

UNIT 1

Academic Integrity





Introduction

Academic dishonesty is a concern at any educational level. Many faculty members feel uncomfortable with delivering courses in the online environment due to a concern that students may find it easier to participate in academic dishonesty than they would in a traditional classroom. The term “scientific fraud” is used to describe intentional misrepresentation of the methods, procedures or results of scientific research, which is unethical and often illegal. As a student, what do you think of academic dishonesty in universities? What if scientific fraud occurs in a researcher’s career? In this unit, you’ll read two texts which might help you get some information about the two questions.



Learning Objectives

Reading

- Identifying the topic of academic integrity
- Understanding the definition of scientific fraud and some relevant examples
- Summarizing the main ideas using topic-related words or phrases
- Developing the awareness of academic integrity

Writing

- Understanding the definition of plagiarism
- Identifying different ways to avoid plagiarism
- Paraphrasing sentences using proper techniques
- Writing a summary of a text



Topic Exploration

Step 1 Use a library catalogue or Internet sources to search for relevant books or articles about *academic dishonesty*. Share your readings with your group members.

Step 2 Work in groups to prepare a presentation of the books or articles you have previously read. Be sure to include:

- the definition of academic dishonesty
- cases of academic dishonesty in China and abroad
- reasons of academic dishonesty and measures to tackle it

Step 3 Report your work to the whole class.



Reading

Promoting Academic Integrity in the Online Environment¹

Introduction

¹ Academic dishonesty is a concern for many instructors whether

¹ This text is adapted from *That's My Story and I'm Sticking to It: Promoting Academic Integrity in the Online Environment* by Gibbons, A., Mize, C. D., & Rogers, K. L. (2002, June 24–29). EDEDIA 2002—World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications, Denver, Colorado.

they teach in high school, two-year or four-year institutions. Academic dishonesty may include cheating on examinations, **plagiarizing**, **falsifying** sources or bibliographies, knowingly helping other students cheat, working together on projects that should be completed independently, or **turning in** the same assignment for more than one course (Dean, 2000). With the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, there seems to be an attitude among instructors that academic dishonesty is easier because of the availability of material that can easily be **cut and pasted** (Renard, 2000). Course delivery through the online environment may also make it easier for students to cheat since students and instructors do not have the same relationship in an online course as they do in a face-to-face course. Investigating reasons for academic dishonesty in face-to-face and online environments may help **shed some light on** ways to develop online coursework that encourages academic **integrity** rather than leaving students to their own devices in which they may be **tempted** toward academic dishonesty.

Reasons for academic dishonesty

2 Measuring the **incidence** of academic dishonesty is usually done through self-report surveys given to students. McCabe and Trevino (1996) reported that from a sample of 1,800 students at nine different state-sponsored universities, seventy percent of students surveyed admitted to cheating on exams. Additionally, it was reported that almost fifty percent admitted to working with others on assignments intended to be independent (McCabe & Trevino, 1996).

3 Several factors seem to be associated with the incidence of academic dishonesty. Dean (2000) has identified four of these as patterns seen in the literature: individual characteristics, peer group influences, instructor influences, and institutional policies.

4 Individual characteristics include ideas such as age, gender, social activities and level of academic achievement (Crown & Spiller, 1998; McCabe & Trevino, 1997). Peer group influences indicate that general students' **disapproval** of cheating is most likely to discourage it while peer group acceptance of cheating is likely to encourage it (Crown & Spiller,

1998). Students who take courses with instructors who are perceived as being actively involved and concerned about students are less likely to be involved in academic dishonesty (Crown & Spiller, 1998). Institutional policies that are communicated clearly to students along with the **penalties** for academic dishonesty are likely to reduce the occurrence of academic dishonesty (Crown & Spiller, 1998; McCabe & Trevino, 1996).

5 Considering these factors in regular academic classrooms, it would seem that the same kinds of academic dishonesty would occur in the online environment for the same reasons. Additionally, it may be more tempting or easier to engage in academic dishonesty in an online course than in one that is face to face. Renard (2000) states that although plagiarism is not new, Internet “cheat sites” have made cutting and pasting written sections or even entire papers easier. Students involved in an online course would be using the Internet consistently so the ease of using these sites could be tempting. Additionally, the perception of the instructor being less involved in an online course could encourage academic dishonesty since that is one of the factors that can influence a student’s decision to cheat.

Academic dishonesty in the online environment

6 Faculty who design courses to be delivered online may evaluate the time a student should spend in a traditional classroom for an equivalent course, add to it time that should be spent outside of class, and in some cases, add extra requirements due to the student not having to physically drive to a campus-based classroom. Faculty may see these students as being able to connect to the online course and go right to work with the course materials. Often faculty do not consider that the physical environment in which the student is taking the course may not be the **optimal** environment for student success. As students’ work begins to be turned in, possibly at a level below the expected standard, the instructor may feel that the **rigor** of the course is being challenged and therefore try to **compensate** by adding additional work. On the other hand, if the work submitted by the student is of a higher than expected standard, the faculty member may suspect that the student may be using inappropriate aids in completing course assignments.

7 In contrast, students may see themselves as being somewhat timid with the technology needed for a particular course. Additionally, these students may not see themselves as having the time to make traditional classroom courses, especially since many online students manipulate their course schedule around work or family obligations (Gibson, 1999). Some students feel that the online courses may be easier than a campus delivery due to a perception about having to only interact with course content, not with the instructor. Students who have done poorly with a particular class may feel that taking the professor **out of the loop** will in some way help them pass the course. In this case, students who may not have the strongest work ethic may be enrolled in courses requiring a stronger work ethic. With all cases, it is easy for the student to become overextended in their time and commitment to the course. This can lead to a situation where students feel that they are required to do too much work for the credit earned in the course.

8 The above mentioned **scenarios** for both faculty and students **set the stage for** many of the factors that can lead to discomfort and the temptation for academic dishonesty. Faculty members who are working to move to the online environment may feel detached from their students, feeling that they really do not have the kind of relationship that they would have if the same students were in a traditional classroom. In a traditional classroom, faculty can “look-in-the-eyes” of their students and make some determination about a student’s feelings and needs. Not having this direct contact may lead the faculty member to begin to be suspicious about the rigor of the course and then ultimately the quality and originality of students’ assignments.

9 The lack of direct contact and a feeling of detachment also may **profoundly** affect students. Students who already have very busy schedules may be compelled to take online courses due to the belief that they can add their academic work on top of an already busy lifestyle. Once the demands of the course become **overwhelming**, especially in cases where the instructor may feel that the rigor of the course is being challenged, the student may feel that the course requirements are unreasonable for the credit to be awarded. Once students begin to feel that the course requirements are unreasonable, the temptation to use

inappropriate resources to complete course assignments may begin to grow. The temptation can become even stronger when students develop the feeling that they are all alone in their course with little contact or interaction with the instructor or peers.

Designing online courses that promote academic integrity

¹⁰ The scenario and concerns mentioned above should not be considered a simple reality of online course delivery. In truth, academic integrity is something that all faculty members must work to promote in any instructional environment. However, with regard to online course delivery, there are design features that can specifically promote academic integrity in this environment.

¹¹ First, online course materials should clearly state that academic dishonesty is not acceptable and then clear examples should be given to illustrate the kind of activities that the student should avoid. Since institutional policies are seen as one factor that has an influence on a student's view of academic dishonesty, it is important to clearly outline for the student what the policy is in all online courses. Further, by giving specific examples, faculty can help students avoid misunderstandings about what the policy actually means. While many students would never turn in someone else's paper as their own, these same students may be tempted to copy and paste sections of their assignments from the Internet, justifying this activity as research.

¹² Secondly, online course materials should include a high degree of interaction. Interaction may be developed in several ways and should work to increase the students' contact with the content, the instructor, and peers. A variety of tools can be used to increase interaction such as chat, **bulletin boards**, MOOCs, email, etc. Faculty using these tools can achieve variety in their courses and decrease the perception by students that the instructor is really not there or is not paying attention to the work they are doing. Further, an instructor can use these tools to facilitate cooperative instructional strategies where students work in peer groups. Using cooperative strategies in online courses help to **enculturate** the students into the course by developing a support structure where

students can become knowledgeable of course **norms**. In interactive, well-supported cooperative environments, student peers help to encourage academic integrity and **adherence** to course policies. Faculty who make good use of interaction strategies will reduce the temptation of the student to seek outside help and increase student satisfaction with the course.

13 Lastly, online courses should be designed to include a variety of evaluation methods. With a single evaluation method, a multiple-choice test for example, a true picture of a student's understanding is difficult to achieve. By using multiple evaluation methods, a trend can be identified with regard to student performance and understanding. This is equally true in both online and traditional environments. In a traditional classroom where a student may be very quiet during the semester and three multiple choice exams and a final examination are used for the course grade, it can be difficult to determine if the student understands the material, simply is good at memorization, or cheats. In courses that use multiple evaluation methods, the trend for a student's work can be compared to individual assignments. If a situation occurs where one paper is turned in at a higher level of understanding or quality than has been seen in other course interactions, the possibility of academic dishonesty may be present. Likewise, a student's work trend can be used to guide the student to higher levels of understanding. As students come to realize that their work is being viewed and evaluated, and that feedback is being given, they will feel more attached to the course environment, and academic integrity will be promoted.

Final thoughts

14 There are no easy answers to the many questions that are associated with online course delivery. It is important to understand that many different people who become involved in online learning do so for many different reasons. By understanding these reasons, courses can be designed in a manner that can facilitate a faculty member's satisfaction as well as the success of students. Through the process students will have greater opportunity to grow, be successful, and have a high degree of academic integrity.

References

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Words and Phrases

- adherence** /əd'hiərəns/ *n.* when someone behaves according to a particular rule, belief, principle, etc. 坚持；依附；忠诚
e.g. The deployed services must be monitored and managed for quality of service and adherence to non-functional requirements.
- bulletin board** /'bʊlətɪn-bɔ:d/ *n.* board on the wall that you put information or pictures on 布告栏
e.g. Our teacher put our pictures up on the bulletin board.
- compensate** /'kɒmpənsɪt/ *v.* to replace or balance the effect of something bad 抵消；补偿
e.g. The official's promise to compensate people for the price rise clearly hadn't been worked out properly.
- cut and paste** piece together by excerpting and combining

			fragments from multiple sources 剪贴
		<i>e.g.</i>	This manuscript was cut and pasted from the author's doctoral dissertation.
disapproval	/ˌdɪsə'pru:vəl/	<i>n.</i>	an attitude that shows you think that someone or their behavior, ideas, etc. are bad or not suitable 不赞成, 反对
		<i>e.g.</i>	His action had been greeted with almost universal disapproval.
enculturate	/ɪn'kʌltʃə'reɪt/	<i>v.</i>	to get into the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values 使适应某种文化
		<i>e.g.</i>	They want to solve the transgenerational problem to enculturate people into this society.
falsify	/'fɔ:lsɪfaɪ/	<i>v.</i>	to change figures, records, etc. so that they contain false information 篡改, 伪造
		<i>e.g.</i>	The file was altered to falsify the evidence.
incidence	/'ɪnsɪdəns/	<i>n.</i>	the number of times something happens, especially crime, disease, etc. 发生率
		<i>e.g.</i>	The incidence of this disease has dropped considerably in the past few years.
integrity	/ɪn'tegrəti/	<i>n.</i>	the quality of being honest and strong about what you believe to be right 正直, 诚实
		<i>e.g.</i>	They said the greatest virtues in a politician were integrity, correctness and honesty.
norm	/nɔ:m/	<i>n.</i>	a required or agreed standard amount, etc. 规范; 标准
		<i>e.g.</i>	Deviation from the norm is not tolerated.
optimal	/'ɒptəməl/	<i>adj.</i>	the best or most suitable 最佳的, 最优的
		<i>e.g.</i>	The network bandwidth optimal allocation mechanism in new generation network is investigated in this paper.
out of the loop			to be or not be part of a group of people who make important decisions 在局外, 出圈
		<i>e.g.</i>	These activists don't want to feel out of the loop.
overwhelming	/ˌəʊvə'welmɪŋ/	<i>adj.</i>	very large or greater, more important, etc. than any other 巨大的, 极大的
		<i>e.g.</i>	The task won't feel so overwhelming if you break it down into small, easy-to-accomplish steps.
penalty	/'penlti/	<i>n.</i>	a punishment for breaking a law, rule or contract