for that student to submit for academic evaluation.		34 (33.0)	14 (13.6)	21 (20.4)	31 (30.1)	16 (15.5)	35 (34.0)	12 (11.7)	18 (17.5)	20 (19.4)	5 (4.9)
14. Worked with another student on material to be submitted for academic evaluation when the instructor had not authorized working together.		43 (41.7)	13 (12.6)	34 (33.0)	21 (20.4)	12 (11.7)	33 (32.0)	11 (10.7)	21 (20.4)	3 (2.9)	15 (14.6)
15. Refused another student's request to collaborate on material to be submitted for academic evaluation when the instructor had not authorized working together.		32 (31.1)	12 (11.7)	24 (23.3)	35 (34.0)	17 (16.5)	38 (36.9)	20 (19.4)	11 (10.7)	10 (9.7)	7 (6.8)

(Table 3 continues)

(Table 3 continued)

Category and Related Items*	Group	1 = Never		2 = Seldom (once or twice)		3 = Occasionally (several times)		4 = Often (5-10 times)		5 = Very Often (10 + times)	
		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>	
		( <i>%</i> )		( <i>%</i> )		( <i>%</i> )		( <i>%</i> )		( <i>%</i> )	
		You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed
16. Submitted the same work, or substantially similar work, in more than one course without prior consent of the evaluating instructor(s).		75 (72.8)	17 (16.5)	15 (14.6)	23 (22.3)	8 (7.8)	35 (34.0)	3 (2.9)	15 (14.6)	2 (1.9)	13 (12.6)
17. Disrupted classroom, lab, or research and study areas; engaged in any conduct or actions that grossly or persistently interfered with the academic process.		87 (84.5)	26 (25.2)	11 (10.7)	29 (28.2)	2 (1.9)	30 (29.1)	0 (0)	11 (10.7)	3 (2.9)	7 (6.8)
18. Used unauthorized materials or fabricated data in an academic exercise; for example, falsifying data in a research paper or laboratory activity.		82 (79.6)	25 (24.3)	15 (14.6)	23 (22.3)	3 (2.9)	31 (30.1)	1 (1.0)	16 (15.5)	2 (1.9)	8 (7.8)
19. Copied sentences, phrases, paragraphs, tables, figures or data directly or in slightly modified form from a book, article, or other academic source without using quotation marks or giving proper acknowledgment to the original author or source.		48 (46.6)	18 (17.5)	45 (43.7)	15 (14.6)	7 (6.8)	32 (31.1)	1 (1.0)	22 (21.4)	2 (1.9)	16 (15.5)

(Table 3 continues)

(Table 3 continued)

Category and Related Items*	Group	1 = Never		2 = Seldom (once or twice)		3 = Occasionally (several times)		4 = Often (5-10 times)		5 = Very Often (10 + times)	
		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>	
		( <i>%</i> )		( <i>%</i> )		( <i>%</i> )		( <i>%</i> )		( <i>%</i> )	
		You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed	You	Observed
20. Copied information from Internet websites and submitted it as your own work.		78 (75.7)	20 (19.4)	19 (18.4)	15 (14.6)	4 (3.9)	26 (25.2)	0 (0)	23 (22.3)	2 (1.9)	19 (18.4)
21. Bought papers for the purpose of turning them in as your own work.		97 (94.2)	26 (25.2)	1 (1.0)	23 (22.3)	1 (1.0)	32 (31.1)	1 (1.0)	14 (13.6)	3 (2.9)	8 (7.8)
22. Sold or lent papers so another student could turn them in as his or her own work.		91 (88.3)	24 (23.3)	5 (4.9)	25 (24.3)	2 (1.9)	30 (29.1)	2 (1.9)	16 (15.5)	3 (2.9)	8 (7.8)
23. Refused another student's request that you sell or lend papers so the student could turn them in as his or her own work.		44 (42.7)	18 (17.5)	13 (12.6)	32 (31.1)	13 (12.6)	33 (32.0)	11 (10.7)	12 (11.7)	22 (21.4)	8 (7.8)
24. Told a faculty member about cheating or plagiarism by other students.		79 (76.7)	43 (41.7)	16 (15.5)	30 (29.1)	6 (5.8)	25 (24.3)	0 (0)	3 (2.9)	2 (1.9)	2 (1.9)
<b>Overall</b>		1533 (62.0)	487 (19.7)	448 (18.1)	638 (25.8)	170 (6.9)	759 (30.7)	116 (4.7)	362 (14.6)	205 (8.3)	226 (9.1)

## Discussion

Contrary to the stated hypothesis and the perceptions of many who work with online courses, the results showed no significant differences in students' perception of the academic integrity of their own behavior or other students' behavior based on course type (face-to-face or online). These findings support those of Grijalva et al. (2006) who found that academic dishonesty was the same in online and traditional classrooms. However, they do conflict with the theory of academic dishonesty being more prevalent in online courses than traditional courses due to ease of accessibility of resources (Carnevale, 1999; Kennedy et. al., 2000; Wang, 2008).

The results did reveal some interesting results based on individual survey responses to each question. Participants in the present study reported much higher incidences of academic dishonesty in others than in themselves. An inherent issue with the use of self-report instruments in research is respondents' biases in stating their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions (Ferrari, Bristow, & Cowman, 2005).

One such bias is the social desirability bias. Social desirability bias is the inclination to answer self-report items in a way that may heighten social approval instead of reflecting one's true feelings (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Paulhus, 1991). It is possible that individuals may have been hesitant to admit, even anonymously, to engaging in dishonest behaviors themselves. Participants may have been more willing to respond honestly regarding the behavior of others.

It is important to note that although some of the responses in Table 1 appear to be somewhat small, when referring to academic honesty the goal should be zero. For example, when asked whether students planned in advance and then copied from another person's paper or received unauthorized aid from another person during an examination, only 1.9% indicated that they themselves had done so at least five or more times. However, when asked if they had observed other students do this, 20% indicated they had done so. Similarly, when asked if they planned to and then used unauthorized materials or devices during an examination or any other form of academic evaluation and grading; for example, used signals, notes, books, or calculators during an examination when the instructor has not approved their use, 2.9% indicated that they themselves had done so at least five or more times while 25.2% indicated observing another student participating in this.

When asked if they had ever prepared work for another student to submit for academic evaluation, 2.9% indicated that they themselves had done this while 27.2% indicated that they had observed the behavior at least five or more times. Furthermore, when asked if they had copied sentences, phrases, paragraphs, tables, figures or data directly or in slightly modified form from a book, article, or other academic source without using quotation marks or giving proper acknowledgment to the original author or source, 2.9% indicated that they had done so at least five times while 36.9% indicated that they had observed this behavior.

Probably the greatest difference in responses was when asked if they had ever copied information from Internet websites and submitted it as their own work. In response to this statement, 1.9% of those surveyed indicated that they had done this at least five times while 40.7% indicated observing others participating in this activity.

Another interesting finding is that 52% percent indicated that they obtained integrity information from the institutions website while nearly 48% indicated that they did not. Additionally, nearly 8% indicated that they did not obtain integrity information from their instructor. Nearly 6% indicated having 'very little' or 'no' knowledge of the academic integrity policy. These numbers may be related to the findings of McCabe and Trevino (2002) who

suggest better educating students toward academic integrity policies and possibly implementing honor codes.

The present study provides additional evidence that there may be unnecessary alarm concerning the prevalence of academic dishonesty in online courses as opposed to face-to-face courses. The faculty concerns about academic dishonesty should not necessarily be more strongly focused on the online environment. The results did, however, highlight some of the more prevalent areas of academic dishonesty that are taking place. By identifying these areas, faculty can become better equipped to help reduce and even eliminate academic dishonesty.

### **Future Research**

Ultimately, future research should concentrate on what can be done to eliminate or lessen incidences of academic dishonesty in both online and face-to-face courses. The majority of existing research in this area tends to focus on a top-down approach. For instance, McCabe et al. (2001) found that students' academic behavior is significantly influenced by an institution's academic integrity programs and policies as well as the institution's honor codes. More specifically, students that were subjected to an honor code system, implemented by the institution, were less likely to cheat than students without a code system. The results indicate a need for academic institutions to create and study an environment that includes a clear communication of rules and standards (McCabe et al., 2001).

Other research should investigate the effectiveness of policies related to academic dishonesty and the implementation of such policies. Whitley and Keith-Spiegel (2001) indicated a need for institutions to create campus wide programs that promote academic integrity and develop effective academic honesty policies. These ideas are taken a step further by Nagel (2001) who promotes a joint effort of student affairs and faculty to create and implement academic honesty policies.

Because the perceptions that faculty hold regarding academic dishonesty in their students can affect their behavior, more research should focus on faculty beliefs about academic dishonesty and the influence of these beliefs on their actions. One study suggests that when faculty members underestimate the frequency of academic misconduct, they very rarely took appropriate action toward offenders (Hard et al., 2006). Hard et al. also indicated that institutions need to better educate the faculty on the prevalence of academic misconduct in order to increase the number of faculty that actively work towards prevention.

Future research may be necessary to do a follow up study to determine if technological advancements such as Blackboard's Safe Assignment and Respondus as well as other features help lower the percentages of those who engage in academically dishonest behaviors.

Finally, future research on academic dishonesty may need to consider social desirability in the participants' responses concerning their own behavior. While it is generally assumed that social desirability is not a factor in most anonymous online questionnaires (Kiesler & Sproull, 1986; Matthews, Baker, & Spillers, 2003), the sensitive nature of the topic of academic honesty may influence responses. Because social desirability is strongest in individuals with higher levels of education (Krysan, 1998), a replication of the present study might attempt to control for social desirability when studying college students' perceptions concerning a sensitive issue such as academic dishonesty (Barger, 2002; Heine & Lehman, 1995).

## References

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