Academic Dishonesty:

A Student Development Dilemma

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Abstract

Many institutions of higher education historically addressed academic dishonesty from a moral perspective through the use and enforcement of honor codes. But many of those institutions have now abandoned their honor codes altogether or have concluded they are ineffective and have replaced them with administrative disciplinary systems. Thus, academic dishonesty is currently addressed by most institutions as a behavioral problem. Even the courts have characterized academic dishonesty as misconduct. However, much of the research that has addressed the issues involved in why students resort to cheating have concluded that it is a moral development problem. The decision that a student makes to cheat involves issues of moral, values, and ethics development. This article provides a review of literature to support the position that academic dishonesty is a student development problem that is best addressed from that perspective. This literature review has been organized into major sections. First, academic dishonesty as a contemporary problem in higher education is discussed. Included in this section is a review of how academic dishonesty has been defined in the literature, a discussion of the contemporary context, and an exploration of the extent of the problem. Second, various contentions about the causes of academic dishonesty are explored. The third section addresses the student development perspective, including a brief review of student development theory. The fourth section includes a review of utilizing a student development perspective in addressing academic dishonesty, including a discussion of the relationship between moral reasoning and cheating.
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This article provides a review of the current literature to support the position that academic dishonesty is a student development problem that is best addressed from a student development perspective. This literature review has been organized into major sections. First, academic dishonesty as a contemporary problem in higher education is discussed. Included in this section is a review of how academic dishonesty has been defined in the literature, a discussion of the contemporary context, and an exploration of the extent of the problem. Second, various contentions about the causes of academic dishonesty are explored. The third section addresses the student development perspective, including a brief review of student development theory. The fourth section includes a review of utilizing a student development perspective in addressing academic dishonesty, including a discussion of the relationship between moral reasoning and cheating.

Academic Dishonesty:

A Contemporary Problem in Higher Education

Academic integrity is a significant component of the philosophies and missions of many institutions of higher education (Stovall, 1989). Universities and colleges, regardless of their constitution, are responsible for providing an environment conducive to learning and excellence (Raffetto, 1985). The collegiate experience should equip students with the necessary ingredients to develop intellectual competence in order to manage their lives and careers in a mature and sensible manner, develop autonomy, establish identity, develop positive interpersonal relationships, develop a sense of direction and meaning, and most importantly, develop integrity (Nuss, 1984).

Academic Dishonesty Defined

One of the most significant problems encountered in reviewing the research literature on academic dishonesty and cheating was the absence of a generally accepted definition. Academic dishonesty usually refers to forms of cheating and plagiarism which result in students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise or receiving credit for work which is not their own (Kibler, Nuss, Paterson & Pavela, 1988).
A variety of student behaviors exist that may constitute academic dishonesty. Hetherington and Feldman (1964) categorized cheating as: a) individualistic - opportunistic, unplanned and impulsive; b) individualistic - planned, involving elements of foresight and activity before an actual test situation; c) social - active, involving two or more people who instigate cheating; and d) social - passive, two or more people allowing others to copy from them. (p. 212)

Most incidents of academic dishonesty fit traditional patterns: taking an exam for another student; altering or forging an official document; paying someone else to write a paper to submit as one’s own work; arranging to give or receive answers by use of signals; getting questions and answers from someone who has taken the exam; copying with or without the other person’s knowledge; doing assignments for someone; plagiarism; and padding items on a bibliography. Obtaining a copy of a test, using unauthorized notes, working together with other students on assignments when it is not allowed, using "cribsheets", turning in stolen exams as tests taken in class, changing grades and answers, and using an instructor’s manual are other unethical practices (Barnett & Dalton, 1981; Nuss, 1984; Raffetto, 1985; Singhal & Johnson, 1983). Pavela (1978) proposed the following definitions:

**Cheating** - intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.

**Fabrication** - intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

**Facilitating Academic Dishonesty** - intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

**Plagiarism** - the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement. (p. 68)
Contemporary Context

American higher education traditionally has viewed its role as encompassing more than just the acquisition of knowledge and the development of intellectual competence. It's goals generally have been described as helping students expand their knowledge and intellectual powers; to enhance students' moral, religious, and emotional interests and sensibilities; and to improve their performance in citizenship, work, family life, consumer choice, health, and other practical matters (Bowen, 1980). During the last twenty-five years student development theorists have agreed that the collegiate experience should enable students to mature and grow along several dimensions. Chickering (1969) proposed that these dimensions include: developing intellectual competence; learning to manage emotions; developing and establishing autonomy; establishing identity; developing interpersonal relations; developing a sense of purpose; and developing integrity. The manner in which colleges and universities have attempted to accomplish these goals and the individuals responsible have changed over the course of history (Sandeen, 1985).

Throughout the 1980's, national attention was focused on how well higher education accomplished its goals. Reports from the National Institute of Education (1984), The Association of American Colleges (1985), and The Newman Report (1985) raised questions about the quality of baccalaureate programs. These reports documented concern for the general condition of undergraduate programs and urged the academic community systematically to encourage integrity and coherence in undergraduate programs. Evidence has been cited which indicates that many college graduates are unable to perform fundamental tasks associated with effective communication, logical problem solving, persuasive argument, and critical analysis of data (Kibler et al., 1988). Serious questions also have been raised about the ability of today’s students to understand and appreciate complex societal problems, many of which have an ethical component (Hesburgh, 1985). The questions and challenges raised by these reports are evidence that higher education is experiencing a confidence crisis. The trust and subsequent support American higher education has traditionally relied upon may be limited as its constituents - students, parents, legislators, alumni,
and citizens - question the value of higher education. Reports of academic dishonesty and cheating contribute to this erosion of confidence and public support (Kibler et al., 1988)

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching conducted a comprehensive nation-wide study on campus community (Boyer, 1990). This report identified six principles that characterize campus community. The first principle identified was: a college or university is an educationally purposeful community, a place where faculty and students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning on campus. Academic dishonesty presents a serious threat to maintaining an educationally purposeful community by undermining the foundation of an institution’s integrity. Failure to provide and enforce adequate penalties in effect communicates a sanction to students, especially those who enter college with cheating patterns already in place. As a result, the value a college or university places on academic integrity is perceived as very low. Institutions cannot afford to ignore academic dishonesty (Stovall, 1989).

Extent of the Problem

Cheating behaviors can be traced in history through thousands of years. Brickman (1961) reported that during the civil service examinations in ancient China, tests were given in individual cubicles to prevent examinees from looking at the test papers of others, that examinees were searched for notes before they entered the cubicles, and that the death penalty was in effect for both examinees and examiners if anyone was found guilty of cheating. But cheating still occurred.

Cheating is not confined to colleges and universities. In a study by Schab (1969), approximately 24% of the girls and 20% of the boys admitted that they began cheating in the first grade; 17% of the girls and 15% of the boys began in the eighth grade; and 13% of the girls and 9% of the boys began in the seventh grade. Academic dishonesty is also not unique to undergraduate students. Zastrow (1970) provided evidence of a 40% incidence of cheating among graduate students.

While there is debate about whether acts of academic dishonesty in higher education have increased, it is clear that the problem on most campuses is significant (Gehring, Nuss & Pavela,
1986). One of the last reports issued by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, *Fair Practices in Higher Education* (1979), amounted to an indictment of both students and colleges for what the council viewed as a rise in unethical conduct, from classroom cheating to false advertising by institutions and abuse of student aid. The report cited anonymous surveys at several campuses in which 30 - 40% of students confessed to cheating at least once. Carnegie’s own surveys found that from 1969 to 1976, the percentage of students who responded that “some forms of cheating are necessary to get what I want” rose from 7.5 to 8.8%; at research universities, the percentage more than doubled, from 4.5 to 9.8%.

Researchers have studied and documented academic dishonesty on American college campuses for over 50 years. During this time, higher education appears to have experienced a gradual increase in academic dishonesty. A study by Drake (1941) found that 23% of college students cheated. Goldsen (1960) reported that 38% of students admitted cheating in an earlier study and that figure increased to 49% in a similar study done in 1960. Since that time studies have reported 50 - 75% of students involved in cheating (Ludeman, 1988; Pavela, 1981). Furthermore, a number of campuses have reported studies in which over 75% of students surveyed admitted to engaging in some form of academic dishonesty (Baird, 1980). McCabe (1992) recently surveyed over 6,000 students at 31 selective colleges and universities across the country. Over-67% of the students responding to his survey reported to have engaged in cheating while in college.

According to Gehring et al. (1986) widespread academic dishonesty poses a substantial threat to the higher educational enterprise in at least four ways:

1. A campus climate which appears to be tolerant of academic dishonesty may have the perverse effect of encouraging students who did not cheat in secondary school to adopt such a practice in college and throughout their lives. Such an outcome is the antithesis of what the college and university experience is designed to accomplish.

2. Apparent faculty indifference to academic dishonesty communicates to students that the values of integrity and honesty are not sufficiently important to justify any serious effort
to enforce them. This is a potentially devastating moral example for a generation of students which Yankelovich (1981) described as lacking clearly defined goals and longing for an ethic of commitment.

3. Most students are justifiably outraged when faculty and staff members appear to ignore obvious cases of cheating or plagiarism. Such feelings, should they become prevalent, will damage any sense of community on campus and alienate some of the very best students from the institution.

4. Academic dishonesty deceives those who may eventually depend upon the knowledge and integrity of our graduates. For example, a study in the Journal of Medical Education found a positive correlation between cheating in medical school and cheating in clinical patient care by young physicians (Sierles, Hendricks & Circle, 1980).

Causes of Academic Dishonesty

It is difficult to ascertain precisely what causes students to engage in academic dishonesty. There are several contributory factors, some of which have probably existed for generations and others which may be considered as somewhat unique to our current social and political setting (Gehring et al., 1986).

Many of the historical studies that relate to the causes of cheating can be grouped in three categories (Bushway & Nash, 1977):

1. Personal characteristics of cheaters.
2. The situational factors involved in a student’s decision about whether or not to cheat.
3. Reasons students give for cheating. (p. 623)

Some of the findings of the research in each of these areas are reported.

Personal Characteristics of Cheaters

Several studies investigated the relationship between either intelligence or achievement and academic dishonesty. Woods (1957) reported a tendency for honest students to be more
intelligent. Ellenberg (1973) found that approximately half of the cheaters in his study had grade averages above 85, whereas the averages of the other half of the class were below that level. Hoff (1940) found a correlation between IQ and honesty of .32, suggesting that bright students tended not to cheat as much as did slower ones. Vitro (1971) reported that cheating was more prevalent among students with low grade averages, and Drake (1941) stated that in a sample of 126 university women, no students receiving A’s cheated, while 4% of those receiving B’s, 23% of the C’s, 75% of the D’s, and 67% of the F’s cheated. Gross (1946) found that the mean IQ of noncheaters was slightly higher than that of cheaters. Brownell (1928) stated that cheaters had IQ’s slightly lower than average. Bonjean and McGee (1965) reported a slight tendency for increased cheating among students with averages below a C, and Kanfer and Duerfeldt (1968) found that the low achieving students cheat more than higher achieving students. Thus, the majority of studies indicate that students who are lower in intelligence may cheat more frequently.

Another characteristic that has been investigated by several researchers is the relationship of fraternity and sorority membership and cheating behavior. Drake (1941) found that 16% of the nonfraternity members cheated, whereas 36% of the members did. Parr (1936) reported a higher percentage of cheating among sorority women (44% versus 33%) as well as slight differences between fraternity and nonfraternity men (47% versus 43%). Bonjean and McGee (1965) wrote that fraternity and sorority membership was the personal characteristic most common to cheating students. In a related study, Hartshorne and May (1928) stated that students who associated with cheaters were more likely to cheat than were students who associated with noncheaters. Thus, the degree of closeness to others in the class seemed to affect dishonest behavior.

Hetherington and Feldman (1964) inferred that cheaters were more neurotic than noncheaters. Brownell (1928) had similar findings and added that cheaters were more extraverted as well. Keehn (1956), stated that cheating should be more related either to extraversion alone or to extraversion and neuroticism than to neuroticism alone. He found more cheating among students scoring high on both extraversion and neuroticism scales, but said that it was not possible to find a
relationship between cheating and extraversion alone because most of his subjects who scored high on the extraversion scale also scored high on the neuroticism scale. In a 1967 study White, Zielonka, and Gaier reported that cheaters were more tense, irritable, anxious, and in turmoil than noncheaters.

Concerning the relationship of the gender of the student and the incidence of academic dishonesty, Hartshorne and May (1928) and Black (1962) reported no significant differences in the gender of cheaters. Anderson (1957), however, found significant differences between the attitudes of men and women toward cheating behavior, with women professing much stricter attitudes and, therefore, possibly cheating less frequently. Also, Feldman and Feldman (1967) suggested that females cheated more in the earlier grades, but that males surpassed them in cheating by the senior year in high school. Schab (1969) reported that among 1,629 high school students, males admitted cheating in a variety of ways in significantly greater numbers than females. Overall, the findings seemed to indicate that the amount of cheating among females is somewhat less than that among males.

Other investigators have concerned themselves with a diversity of other behavioral characteristics and their relationship to academic dishonesty. Hetherington and Feldman (1964) found cheating more common among students who were less self-sufficient and who exerted little effort in their studies. Boodish (1962) noted that cheaters were often good, but overambitious, students. Vitro (1971) found that cheaters generally had parents who punished them severely or not at all. Thus, his results suggested that a moderate degree of discipline results in children who internalize moral values and are thus honest in their school work. Black (1962) stated that there were no significant differences in the cheating behavior of students who attended class regularly and those who frequently cut class. Drake (1941) published some findings suggesting that interest in a course’s content influenced cheating behavior. In his study 20% of the cheaters and 90% of the noncheaters enrolled in further courses in the department in which they had cheated. He added that lack of success may have also accounted for part of the difference. Steininger, Johnson and
Kirtz (1964) found a definite relationship between lack of meaningfulness of courses and cheating. Zastrow (1970), in contrast to all these findings, found no significant personal differences in cheating and noncheating students. In most cases, though, these research studies have suggested that there are differences in the personal and behavioral characteristics of cheaters and noncheaters.

The Situational Factors Involved in a Student's Decision About Whether or Not to Cheat

Several investigators have determined that particular characteristics of a situation have a great influence on whether or not a student cheats. McQueen (1957) reported that situational factors were very important determinants of cheating. Rogosin (1951) interpreted some of the studies in this area to mean that the situation was more important than behavioral characteristics as a determinant of whether or not cheating occurred. Bushway and Nash (1977), Pavela (1981), Singhal and Johnson (1983), Nuss (1984), Gehringer et al. (1986), and Kibler et al. (1988) have all reported situation factors as very important in influencing whether or not students elect to cheat.

Steininger, Johnson and Kirtz (1964) stated that a professor leaving the room during an exam could cause some students to cheat more than they might but that the students that cheated subsequently would feel more guilt because of having cheated in that situation. Tittle and Rowe (1974) found that under conditions of trust, the level of cheating was very high. Their research indicated that moral appeals had no effect on the incidence of cheating. The data disclosed that cheating can be reduced by a threat of being caught and punished. Likewise, Singhal and Johnson (1983) stated that a key aspect in the prevention of cheating is setting an academic atmosphere where honesty is an expected standard and any deviation from this standard can be readily detected and handled.

Studies have found that the personality and teaching styles of the professor may influence cheating behavior (Bushway & Nash, 1977). Shirk and Hoffman (1961) proposed a theory that very authoritarian professors incite cheating. Their authoritarian professor was characterized as one who informs the students that they are inferior for not knowing all the answers and that test grades reflect their intellectual abilities. Research by Steininger et al. (1964) seemed to support this belief.
They suggested that teachers who give excessively difficult tests may contribute to an increase in cheating. Excessively difficult tests may lead to feelings of hopelessness in students. Weldon (1966) underscored this argument with her examination of the relationships between the amount of cheating and the democratic or totalitarian characteristics of teachers. She suggested that students cheated much less frequently when they were freer to voice their opinions about their work and were not tested by totalitarian procedures. Woods (1957) reported that cheating may be encouraged inadvertently by teachers who were too easy or too hard. According to Montor (1971), students reported that negative attitudes of teachers towards inquisitive students was a factor in encouraging them to cheat. In a related study, Johnson and Klores (1968) found that a dissatisfying classroom situation was judged by some students as producing a greater amount of cheating. The Montor (1971) study reported that some students saw a teacher's grading on a curve as an inducement to cheating because under such a grading system poor students would have to cheat or would be doomed to get a low grade. These conclusions are important since cheating has been found to be a behavioral defense mechanism students use to combat anxiety related to fear of failure and incompetence (Butcher, 1971). Thus, there seems to be an important relationship between teaching style and classroom atmosphere and the amount of cheating that occurs.

The moral climate of the institution also appears to influence the amount of cheating. Steiner (1930) indicated that the moral tone of the school can have a positive effect on the characters of students as well as the incidence of cheating in the school. Atkins and Atkins (1936) found that a good emotional tone in the classroom, instruction about not cheating before taking a test, and great difficulty in cheating led to less cheating. In a related study, Fischer (1970) examined five classroom situations in an attempt to determine when students would be most likely to cheat. The five conditions were:

1. A “control” condition in which students were given instructions for the test.
2. An "informative appeal to honesty" condition in which students were told that being honest on the test was important in providing results that could be used in helping the teacher assess teaching techniques.

3. A "public affirmation of value" condition in which a pre-test discussion was held about cheating and students were asked to state why they would not cheat on the test.

4. A "value-relevant threat of punishment" condition in which students were told prior to the examination that if they were caught cheating they would have to write a sentence about cheating fifty times.

5. A "non-value-relevant threat of punishment" condition in which the students were told that their punishment for cheating would be to write numbers repeatedly. (p. 13)

Under the first two conditions, Fischer reported that approximately two-thirds of the control group and three-fourths of the informative appeal groups cheated. The incidence of cheating was lower in the other three situations, but no significant differences in the incidence of cheating were found between the three. All three were significantly lower than the informative appeal group. Thus, punishment conditions appear equally as effective as non-punishment conditions in their influence on cheating behavior. Therefore, cheating appears to be influenced by the moral climate of the institution.

The chances of success in cheating was another situational determinant that some researchers have addressed. The literature seems to indicate that students are less likely to cheat if the chances are greater that they may get caught. Vitro and Schoer (1972) found that the highest incidence of cheating occurred among students who were unlikely to do well on the test, who were unlikely to get caught, and to whom the particular test was very important. Ludeman (1938) found likelihood of success as a determinant when he reported that one of the two major reasons that students cheated was the fact that they had seen others get away with it. Atkins and Atkins (1936) reported that the amount of individual dishonesty increased with the ease of dishonesty. Uhlig and Howes (1967) found that a large percentage of college students would cheat even in nonpressure
situations if the opportunity was present. On the other hand though, Williams (1969) reported that cheating does not increase with the number of opportunities. Nevertheless, the literature indicates the likelihood of success as an important determinant of cheating behavior.

**Reasons Students Give for Cheating**

Related to the situational influences as determinants of cheating are the reasons students give for their dishonesty in the classroom. In the relevant literature, investigators have cited numerous reasons for academic dishonesty.

Concern about grades was the most frequently mentioned. Drake (1941), Woods (1957), Trabue (1962), Smith, Ryan and Diggins (1972), Pavela (1981), Hardy (1982), Singhal and Johnson (1983), Gehring et al. (1986) and Kibler et al. (1988) all stated that pressure to get grades caused most students to cheat. Woods (1957) also reported fear of failure as a reason. Related to these studies are the findings of Cornhlsen (1965), who studied high school seniors. She reported that pressure to get grades to gain admittance to college caused many students to cheat. Further results from her study showed that any kind of pressure from administrators, teachers, and/or parents frequently influenced cheating.

In a study at the University of Maryland, students were asked to select from several reasons why they perceived that students were most likely to cheat and why they personally would choose to cheat (Nuss, 1981). The most common perception was that students cheat in order to avoid failing a class (45%), while 21% perceived that the reason was because no one ever gets punished for it. Almost one-half (48%) indicated that the reason they personally would cheat was to avoid failing a class. Only 7% reported as a reason for their personal cheating that no one ever gets punished for it.

Gehring et al. (1986) listed six factors which have been cited as contributing most frequently to incidents of academic dishonesty:

1. Students are unclear about what behaviors constitute academic dishonesty.
2. Students believe that what they learn isn’t relevant to their future career goals.
3. Student values have changed. The ability to succeed at all costs is one of the most cherished values.

4. Increased competition for enrollment in high demand disciplines and admission to prestigious graduate and professional schools prompt students to cheat to improve their grades.

5. Students are succumbing to frequent temptation. Examinations are not properly secured and faculty members are casual about proctoring exams. Assignments and examinations are repeated frequently from semester to semester.

6. The risks associated with cheating are minimal. Students believe that no one gets punished and faculty members may avoid using campus disciplinary procedures by simply giving those suspected of cheating a lower or failing grade. (pp. 3-4)

Pavela (1981) stated that the increased willingness of students to engage in dishonest or unethical behaviors has continued in part due to vague policies and procedures, laxity in proctoring exams, and lenient penalties. The academic community does not discuss the value it places on integrity (Nuss, 1984). In Nuss’ study, approximately one-half of the faculty indicated that they never or rarely discuss university policies or their own requirements pertaining to academic dishonesty. Nuss concluded that without sufficient opportunities for discussion it is difficult, if not impossible, for new generations of college students to become aware of the values associated with effective scholarship.

Student Development Perspective

A frequent criticism directed at academic administrators is that their practice is seldom guided by theoretical constructs. The principles of student development are useful tools for colleges and universities as they design educational programs and activities to alleviate academic dishonesty and to teach students the fundamental values associated with effective scholarship (Nuss, 1984). Sanford (1962) and others encouraged educators to become concerned with educating the “whole person.” Sanford argued that the college environment should enable the
student to encounter the appropriate challenges and support for development (Sanford, 1966; Sanford & Axelrod, 1979). As the result of efforts to identify elements of the collegiate experience and the college environment which contributed to the education of the whole student, a body of research evolved which describes the way adolescents mature and develop into adulthood.

Knefelkamp, Widick, and Parker (1978) and Rodgers and Widick (1980) made significant contributions by categorizing the existing theories. There are at least five categories, which were described as the psychosocial theories, cognitive developmental theories, maturity models, typology models, and person-environment interaction models.

Rodgers (1988) argued that institutions of higher education should strive to create environments that help students learn and develop. He further asserted that when typological, psychosocial and cognitive-structural theories are integrated in use, it can be demonstrated that the outcomes are better than when enlightened and experienced common sense is used.

Utilizing a Student Development Perspective in Addressing Academic Dishonesty

All of these theories discussed in the previous section, albeit in somewhat different ways, focused on the importance of the interaction of the individual with the environment and the fact that various characteristics or aspects of the environment serve as sources of challenge and support which facilitate development. The work of the cognitive developmental theorists is particularly relevant to academic integrity because it focuses on how individuals reason about ethical and moral dilemmas (Kibler et al., 1988).

The current moral development research began with Kohlberg (1958). The early cognitive developmental research viewed moral development as an invariant, hierarchical, and sequential movement through a series of qualitatively different stages of moral reasoning. Stages of moral development were the structures of thought which underlay the moral judgments. Cognitive developmental theorists focused on the intellectual process used by the individual rather than the content of the thought (Nuss, 1984). Rest's (1983) research provided helpful perspectives about
the relationship between moral reasoning and production of moral behavior. He argued that development needs to be considered in more complex terms than simply the picture of an individual as being in one stage and moving step by step through a series of stages. Development is viewed as the gradual shifting from the use of lower stages to higher stages. Nuss in Kibler et al. (1988) summarized the principles of moral development theory as follows:

1. Development is viewed as the gradual shifting from the use of lower stages to higher stages.
2. Development is portrayed in terms of the progressive understanding of cooperative relationships.
3. Development of moral judgment requires more than just the attainment of certain rational operations.
4. Development is determined by the experiences and stimuli which result from the interaction between the individual and the environment.
5. Development requires a variety of social experiences including an opportunity to encounter different perspectives and roles. Development requires moral conflict in order for the individual to recognize the inadequacy of lower stages of reasoning. (p. 9)

The Relationship Between Moral Reasoning and Behavior

In examining ways in which colleges and universities can enhance academic integrity it is important to consider the relationship between stages of moral reasoning and moral behavior (Kibler et al., 1988).

The research reviewed by Nuss (1981) demonstrated that moral judgment is not synonymous with moral action. Kohlberg (1971) considered moral judgment to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for moral action. He also argued that moral judgment is the only distinctively moral factor in moral behavior (Kohlberg, 1975). Rest (1979) stated that moral judgment as a psychological variable has a limited role in the explanation of moral action.
The relationships between moral reasoning, moral behavior, and the particular situation are complex. The research in this area appears to support the following generalizations made by Boyce and Jensen (1978):

1. Persons operating at higher stages of moral judgment tend to act with greater consistency in their judgments.
2. There is a relationship between moral judgments, beliefs, values, and behavior.
3. Changes through persuasion or verbal interaction can influence behavior.
4. The stage of the message is important in determining the amount of behavioral change that occurs. (p. 119)

Hersh, Paolitto and Reimer (1979) cautioned against attempting to generalize from studies with relatively straight-forward choice situations, such as cheating studies, to behavior in less structured decision making situations. They argued that the particular setting plays an important role in promoting consistency between judgment and action.

Rest (1983 & 1985) proposed a four-part framework to consider the production of moral behavior and action in a particular situation. The four component processes are briefly described by Nuss in Kibler et al. (1988) as follows:

**Component I Moral Sensitivity.** This process involves the interpretation of the situation and identification of possible courses of action. Research findings on Component I indicate that many people have difficulty in interpreting even relatively simple situations: striking individual differences exist among people in their sensitivity to the needs of others; and the capacity to make these inferences generally develops with age (Rest, 1983). (p. 559)

**Component II Moral Judgment.** When the alternative courses of action have been identified, the individual must be able to determine the moral ideal. The cognitive development research on moral reasoning focuses primarily on this component, how does the individual reason about the moral alternatives? Can the individual identify the moral alternative?
**Component III Moral Motivation.** The moral course of action has been identified, but the individual must choose it over the alternative courses of action. This process involves prioritizing the values associated with the particular situation in such a manner so that the moral value is placed higher than other competing values such as affiliation, success and security.

**Component IV Moral Behavior.** This process involves executing and implementing a plan of action which results in the moral behavior. Having placed the moral alternative ahead of the other options the individual must be able to keep the goal in sight, have sufficient ego strength to tolerate frustration, lack of support or cooperation, and other hurdles. (pp. 13-14)

Rest’s model makes it apparent that if colleges and universities are interested in fostering academic integrity among their students, a carefully developed and comprehensive set of educational programs, policies, and procedures are necessary (Nuss, 1981). If colleges and universities are serious about addressing the problem of academic dishonesty, they must design programs, policies and procedures which help their students respond to ethical dilemmas (Kibler, et al., 1988).

Kibler et al. (1988) argued that even though the precise causes of academic dishonesty were unclear and the extent of the problem was unknown, colleges and universities needed to initiate systematic and conscientious efforts to help students appreciate the fundamental values associated with effective scholarship and to embrace the standards of academic integrity. They further stated that it is incumbent upon students, faculty and administrators to design ways to help students respond to ethical dilemmas. While each campus has its own unique mission and value system or ethos, it is safe to conclude that all institutions agree on the necessity for academic integrity. Nuss (1981) stated that the student development theoretical framework provides guidance for the design of proposed approaches to the problem of academic dishonesty. The assumptions she offered include:
1. College students are at different places developmentally and should not be considered as a homogeneous group.

2. Moral development is facilitated by opportunities to role play, confront different social or moral perspectives, and participate in decision making on ethical issues.

3. Students can comprehend moral reasoning that is related to their own stages of moral reasoning, but are unable to comprehend moral reasoning that is more than one stage above their own.

4. The environment should provide the necessary challenges and support to encourage new responses and developmental growth.

5. The moral development of some students may exceed that of some faculty and staff.

6. Different educational approaches and initiatives can contribute to different aspects of moral development (Dalton, Healy & Moore, 1985).

7. Educational interventions and programs must consider the four component processes and the complexities of moral behavior (Rest, 1985). (p. 77)

Nuss (1981) argued that the effectiveness of the measures which colleges and universities take to enhance academic integrity can be improved if they are planned within the context of moral development theory. The Carnegie Council and others have recommended specific steps colleges and universities should take (Carnegie Council, 1979; Levine, 1980; Pavia, 1981; Gehring et al., 1986; & Kibler et al., 1988). Several of these steps were discussed by Nuss within the context of the development framework in Kibler et al. (1988). These included the importance of a clearly written policy, opportunities for discussion and dialogue, equitable adjudication procedures, the role of sanctions and the importance of instructional settings. These steps are discussed in summary form below:

**Clearly written policy.** The student development literature emphasizes the important role that the environment plays in fostering development. Clearly communicating the communities expectations for academic integrity is one important way for the environment to foster student
development. Institutional policies and expectations should include definitions of academic dishonesty, examples of behaviors which constitute infractions, a description of the process followed when alleged violations occur, and a description of the sanctions usually imposed.

**Opportunities for discussion and dialogue.** The literature indicates that students are at different places developmentally and that development is facilitated by opportunities to role play and confront different social and moral perspectives. Frequent discussions about academic integrity provide the institution with an opportunity to communicate the value it places on integrity relative to other values such as achievement and competition. With this approach, students have the opportunity to seek clarification or elaboration and could become familiar with the way different disciplines or professions view integrity and ethical questions. The discussions may help students avoid unintentional violations as a result of ignorance or misunderstanding.

**Equitable adjudication procedures.** Equitable procedures for resolving cases of alleged academic dishonesty should be considered within the context of the theoretical framework. The procedures should be compatible with the institutional mission and the needs of the campus community and ensure due process for all parties. Campus procedures should provide the student with the opportunity to confront the ethical implications of their behavior, gain a better understanding of the roles and the responsibilities of students and faculty within the academic community, develop an appreciation of the values associated with effective scholarship, and gain exposure to forms of moral reasoning they can comprehend and which are likely to stimulate their development.

**Role of sanctions.** Pavela (1981) argued effectively against the practice of simply giving a student a failing grade for academic dishonesty for several reasons. The practice does not serve as a deterrent to students already in jeopardy of failing and it misleads other schools to which the student may apply. Most importantly, the practice deprives the student of an adequate opportunity to confront the ethical implications of the behavior. Consistently applied sanctions represent the essence of challenge and support.
**Instructional settings.** To facilitate the moral development of students, the actions of the academic community must be consistent with its published statements and policies. Conditions which facilitate academic dishonesty and failure to insist that faculty members demonstrate high ethical standards communicates a mixed message to students and creates an environment which is not conducive to student development.

**Summary**

This review of the literature revealed the following:

1. A wide variety of behaviors exist that may constitute academic dishonesty.
2. Academic dishonesty is viewed as a major problem for contemporary higher education.
3. Although it is difficult to determine the precise dimensions of the extent of academic dishonesty, it clearly is and has been a wide-spread problem affecting nearly all institutions of higher education.
4. There are differences in the personal and behavioral characteristics of students who cheat and those who do not cheat.
5. There is a relationship between teaching style and academic dishonesty.
6. The moral climate of the institution appears to influence the amount of cheating that occurs.
7. Likelihood of success is an important determinant of cheating behavior.
8. Concern about grades is the most frequently cited reason by students for engaging in academic dishonesty.
9. The principles of student development are useful tools for colleges and universities as they design educational programs and activities to alleviate academic dishonesty and to teach students the fundamental values associated with effective scholarship.
10. There are specific steps that institutions can take within the context of student development to address academic dishonesty. These steps include the importance of clearly written
policies, opportunities for discussion and dialogue, equitable adjudication procedures, the role of sanctions and the importance of instructional settings.
REFERENCES


