

Essay on academic honesty

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Academic Honesty

The concept of academic honesty is an issue which has become increasingly prevalent with the advent of the internet and its readily available information. The issue arises out of students who simply just copy-and-paste information into their essays rather than researching, composing and referencing a competent essay of their own volition. The fundamental issue central to academic dishonesty for educators is “ because its occurrence distorts the assessment of learning” (Ravenscroft et al, 2004, p173). In short, ‘ cheating’ is academically wrong in terms of it being an unfair representation of the student’s abilities. Cheating can take a number of forms: either, stealing someone else’s work, copying someone else’s work or failing to properly cite the sources used. Many studies have tried to assess whether students apply the same code of ethics to their studies as they would do in the workplace and raises the question of whether students take their studious ethics seriously or not. In short, academic honesty is fundamentally wrong even though many students fail to recognise this.

A study carried out Paul W. Grimes (2004) was designed to assess how serious the problem of dishonesty is in academia and business. His study found that cheating is a prominent problem in academia: “ though most students reported fearing the punishment of being caught, substantial numbers of students indicated that academic cheating is socially acceptable and not ethically wrong” (Grimes, 2004, p284). This finding is extremely surprising and indicates a paradox between the fear of being caught and not thinking that they are doing anything wrong; if they truly felt that then they

wouldn't be afraid of ' being caught' in the first place. The study also concluded that students generally perceived that cheating in a business context was significantly worse than when in an academic one (Grimes, 2004, p284). Again, this demonstrates an immaturity towards their studies which presumably vanishes once the student graduates and begins their professional life. However, this simply does not make sense as in either case, it is cheating and cheating is never correct, regardless of its context. This conclusion indicates that “ students universally hold a lower standard of accountability for personal action within the school environment relative to the ‘ real world’ of work” (Grimes, 2004, p284). It is this idea of the ‘ real world’ which seems to underpin the reason why students seem to feel it is acceptable to cheat in an academic context and one inference that can be made from this is that perhaps colleges should have harsher consequences for academic cheaters.

Furthering this idea, another study was carried out by Barnaby et al. (2004) which assessed the levels of association between attitudes on cheating and cognitive moral development (Barnaby et al, 2004, p397) and discusses this on the basis that repeatedly, studies have found that students cheat academically sometime during their experience at high school or college, despite knowing that it is wrong to do so (Barnaby et al, 2004, p397). The study concluded that cheating behaviours are indicative of a number of situational factors including a correlation with a lower moral development and that depending on the student's subject; their moral development may be lower than others – specifically, the study claims that Business majors have a distinctly lower moral development, for example (Barnaby et al,

2004, p406). The inferences that can be made in this instance indicate that high school or college students are less mature as shown by their ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong. One might hope that a student of teenage age and above would be capable of making this distinction but clearly this is not the case – despite the fear of being caught.

In practice, it is clear that students feel comfortable with the idea of academic cheating – more so than they would in a business context, indicating that students view the ‘real world’ as being entirely separate from the world of academia. However, this is not the case and students must recognise this in order to complete their education with a flawless, plagiarism-free record. Somewhat ironically, students who are unable to do this invariably fail to complete their education at all and, as such, will rarely make it to the world of business where they will be required to produce such self-composed work anyway since frequently, a degree is necessary to produce to such a level. Ergo, it is important for college and high school students to take seriously their academic pursuits and to develop healthy academic habits from a young age, readying them for the world of professionalism and business. Simply just because they are not being paid to produce their own work, students must not shirk the responsibility they hold towards producing un-plagiarised work that is the product of hard work – not cheating. In short, students must take pride in their own work – recognising the importance of producing it themselves without relying on assistance or the internet and ensure that in situations where they do utilise others’ research, that it is referenced and cited correctly and honestly.

References

Grimes, P. W. (2004, February). Dishonesty in Academics and Business: A Cross-Cultural Evaluation of Student Attitudes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 49(3). Retrieved 10 August 2011, from Ebsco.

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Ravenscroft, S. P. et al. (2004, October). Cheating and Moral Judgment in the College Classroom: A Natural Experiment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 54(2). Retrieved 10 August 2011, from Ebsco.