Public Abstract

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Title:THE EFFECT OF AN ONLINE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY TUTORIAL ON STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF CHEATING

Many college faculty members expect more cheating to occur in online classes than in face-to-face courses. This opinion stems from the belief that it is easier for students to cheat when material is delivered online and the instructor is not physically present to deter cheating. To many, it seems reasonable that online courses provide students with greater opportunities to cheat. In one study, the researchers found 64% of faculty and 57% of students thought cheating in online classes would be easier than in face-to-face courses (Kennedy, Nowack, Raghuraman, Thomas, & Davis, 2000). In contrast, the study revealed that students who had taken one or more online courses were less likely to believe it was easy to cheat in this environment.

A review of the literature on academic integrity revealed wide disparity in the prevalence of cheating in college and university settings. For example, a 2009 study reviewed 60 years of plagiarism research and found the rate of student cheating has been increasing between 1941 and 1992 (Chao, Wilhelm, & Neureuther). In contrast, other recent studies have found rates of cheating to be lower than 1941 figures. One fact seems to be clear, however, students who cheat in face-to-face classes are more likely to cheat in online courses, too (Dillé, 2011; Lanier, 2006). On the other hand, delivery type is less of a predictor of cheating behavior than other factors. Part of term, major, and classification were significant predictors of student cheating behaviors (Mastin, Peska, & Lilly, 2009; McCabe, 2005; ?enda?, Duran, & Fraser, 2012). Many studies have focused on the ability of students to recognize cheating and the effect of institutional policies as a deterrent. Holt, Fagerheim, and Durham (2014) found educating students about what constitutes plagiarism improves their ability to identify and avoid such behaviors. Similarly, in numerous studies, McCabe and colleagues found that an institutional honor code establishes a culture that is less tolerant of cheating and, therefore, acts as a significant deterrent to student cheating (McCabe, 2005; McCabe & Pavela, 2000, 2004; McCabe & Treviño, 1996). There has been very little research on the effect of online tools, such as plagiarism tutorials and academic integrity tutorials, on changing student cheating behaviors and perceptions.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of an online academic integrity tutorial on students' perceptions of cheating at a large sized community college in an urban area in the Midwest. Students enrolled in at least one online class participated in a survey measuring their attitudes about cheating before and after completing an online academic integrity tutorial. The tests used to analyze the data to address question one included a dependent means t-test, an ANOVA, and an independent means t-test. A Box-Whisker Plot was created for question two and a Scatter Plot was created for question three to visually inspect the data and determine if a Pearson Correlation should be conducted. Neither graphs revealed a correlation.

The analysis revealed that an online academic integrity tutorial had no significant effect on student perceptions of cheating. However, further analysis on the 29 types of cheating behaviors showed significance for five of the items. The sample size was too small to successfully analyze the effect of major and age on the change in student perceptions of cheating. The variable gender showed no effect, but there was a significant effect between classification groups. Freshmen were likely to experience a change in their perception compared to other classifications.

A student's knowledge of the institution's academic integrity policies did not correlate to perceptions of

cheating. Similarly, there was no correlation between student perceptions of cheating and actual incidents of self-reported cheating. Nevertheless, there was a positive gain in the mean scores from pre- to post-survey and additional research of the effect of an online academic tutorial is needed.