

teaching note

Academic Misconduct: The instructor's responsibility

Summary

This case is intended primarily to engage the students in critical discussions of cheating generally and of their personal attitudes toward academic misconduct. Graduate students who are preparing to teach will benefit from both a realistic demonstration of instructor behavior and a deeper examination into the reasons students cheat, the methods they use, and the purposes behind the institution's student conduct policies and procedures. Students will also gain a greater recognition of the responsibilities and potential conflicts facing an instructor who discovers a student cheating.

Target Audience

The target audiences for this study are graduate, doctoral students, and newly-hired teaching faculty. It may be applied in graduate program seminars or ad-hoc workshops on enforcing or addressing student academic misconduct. It may be particularly useful to invite a representative from the student conduct office or an instructor with experience in cases of academic misconduct.

Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this case is to increase cognitive and affective skills of future hospitality educators as they relate to preventing and responding to student academic misconduct. The instructional objectives of the case are as follows:

- Identify common factors influencing student academic misconduct
- Recognize common methods of student cheating
- Define the instructor's responsibilities for academic integrity
- Comply with FERPA restrictions concerning the privacy of student conduct information
- Evaluate options available to an instructor facing a case of academic misconduct
- Implement procedures to confront and report student violations of the academic misconduct policy consistent with respective institution's office of student conduct.

Case Assignment

The case and the items below should be assigned a week prior to the day the case will be discussed. Assignment instructions:

- Read the case description above and plan to discuss the Jake's options
- Locate and read the institution's student academic misconduct policy, including the procedures for handling cases of misconduct. Highlight the provisions concerning the instructor's

responsibilities. Alternatively, students may be assigned to collect policies from several institutions for comparison.

- Complete the institution's FERPA instructor training module or independently identify the law's primary provisions.
- Read pages 47-50 of *Perceptions of cheating: An Exploratory study* (Kincaid and Zemke, 2006) and prepare a list of common cheating methods.
- Respond briefly in a typed document to the case discussion questions.

Case Discussion Questions

- What are the effects of academic misconduct on students, instructors, and institutions?
- How and why do students cheat?
- Did Jake violate FERPA policy or create legal risks for the university by confronting Eric during the exam in the presence of other students? What alternatives did he have?
- What should Jake do next? What will be the consequences of his decision?

Teaching Plan/Case Discussion (85 minutes total)

Perspective of college on academic misconduct (10 minutes)

An instructor who chooses to use this case most likely has a strong commitment to academic integrity and may choose to start by outlining the educational and social goals of student conduct codes. Alternatively, students may be asked to compile reasons why an instructor, a student, or an institution should care about integrity in education, and how academic misconduct affects each of them. This may lead to a further examination of the institution's expectations of students and graduate assistant instructors to comply with and enforce the student conduct code.

Why and how students cheat? (10 minutes)

The Kincaid and Zemke (2006) article provides a basis for a discussion of the factors influencing cheating behavior. The instructor may start by asking why students cheat and categorize the factors into individual, institutional, and social influences. In a similar fashion, the instructor may ask how students cheat and describe examples from his or her own experiences. Students may also be asked to take a few minutes to find online advice and resources that are available to help students cheat. Table 1 provides additional factors for discussion.

Although technological advances have enabled some new methods of cheating, the students may be surprised that the most common forms of cheating have changed very little: plagiarism, copying answers from other students, unauthorized collaboration on individual

Table 1**Factors Influencing Cheating Behavior**

Individual	Environmental	Social
Laziness/work habits	Instructor's attitude	Perceived social norms
Moral justification	Risk of punishment	Social approval
Low self-esteem	Communication	Pressure to assist others
Goal orientation	Peer behavior	Pressure to succeed

Adapted from McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield (2001)

work, and the use of unauthorized notes or resources. Students may be challenged to predict new ways in which technology may be used to cheat.

Individually or in groups, students should attempt to identify ways of preventing, deterring, and detecting the cheating methods identified in the previous discussion. They may also be asked to describe effective methods they have observed in other courses. The students should be asked to reconsider for a moment the reasons why students cheat, and determine whether the prevention techniques identified in this discussion adequately address the causes of academic misconduct. Identification of prevention methods may be followed by a comparison of their potential efficacy. Students may be challenged to consider whether the threat of adverse consequences has a stronger or weaker influence than the instructor's attitude and clear communication of expectations. Much of the research in this area indicates that environmental factors are more influential than individual and social factors, (McCabe, Butterfield, and Trevino, 2012; Whitley, 1998).

FERPA (5 minutes) — For U.S. Institutions

A brief review of the primary FERPA regulations and students rights should address the importance of keeping information about a student's performance and conduct strictly confidential. Students may be asked to briefly discuss the public policy behind FERPA or to predict some potential violations that may occur in the enforcement of the academic conduct code. The discussion should close with a reference to university resources for additional guidance.

Quiz (10 minutes)

If appropriate for the audience, a short quiz and follow up discussion will ensure the students are aware of the primary provisions in their institution's student academic misconduct policy. Appropriate questions might include the following:

1. How is academic misconduct defined by the institution?
2. What are the potential penalties for misconduct?
3. What are the procedures for reporting and resolving cases of misconduct?

The students may grade the quiz themselves to help identify and

correct any misunderstanding of the institution's expectations.

Office of Student Conduct or Disciplinary Committee (20 minutes)

This discussion should examine the duties and functions of the institution's Office of Student Conduct or equivalent in cases of alleged or suspected academic misconduct. It may be very useful to invite a member of that office to outline the institution's expectations of instructors and the procedures for cases of violations. Using a simple hypothetical violation as an example, examine any forms the institution may require and demonstrate the progression of the case through the administrative procedure. Additional materials may be available from the Office of Student Conduct. Alternatively, a faculty member might be invited to share experiences with handling academic misconduct.

Case discussion (20 minutes)

To introduce the case, a student or students may be asked to summarize the case and the dilemma Jake is faced with. The instructor should then solicit multiple responses to the case questions, either individually or in groups. The instructor should encourage debate and guide the discussion toward a resolution.

After reviewing the case questions, the instructor should distribute the case conclusion and allow students time to read it. Students should be asked whether Jake took the right actions with Eric, and what other actions he might have taken instead. The discussion may be concluded with the students' perceptions of the future effects this episode may have on Eric, Jake, and the college.

Pilot Test Results

This case was tested in Spring semester 2014 in a class of 18 graduate students. Overall, they found the study very useful to future educators and surprising in the complexity of the problem. They described it as realistic and "sobering." While they were aware of cheating behaviors in their undergraduate programs, they were surprised by the volume of academic research on the topic and appreciated a scientific study of academic misconduct. They identified the value of academic integrity in the reputation of the college and the value of their own degrees and agreed that instructors such as Jake should be

accountable for enforcement of the institution's rules.

Students identified some common forms of cheating (test banks, plagiarism, crib notes, copying answers), but were generally unaware of some of the more sophisticated methods enabled by new technology. A few minutes searching the internet for ways to cheat highlighted the immense scope of academic cheating. The students then recalled the reasons why students cheat from the assigned article and the reasons were listed on a whiteboard under three categories: individual characteristics and circumstances, classroom environmental factors, and social factors. They easily identified more that were not in the article, and the instructor added a few more. The exercised demonstrated clearly the relationships among the various factors and the individuality of cheating behavior.

Regarding the case, the students generally agreed that Jake had an obligation to do something about the suspected cheating in his class, but did not agree on what action Jake should take. This led to a good examination of the instructor's alternatives in the situation and their relative risks and benefits. The students agreed unanimously that Jake should have taken Eric out into the hallway and most would not have allowed him to finish the exam. They agreed that the student appeared to be cheating, but were also sensitive to the student's rights to privacy and presumption of innocence.

The students were gratified to read the conclusion and agreed they would have done about the same thing, but doubted that such administrative support would be available on short notice in all cases. None of the students said that Jake should have taken the note from Eric, but they did point out that it would be hard to prove Eric was cheating without it. Their suggested penalty was moderated by uncertainty whether Eric was actually cheating, but they supported substantial sanctions if he was.

Case Conclusion

Jake does not have Sam's phone number so he decides to step outside the exam room into the hallway and call the graduate program administrative office for advice on how to address this issue. He explains briefly the situation and is instructed by the faculty graduate coordinator not to allow the student to leave the classroom until someone arrives to assist. When Jake re-enters the exam room, Eric turns in his exam. Jake accepts the exam and asks Eric to sit down at a desk away from other students. Eric sits quietly after a brief protest.

Dr. Heinzman, an associate dean, enters the class room after approximately 15 minutes. Jake asks Eric to step outside with Dr. Heinzman, then explains the situation to Dr. Heinzman and again asks Eric to provide the note. Eric responds that he has thrown it out. When asked where specifically where he has thrown it out, Eric says that he ate it. When asked where he obtained the note, Eric admits he was cheating and that he will take responsibility for it and an F on the exam, but he

refuses to disclose how he obtained the note and the information on it.

Dr. Heinzman informs Eric and Jake that a meeting will be scheduled the next morning to further discuss these events. Eric inquires what will happen in this meeting and what penalty could be imposed. Jake tells Eric he will send an email later, then re-enters the classroom where the last students are completing the exam. After a brief time, Eric opens the door of the classroom and motions for Jake to meet him outside. Eric declares that he will not attend any meeting and that Jake has "no evidence". Jake simply advises Eric to check his email for a meeting request regardless and encourages Eric to attend the meeting the next day. Jake returns to the classroom and after the last student finishes the exam, he discusses the matter further with Dr. Heinzman. They agree to meet with Eric the next morning.

Jake returns to his office and sends an email to Eric requesting that he attend a meeting the next morning. After sending the email, Jake begins to write a summary of the events that occurred with Eric during the exam. He also prints out his syllabus and other course content specific to the student academic code and penalties for cheating. Dr. Heinzman encourages Jake to contact Dr. Sampson, the associate dean of academic affairs for the college, to attend the meeting the next morning.

Jake meets with Dr. Sampson shortly before the meeting time and summarizes the events. After hearing the story and receiving the student's I.D. number, Dr. Sampson returns to her office to check a database that holds records of other reported misconduct for the school.

When Eric arrives Dr. Sampson explains her role in academic affairs including alleged misconduct. Jake again summarizes the events of the previous day and asks Eric to share any comments or objections. Eric chooses to say nothing. Jake then completes the university's academic misconduct reporting form, recommending a failing grade for the course. According to the university's procedure, Eric is then presented with the option of accepting the sanctions or requesting an appeal. Eric refuses to select any option and says he is going to get a lawyer. He again says that the numbers on the paper were his lucky numbers that he had dreamed of the night before. Jake and Dr. Sampson advise Eric of his rights as a student to appeal the sanctions they are recommending to the Office of Student Conduct. Jake and Dr. Sampson sign the form and note on it that the student has refused to select an option or sign form. Jake provides a copy of the form to Eric and forwards the original to the appropriate college and university officials.

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