Association for
Business Communication

Southwestern United States

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Editors' Note

Welcome to the 38th meeting of the Association for Business Communication-Southwestern United States. Many thanks are given to the planners, program chairs, reviewers, presenters, and other contributors responsible for making this a great conference. Special thanks go to Margaret Kilcoyne, Vice President and Program Chair of ABC-SWUS, who has assembled a great program that will appeal to business communicators.

The program this year includes 28 presentations by 48 authors from United States institutions in Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, as well as from the countries of Mexico and India. Seven of the papers are included in this proceeding.

Each year completed papers that are submitted for the program are considered for the Irwin/McGraw Hill Distinguished Paper Award. This year's distinguished paper was awarded to **Betty A. Kleen** and **Shari Lawrence** from Nicholls State University. They will present their paper on Thursday, March 10 at 8:30 a.m.

Congratulations are also in order for **Harold Hurry**, who is being awarded the 2011 Prentice-Hall Outstanding Educator Award. In these proceedings, you will also find information on previous program chairpersons, Distinguished Paper Award recipients, and recipients of the Outstanding Research and Outstanding Teacher awards.

You will find in this proceedings a call for papers for next year that includes the dates for both presentation proposals (September 15) and the proceedings (January 15) of the accepted presentations.

We hope this conference becomes a memory of professional enhancement and great times with colleagues as we share our collective knowledge and research.

Susan Evans Jennings
Faridah Awang
Co-editors

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                                           Ann Wilson, Stephen F. Austin State University

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CONGRATULATIONS!
Recipients of the 2011 McGraw-Hill/Irwin Distinguished Paper Award

Student Cheating: Current Faculty Perceptions
Betty A. Kleen, Nicholls State University
Shari Lawrence, Nicholls State University

CONGRATULATIONS!
Recipient of the 2011 Federation of Business Disciplines Outstanding Educator Award

Harold A. Hurry, Sam Houston State University

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Future National and Regional Meetings

2011 – 2012

Association for Business Communication-Southeastern United States
March 31-April 2, 2011
Charleston, South Carolina
Program Chair: Deborah Roebuck

Association for Business Communication 76rd Annual Convention
October 18-23, 2011
Montreal, Canada
Program Co-chairs: Faridah Awang and Kathy Hill

Association for Business Communication-Southwestern United States
February 28-March 3, 2012
New Orleans, Louisiana
Program Chair: Lucia S. Sigmar

ABC-SWUS Program Chairpersons 1973 - Present

2010-2011	Margaret Kilcoyne	1989-1990	Marlin C. Young
2009-2010	Faridah Awang	1988-1989	Sallye Benoit
2008-2009	Marcel Robles	1987-1988	Tom Means
		1986-1987	Lamar N. Reinsch, Jr.
2007-2008	Ann Wilson	1985-1986	Sara Hart
2006-2007	Carolyn Ashe	1984-1985	Betty S. Johnson
2005-2006	Harold A. Hurry	1983-1984	Larry R. Smeltzer
2004-2005	Lana W. Carnes		
2003-2004	Marsha L. Bayless	1982-1983	Daniel Cochran
		1981-1982	Nancy Darsey
2002-2003	Betty A. Kleen	1980-1981	John M. Penrose
2001-2002	William Sharbrough	1979-1980	R. Lynn Johnson
2000-2001	Carol Lehman	1978-1979	Raymond V. Lesikar
1999-2000	William P. Galle, Jr.		
1998-1999	Anita Bednar	1977-1978	Jack D. Eure
		1976-1977	Phil Lewis
1997-1998	Timothy W. Clipson	1975-1976	Dale Level
1996-1997	Debbie D. Dufrene	1974-1975	Bette Anne Stead
1995-1996	William J. Wardrope	1973-1974	Sam J. Bruno
1994-1995	Roger N. Conaway		
1993-1994	Donna W. Luse		
1992-1993	F. Stanford Wayne		
1991-1992	Beverly H. Nelson		
1990-1991	Marian Crawford		

First Call for Papers

Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States
New Orleans, Louisiana
February 28-March 3, 2012

You are invited to submit a proposal or paper for presentation at the 2012 ABC-SWUS Conference in New Orleans. Research papers or position papers related to the following areas are encouraged:

Communication Technology	Technology and Education
Innovative Instructional Methods	Business Education Issues
International Business Communication	Paradigm Shifts in Communication
Training and Development/Consulting	Interpersonal Communication
Nonverbal Communication	Executive/Managerial Communication
Legal and Ethical Communication Issues	Organizational Communication

- Papers or proposals should include a statement of the problem or purpose, methodology section (if applicable), findings (as available), a summary, implications for education and/or business, and a bibliography.

- If you are submitting a proposal only, it should contain 750 to 1,500 words and must be submitted on the ABC website: http://www.businesscommunication.org. Click on the link for the 2012 ABC-SWUS conference.

- If you are submitting a completed paper please submit your proposal online as indicated above. Then email the completed paper to Lucia Sigmar at **lss002@shsu.edu**. All submissions must be in Microsoft Word.

- Personal and institutional identification should be removed from the body of the paper. Identify yourself and your institution only on the cover page. Submissions will be anonymously reviewed.

- A cover page is required with the title of the paper and identifying information for each author: name, institutional affiliation, address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address.

- For your research to be considered for the Richard D. Irwin Distinguished Paper Award, you must submit a completed paper rather than a proposal.

- Submitted papers should not have been previously presented or published or be under consideration or accepted for presentation elsewhere.

- All authors and co-authors are expected to join ABC-SWUS and pre-register for the FBD meeting.

<u>Deadline</u>: **Papers and proposals must be received by September 15, 2011.**

The deadline for submitting accepted papers to the Proceedings will be January 15, 2012. Authors must submit to the proceedings editor a copy of the finished paper they wish to be considered for inclusion in the proceedings, this also applies to completed papers that were sent for original acceptance to the conference.

For more information, contact Program Chair Lucia S. Sigmar
Email Address: lss002@shsu.edu
Phone Number: 936.294.4904

Prentice-Hall and Thomson Learning Outstanding Educator Awards

for

The Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States

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To be eligible for the award, recipients must have received the ABC-SWUS Outstanding Educator Award, must not be a previous recipient of either the Prentice-Hall or Thomson learning awards, must be a member of the Association for Business Communication, and must teach in the business communication discipline. This top tier ABC-SWUS award began in 2001 to honor outstanding educators in ABC-SWUS who were already recognized by our association. The award was sponsored by Prentice-Hall in 2001 and 2002, and by Thomson Learning in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. The award winner must also have been recently active in the association as evidenced by attendance at recent ABC-SWUS conferences. The award winners are listed below:

2011	Harold A. Hurry, Sam Houston State University
2010	Geraldine E. Hynes, Sam Houston State University
2009	Roger N. Conaway, Tecnológico de Monterrey, campus San Luis Potosí
2008	Bobbye J. Davis, Southeastern Louisiana University
2007	Betty A. Kleen, Nicholls State University
2006	William Wardrope, University of Central Oklahoma
2005	Betty S. Johnson, Stephen F. Austin State University
2004	Marsha L. Bayless, Stephen F. Austin State University
2003	Lillian H. Chaney, University of Memphis
2002	Debbie DuFrene, Stephen F. Austin State University
2001	Anita Bednar, University of Central Oklahoma

The Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States
Outstanding Researcher and Teacher Awards

These awards were developed and first awarded in 1992 to recognize the accomplishments of the region's members. Nominated candidates are evaluated by a panel of previous award winners. No awards were given in 1998, 2001, 2003, or 2007. The association began alternating the awards every other year in 2000 between researcher and teacher. The recipients below each received a plaque and award of $100 (the award was changed to $200 in 2008):

2010 Margaret Kilcoyne, Outstanding Researcher Award

2009 Harold Hurry, Outstanding Teacher Award

2008 Roger N. Conaway, Outstanding Researcher Award

2008 Geraldine E. Hynes, Outstanding Teacher Award

2006 Janna P. Vice, Outstanding Researcher Award

2005 Bobbye Davis, Outstanding Teacher Award

2003 Marcel Robles, Outstanding Teacher Award

2004 William Wardrope, Outstanding Researcher Award

2002 Lillian H. Chaney, Outstanding Researcher Award

2002 Jeré Littlejohn, Outstanding Teacher Award

2000 William Sharbrough, Outstanding Researcher Award

1998 Betty Kleen, Outstanding Researcher Award

1999 Robert Olney, Outstanding Teacher Award

1999 William Wardrope, Outstanding Teacher Award

1997 Al Williams, Outstanding Teacher Award

1996 Betty S. Johnson, Outstanding Researcher Award

1995 Marsha L. Bayless, Outstanding Researcher Award

1995 Anita Bednar, Outstanding Teacher Award

1994 Nelda Spinks, Outstanding Teacher Award

1993 Timothy W. Clipson, Outstanding Teacher Award

1993 F. Stanford Wayne, Outstanding Researcher Award

1992 Debbie D. DuFrene, Outstanding Researcher Award

1992 Beverly H. Nelson, Outstanding Teacher Award

The Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States

Irwin-McGraw Hill Distinguished Paper Award Recipients

2011   Betty A. Kleen and Shari Lawrence, Nicholls State University
        Student Cheating: Current Faculty Perceptions

2010   Jose Guadalupe Torres and Roger N. Conaway
        Adoption and Use of New Communication Technologies in an International Organization: An Exploratory Study of Text Messaging

2009   Susan Evans Jennings, S. Ann Wilson, and Judith L. Biss
        Is Email Out and Text Messaging In? Communication Trends in Secondary and Post Secondary Students

2008   Debbie D. DuFrene, Carol M. Lehman, and Judith L. Biss
        Receptivity and Response of Students to an Electronic Textbook

2007   William J. Wardrope and Roger N. Conaway
        Readability and Cultural Distinctiveness of Executives' Letters Found in the Annual Reports of Latin American Companies

2006   Janna P. Vice and Lana W. Carnes
        Professional Opportunities for Business Communication Students That Go Beyond the Course Grade

2005   Lillian H. Chaney, Catherine G. Green, and Janet T. Cherry
        Trainers' Perceptions of Distracting or Annoying Behaviors of Corporate Trainers

2004   Patricia Borstorff and Brandy Logan
        Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressivenes: Organizational Life, Gender, and Ethnicity.

2003   Ruth A. Miller and Donna W. Luce
        The Most Important Written, Oral, and Interpersonal Communication Skills Needed by Information Systems Staff During the Systems Development Process

2002   Roger N. Conaway and William Wardrope
        Communication in Latin America: An Analysis of Guatemalan Business Letters

2001   Annette N. Shelby and N. Lamar Reinsch Jr.
        Strategies of Nonprofessional Advocates: A Study of Letters to a Senator

2000   Donna R. Everett and Richard A. Drapeau
        A Comparison of Student Achievement in the Business Communication Course When Taught in Two Distance Learning Environments

1999   Susan Plutsky and Barbara Wilson
Study to Validate Prerequisites in Business Communication for Student Success

1998   Jose R. Goris, Bobby C. Vaught, and John D. Pettit Jr.
Inquiry into the Relationship Between the Job Characteristics Model and Communication: An Empirical Study Using Moderated Progression Analysis

1996   Beverly Little, J. R. McLaurin, Robert Taylor, and Dave Snyder
Are Men Really from Mars and Women from Venus? Perhaps We're All from Earth After All

1995   Bolanie A. Olaniran, Grant T. Savage, and Ritch L. Sorenson
Teaching Computer-mediated Communication in the Classroom: Using Experimental and Experiental Methods to Maximize Learning

1994   James R. McLaurin and Robert R. Taylor
Communication and its Predictability of Managerial Performance: A Discriminant Analysis

1993   Mona J. Casady and F. Stanford Wayne
Employment Ads of Major United States Newspapers

1992   Betty S. Johnson and Nancy J. Wilmeth
The Legal Implications of Correspondence Authorship

1991   Rod Blackwell, Jane H. Stanford, and John D. Pettit Jr.
Measuring a Formal Process Model of Communication Taught in a University Business Program: An Empirical Study

Student Cheating: Current Faculty Perceptions

Betty A. Kleen
Shari Lawrence
Nicholls State University

Introduction

The issue of student cheating has been of concern to faculty and administrators across college campuses for many years. Recent technological advancements, however, have increased the capacity for students to cheat and have therefore raised concerns that cheating may now be more prevalent. Specifically, cheating today has gone beyond simply copying from a fellow student or making notes to bring in during an exam. By accessing the Internet, students can plagiarize material easily, purchase exams, or download solutions manuals. In addition, the use of alphanumeric calculators and smart phones has made cheating in the classroom much easier.

The purpose of this paper is to address what constitutes cheating, discuss how colleges and universities are addressing the problem, and analyze what faculty think about cheating and appropriate student sanctions. The authors surveyed faculty to assess their opinions on student cheating and what penalties should be assigned for various cheating incidents. In addition, a review of recent literature on what steps universities are taking to handle the problem is discussed.

Understanding Student Cheating

Before university administrators implement policies on student cheating, it is important to understand the basis behind this behavior. Drawing from a key assumption in economic analysis, rationality, it can be assumed that people will act rationally, meaning they will act in their own self-interests. Furthermore, individuals will think through a cost-benefit analysis and will behave in a manner in which the benefits of their actions exceed the costs. Therefore, if college students believe that the benefits of cheating outweigh the costs, they will cheat.

The main benefits of cheating are better grades and being able to put much less time and effort into studying. The costs of cheating include whatever punishment being caught would entail and the internal distress from guilt. The appearance of a gradual decline in morals in our society, as presented by the media, can serve to undermine the feelings of guilt a student may have regarding cheating. In addition, a student may believe that the probability of being caught is low, and even if caught, the punishment may not be very severe. Unfortunately, these views make the benefit of cheating greater than the costs,

which may be why cheating is on the rise across college campuses.

According to the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI), more than 75 percent of college students admit to some form of cheating (2010). Surprisingly, according to the CAI, the main reason students cheat is not to earn a better grade or to succeed, but because of laziness. In addition, 50 percent of students do not believe that cheating is wrong, which helps them to justify it.

The relationships that students develop with their peers as well as faculty can also influence the probability of cheating. For instance, a study by McCabe and Trevino (1997) indicates that perceived peer disapproval is the strongest predictor of reduced cheating. However, a related study by Merritt (2002) found that just 19 percent of students say they would report a fellow student for cheating. Therefore, with a reporting percentage this low, it can be surmised that there is probably not much peer pressure to prevent students from cheating. McCabe and Trevino (1997) also found that students who are involved in extracurricular activities such as student clubs, fraternities, or sororities are more likely to cheat. Regarding faculty/student relationships, students are less likely to cheat if they perceive their instructors to be concerned about them as well as about creating a high standard of academic integrity in the classroom (Roig & Ballew, 1994; Genereux & McLeod, 1995; Crown & Spiller, 1998; Whitley, 1998).

A recent study by Alexander, Zhao, and Truell (2010) compared business and non-business students to see if their perceptions differed. A prior study by McCabe, Butterfield, and Trevino (2006) found a higher incidence of cheating among business students compared to non-business students. However, Alexander, Zhao, and Truell's results indicate a significant difference between business and non-business students in only one area: online testing. Business students perceived that cheating on an online test deserved a lighter penalty compared to non-business students.

Finally, university policies can influence the prevalence of student cheating. Specifically, universities with honor codes appear to have less of a problem with cheating compared to universities without such codes (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999). In addition, students are less likely to cheat if the university policies have been communicated effectively and are also being enforced (Aaron, 1992; McCabe & Trevino, 1996; Crown & Spiller, 1998).

Purpose

Based on the discussion concerning increases in student cheating and students' attitudes toward cheating, the authors chose to learn more about what faculty perceive are appropriate punishments for cheating incidences. This paper presents an analysis of perceptions of current faculty about penalties to be assigned for several different cheating scenarios. Faculty surveyed included two groups. The first group included faculty who attended a breakout session at a faculty institute at the researchers' university, a medium-sized public university in the ABC-SWUS region. The second group included faculty who are members of ABC-SWUS.

Methodology

One of the authors presented a breakout session on student cheating at the

institution's spring faculty institute. As part of the breakout session, attendees took a few moments to complete a questionnaire on what they consider to be cheating and what penalties they apply for various cheating incidences. Some of the session's discussion then focused on the more frequent answers provided by the group. That survey data was collected after the session and analyzed. Because the authors both teach business communication classes, they determined that a subset of questions from the January survey would be sent to ABC-SWUS members to gather their perceptions as well. The authors obtained the ABC-SWUS listing from the official Association for Business Communication website; additionally, other faculty who had also attended ABC-SWUS (part of the FBD meeting) in recent years were added to this listing. Email addresses were identified for all. Questions from the January survey were replicated in a Google docs form, and an email was sent with a link to the survey.

Findings

Fifty-seven faculty members at the medium-sized public institution turned in completed surveys. All 81 faculty who are ABC International members living in the Southwest region were included in the email survey. Another 16 faculty were identified as attending ABC-SWUS at the FBD conference in recent years, although not ABC International members. Ninety-seven faculty members received the email survey, and 41 responded, for a 42% response rate. Participant characteristics are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics

	Nicholls State University		ABC-SWUS	
Gender	**No. (57)**	**Percentage**	**No. (41)**	**Percentage**
Male	18	31.6	13	31.7
Female	39	68.4	28	68.3
Totals	57	100.0	41	100.0
Tenured				
Yes	16	28.1	21	52.5
No	41	71.9	19	47.5
Totals	57	100.0	40	100.0
Years' Teaching Experience				
1-5 years	21	36.8	1	2.4
6-10 years	8	14.0	7	17.1
11-15 years	12	21.1	4	9.8
16-20 years	5	8.8	6	14.6
21+ years	11	19.3	23	56.1
Totals	57	100.0	41	100.0

College Affiliation				
Business	9	15.8	35	85.4
Education	7	12.3	0	0.0
Arts and Sciences	25	43.8	3	7.3
Other	16	28.1	3	7.3
Totals	57	100.0	41	100.0

The percentages of male and female respondents were very similar in both groups. The authors surmise that because the state university's group was a self-selected group interested in learning tips about dealing with student cheating, a larger percentage of untenured versus tenured faculty attended the breakout session. The ABC-SWUS group was close in tenured and non-tenured percentages. The university group also consisted of more participants with fewer years teaching experience than the ABC-SWUS respondents. The breakout session at the university was open to all faculty members at the institution, explaining the mixture of college representation. As expected from previous knowledge of ABC-SWUS faculty affiliations, a high percentage of ABC-SWUS respondents reported college of business affiliation. When asked whether the way some professors conduct class makes it easier for students to cheat, faculty responses leaned toward the agree and strongly agree side of the responses (75% for ABC-SWUS and 70% for the state university faculty). The comparison of responses appears in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Respondents' Opinions Regarding Whether the Way Some Professors Conduct Class Makes it Easier to Cheat
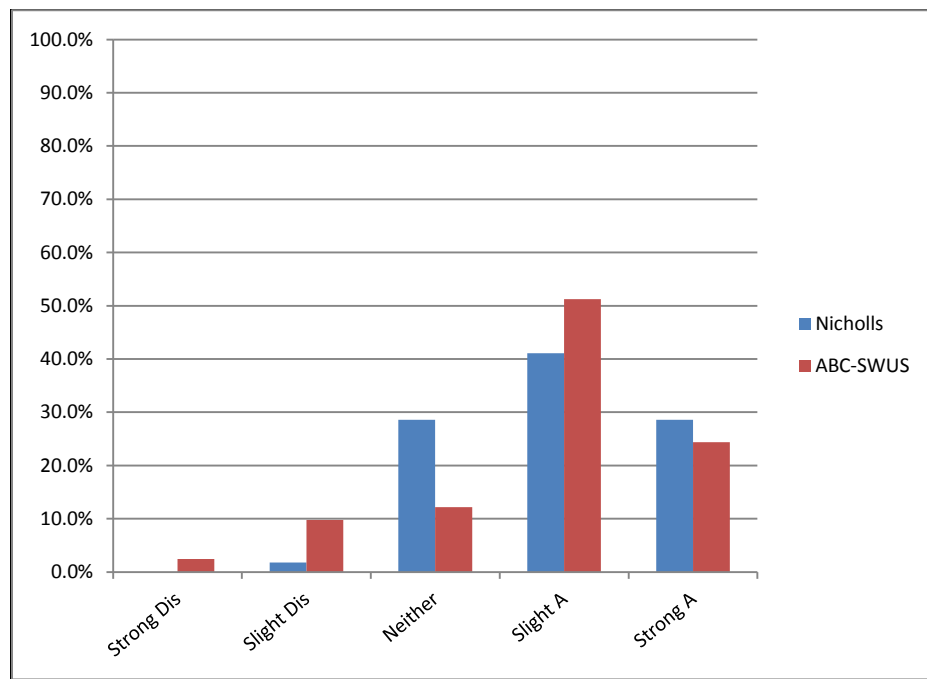
The remaining survey questions related to penalties for various instances of cheating. The penalty options included no penalty, grade of zero on the assignment, grade of zero on the assignment and a required course to reduce cheating (RCC), a failing grade in the course, and dismissal from the university. For a cheating incidence where a student turned in an assignment completed by a friend or classmate, the most frequent response was a grade of zero. A considerable number of respondents would strengthen the penalty by requiring a course to reduce cheating or assigning a failing grade in a course (see Figure 2 below). When respondents were asked about a penalty for a student who completes an assignment for another student (see Figure 3), fewer faculty selected the penalty level of an F in the course.

Figure 2: Respondents' Opinions of Penalties for Turning in an Assignment Completed by a Friend/Classmate
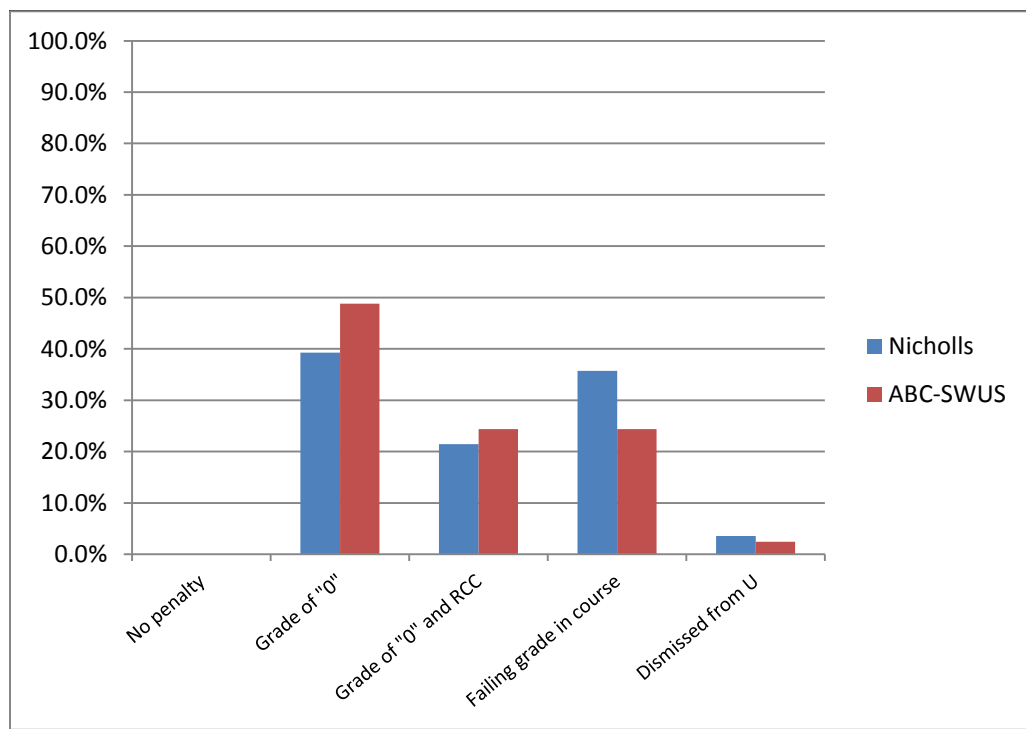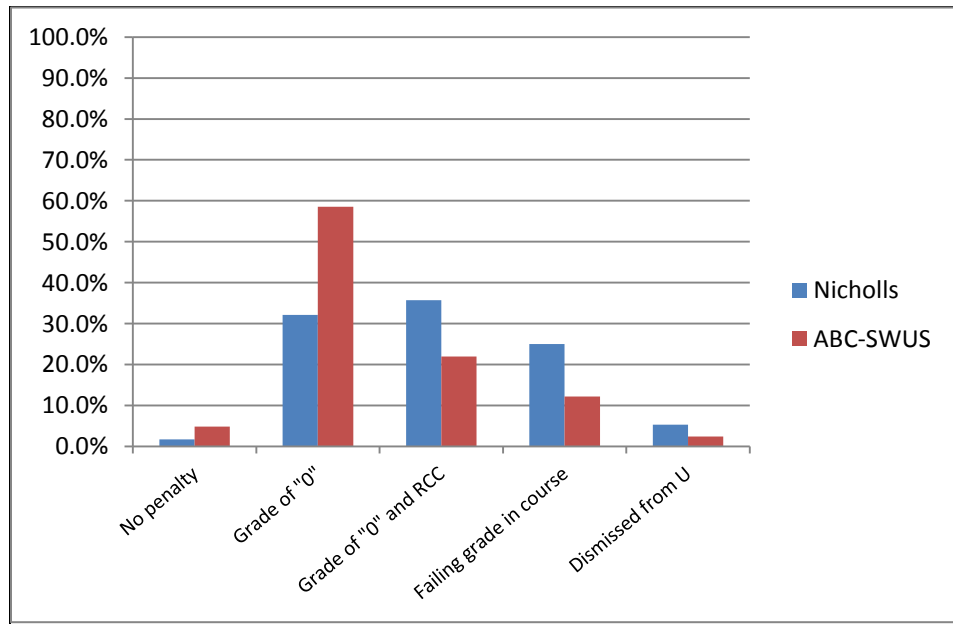
Figure 3: Respondents' Opinions of Penalties for Completing an Assignment for another Student

When asked what penalties should be applied if a student completes an individual assignment with a group, the state university faculty was slightly less rigorous in penalties. While no ABC-SWUS respondents would apply a penalty of dismissal from the university, 97% would apply at minimum a grade of zero or more stringent penalty on the assignment. See Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Respondents' Opinions of Penalties for Completing an Individual Assignment with a Group

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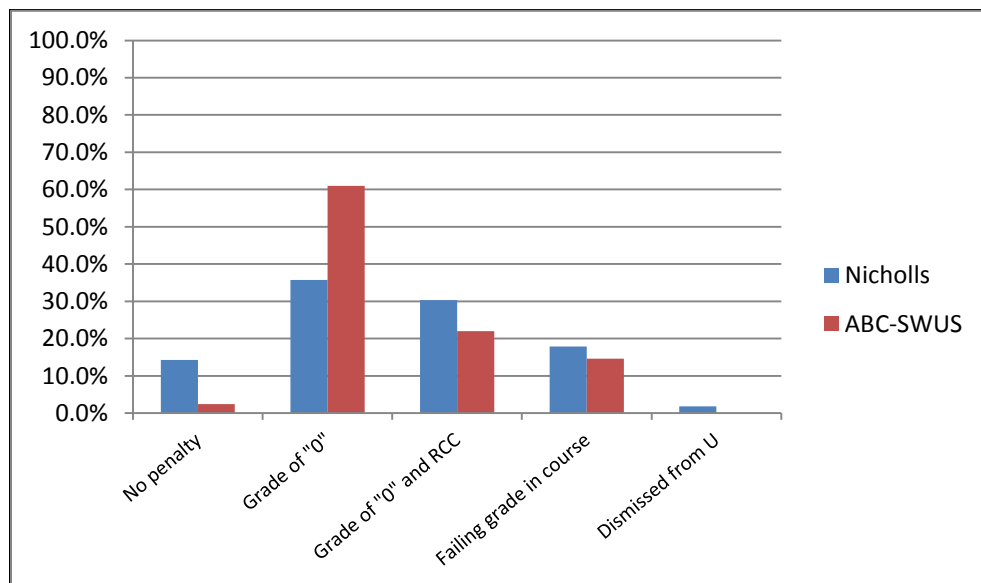
Of particular interest to the authors were the responses to questions concerning copying and pasting, from either the Internet or other sources, while providing no quotation marks or citations. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, the two groups' answers to the two questions were very similar, showing little difference in penalties for students caught copying/pasting Internet or other sources with no quotations or citations.

Figure 5: Respondents' Opinions of Penalties for Copying/Pasting from the Internet with No Citations or Quotes
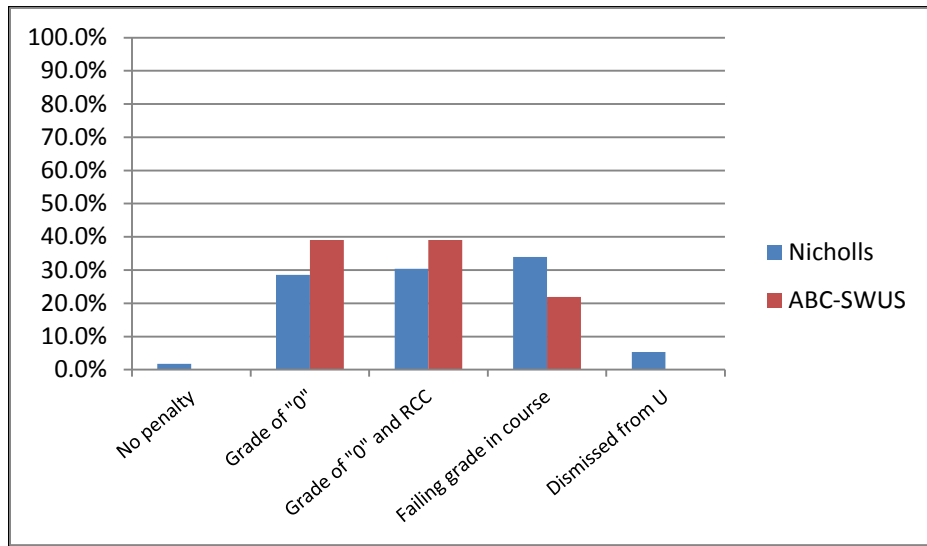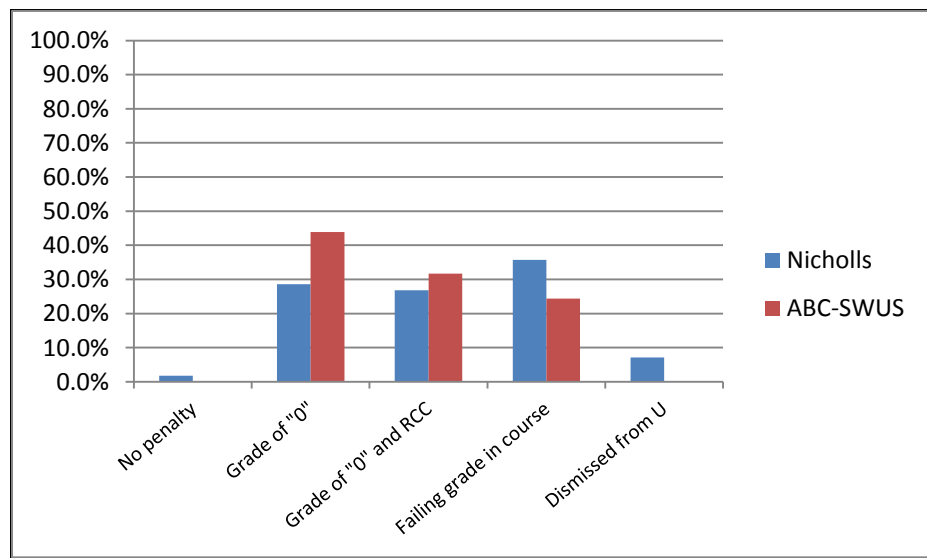

Figure 6: Respondents' Opinions of Penalties for Copying and Pasting from Books, Journals, and Newspapers with No Citations or Quotes

Two final questions related to penalties for either (a) purchasing a paper from the Internet or another student and submitting it as a student's original work or (b) copying a paper previously submitted by another student to submit as original work. The most frequent response for both these cheating instances was a failing grade in the course.

Of all questions posed to respondents, the purchase of a paper from another student or the Internet to submit as original work earned the highest percentage of faculty indicating a penalty of dismissal from the university. Detailed results are shown in Figures 7 and 8.

Figure 7: Respondents' Opinions of Penalties for Purchasing a Paper from another Student or the Internet and Turning in as Original Work
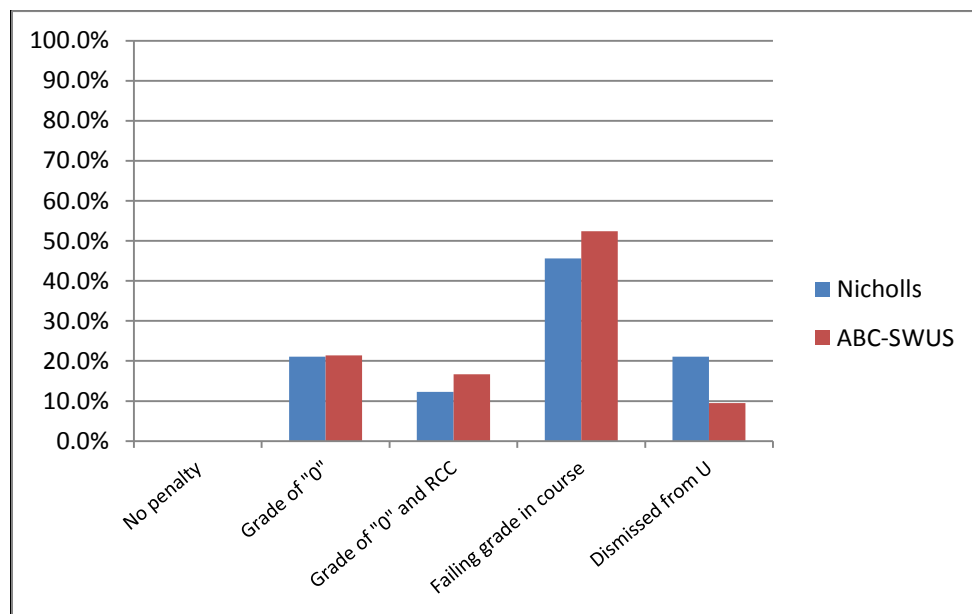
Overall, survey respondents of both groups often identified a student-cheating penalty of either a grade of zero on the assignment or a grade of zero coupled with the student being required to take a course targeted toward reducing cheating. Many students may perceive the benefits of cheating outweigh the cost if penalties of this level are applied when a student is caught. Only

when the cheating scenario moved to the level of (a) purchasing a paper from the Internet or another student to submit as original work, or (b) submitting as original work a paper previously submitted by another student did the penalties of a failing grade in the course or even dismissal from the university receive more responses.

**Figure 8: Respondents' Opinions of Penalties for Submitting
a Previously Submitted Paper from another Student**
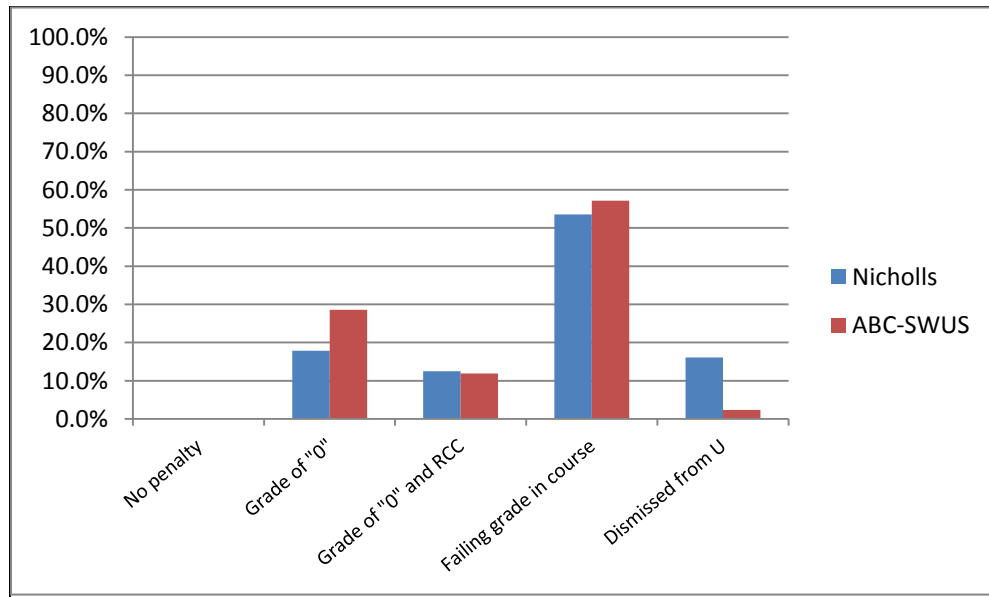
Options for Universities

University administrators can take several positive steps to curtail the incidences of cheating on their respective campuses. It is important to increase the cost of cheating beyond the benefits. This can be accomplished by implementing strict policies against cheating and adhering to them campus wide. These policies must be communicated effectively to the students. One option may be to discuss academic honesty policies with incoming freshmen. This can be done in a university preparatory class. In addition, the academic honesty policy should be included in all course syllabi. Students must not only be aware of the policies regarding cheating, they also must believe that the prescribed sanctions will be implemented. Otherwise, university policies against cheating will not be taken seriously by students.

One of the problems facing universities is that of tracking incidents of student cheating across the various departments and colleges on campus. For instance, the Faculty Senate at the authors' university realized that there were multiple offenders who were continuously being given minor infractions such as a zero on an assignment because the professor was unaware of the student's cheating history. As a result, the university has implemented a central reporting system whereby faculty can document incidents of student cheating and submit them to be entered into an academic integrity database maintained by the vice president of academic affairs. This has enabled administrators to identify when a student has multiple offenses. This can lead to stiffer penalties being applied for multiple offenders. The administrators and faculty believe that the implementation of the central reporting system for student cheating has been an effective move toward

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substantially increasing the cost of multiple offenses by students.

Another step universities can take to curtail cheating is to teach ethical standards of behavior in the classroom. This can be accomplished in courses of various disciplines with case studies, classroom discussions, and simulations. Ideally, students should behave in an honest manner because it is the right thing to do and they would otherwise feel guilty rather than for fear of being caught. There is some debate, however, on the effectiveness of "teaching" morals. Some believe that honesty is an intrinsic value that cannot be taught, particularly in adulthood. Indeed, a study by Brown and Choong (2005) found that better exposure to ethics in the classroom did not have an effect on students' behavior. Although this finding is disappointing, the authors believe universities should still strive to teach ethical standards in the classroom since the outcomes, while minimal, could nonetheless be positive.

Students' relationships with faculty as well as classroom culture can play a key role in student cheating. If teachers are engaged with their students and develop positive interpersonal relationships based on mutual respect, students may be less likely to engage in cheating. In addition, faculty can create a climate in the classroom that inhibits cheating by having multiple versions of exams and changing the exam content each semester; faculty should also actively monitor the class while exams are being given. Customized projects and/or writing assignments can reduce the possibility of a student finding a previously completed assignment to copy. Finally, new assignments should be given each semester to prevent students from accessing old data.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Since recent studies report that three-fourths of college students will admit to some form of cheating, most students who cheat do so because of laziness, and many students do not believe cheating is wrong. It is no wonder faculty today encounter so many instances of cheating. If students perceive the benefits of cheating outweigh the costs, they will most likely continue to cheat and take their chances with being caught.

When a convenience sample of faculty at the authors' university and the ABC-SWUS members were surveyed, approximately 70% of both groups agreed or strongly agreed that the way some professors conduct class makes it easier to cheat. When presented with cheating scenarios and asked to indicate the penalty they perceived students should receive, respondents more often reported (a) a grade of "0" or (b) a grade of "0" AND a required course designed to deter cheating instead of stronger penalties. One limitation of this study is that respondents were not provided with an opportunity to identify different penalties for first offense versus second offense versus third offense. The authors recognize that a more detailed survey may have resulted in at least some faculty identifying different penalties for repeat offenders. The cheating scenarios that would receive more severe penalties as identified by respondents were those of (a) purchasing a paper to turn in as original work, or (b) copying a paper previously submitted by another student to turn in as original work.

The authors' university elected to implement an academic integrity multiple-offender database to deter students from multiple

cheating offenses. While this process may not be the answer for all universities, such a database increases the costs in a cost-benefit analysis a student may complete when considering whether or not to cheat on a test, homework assignment, or major project.

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Critically Reflecting on the Practice of
Classroom Communication and Teaching:
One Professor's Assumptions, Beliefs, Philosophies, and Methods

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Introduction

They say that if you watch what games children play and what they enjoy doing, you can frequently predict the vocation they will choose as adults. Through divine providence perhaps, the little one who enjoyed playing school is now a teacher. Much of what I had done as a young adult—my education, career, even parenthood—has prepared me for what I now do and enjoy very much.

As a very little child, I created a schoolhouse at home with my little brother and sister (I was the oldest). I tried to recreate for them some of the lessons my kindergarten through second grade teachers taught my classes, but as three and four year olds, my sister and brother were not always very cooperative. Later, as a work-study lab assistant for the Chemistry department at my undergraduate institution, I found it very rewarding to explain complex theories and procedures to people and see them succeed with their lab work. I was soon able to observe, first hand, what it is like to become a scholar as my spouse attended classes, passed the comprehensive exams, and wrote and defended a dissertation. Inspired by this example, I applied for and was awarded a research assistantship

during the time I did my graduate work, and discovered how much I really enjoy working with data. As an undergraduate biology major, this enjoyment was masked somewhat by the concurrent need to operate a great deal of equipment and apparatus, which I found unpleasant. While I love science, I never much cared for manipulating gadgets and contraptions, a very necessary component of scientific inquiry in a laboratory setting. This realization prompted me to switch fields.

During my days as a budget analyst and market development manager in the publishing industry, I gained experience in my content areas of business—general business practice, management, managerial accounting, and marketing. I left my career to raise our son and to have more children (who never came). Most other parents I knew at that time packed their little ones off to daycare, preschool, and other programs, but I wanted to teach and train my own child. I also involved myself with volunteer work at church and, later, at my son's school. While working on a Vacation Bible School project at church, I became friendly with the wife of the provost at my current institution; she recommended that I interview for an adjunct position. I began

teaching when my son went to kindergarten.

I learned to teach first by trial and error. I read the rather scathing reviews I received from my students and adjusted my strategies and methods accordingly, vowing to myself to do a better job for them. I sought advice from colleagues, particularly the department chair who hired me, and read books and articles about teaching. I learned to think through the objectives for each course and to plan lessons based on them.

As I worked through my self-imposed "TQM" program, I gained confidence, became popular with students, and moved to full-time teaching. Now, as I look back on my teaching career, I see that my journey toward becoming a better teacher has been consistent with Brookfield's (1995, 1998) model, advancing first through viewing my practice through the eyes of my students, then through the eyes of my colleagues, through the lens of the education literature, and, finally, through reflection on my own life and experiences. The remainder of this paper will articulate my evolving understanding and philosophy of teaching and plans for continued practice improvement.

Assumptions and Beliefs

Aside from my experiences, I believe that my basic nature also shapes the kind of teacher I am. I have, for as long as I can remember, accepted as axiomatic the existence of a loving God who wishes people to be reflections of his love. As a result, I easily embrace the democratic ideals and values of justice and freedom of expression Brookfield (1995) discusses, and

desire to implement them in the classroom. As perhaps the majority of Americans have, I have long held that democracy and freedom are cherished and sought by all in one way or another. Naturally, this ontological belief permeates the way I live my life, including the way I teach; to be a good college-level educator, I feel I must create a participatory and democratic climate in the classroom. I believe people respond well to being treated equitably. Brookfield categorizes teaching assumptions as *paradigmatic*, or fundamental, structural axioms, *prescriptive*, normative beliefs about what should take place in a classroom, and *causal* or hypothetical "if-then" assumptions. I have noticed that Brookfield seems to have written his text with the same paradigmatic assumption that I hold about the importance of democratic classrooms.

I am a (Myers-Briggs) introvert, and introspective, preferring to take time to think things over a bit before making comments. Naturally, as a student I tended to be attentive but quiet in class, and perhaps this is why I do not mark down students who are quiet in class.

Also, I think at least one of my paradigmatic assumptions comes from my childhood "teaching experience." My play teaching experiences as a youngster at home with my little brother and sister helped me see from a very early age that pupils may not always be very cooperative with a teaching agenda. Perhaps as a result of this early experience, I am prone to assuming that students (even adults) will not necessarily cooperate with your classroom agenda and require flexibility and clear explanations of what is expected from the start.

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Somewhere along the way, I realized that a prescriptive assumption of mine seems to be that the best educational processes (Brookfield, 1995) are ones that make learning fun and entertaining for students. Therefore, a causal assumption that stems from that is that if humor is interjected into discussions, lectures, and exercises, students will better assimilate the lessons.

Teaching Methods, Techniques, and Approaches

The primary methods and techniques I use are the lecture-discussion, case analysis and discussion, and hands-on practice. While some methods are more appropriate for particular courses and lessons than others, the lecture-discussion seems to be useful in all undergraduate business subject areas and is therefore foundational.

Huang (2005) offers ten very useful tactics from his own practice for developing learning-rich discussion, particularly in the MBA classroom, or in my case, Business Ethics and Principles of Management, which tend to rely heavily on the discussion format. Among Huang's (2005) suggestions are to expand the number of ways to ask questions based on Bloom's taxonomy and to begin discussions with familiar experiences, using such techniques as referring to assigned reading and asking for responses to assigned questions (all of which are my typical openers as well). Huang (2005) further suggests being tolerant of silence after a question is posed (rephrasing the question or probing later, if no one responds) and engaging in good listening skills. Assist students in clarifying their thoughts through verbalizing them, encourage them to open up to a range of different viewpoints, and try to foster

dialogue among the students. Fostering student-to-student dialogue can be accomplished through eye contact with the entire class, and using prompts such as, "What do the rest of you think of that thought?" Linking students' ideas to other students' comments and being sensitive to individual participation styles are also effective means to keep discussions fruitful and on target. Huang (2005) also provides an appendix of techniques to vary the discussion format. I have learned to use many of these tactics with considerable success and plan to incorporate the variations Huang (2005) describes in his appendix. While challenging and demanding because of the need to balance structure with flexibility, I find facilitating class discussion to be a rewarding experience for me and a fruitful one for student learning.

Assigning students cases to analyze in a written assignment for later use as the basis for group and class discussion also supports learning in my classroom. Australia-based research team Shameem and Ho (2007) engaged their undergraduate marketing students in various forms of assessment, in an effort to take summative assessment beyond mere evaluation. Their research involved a one-page, Likert-scale survey instrument to determine student attitudes toward the case analysis style assessment. While I find the actual research design to be unsupportive of the authors' conclusions that case analysis required a deeper level of learning on the part of students, I do concur with the conclusion itself. Indeed, in my experience, cases seem to support the higher levels of undergraduate learning in Bloom's taxonomy. Weaver and Atkinson believe that, "it is this interaction between reading and writing that constitutes analysis." one of the higher levels of

learning in Bloom's taxonomy (Weaver & Atkinson, 1994, p.117, as cited in Lee & Esterhuizen, 2000). When students read and study a marketing case, for example, and then write successfully argued opinions regarding actions to be taken in the case, they seem to internalize course concepts, as evidenced by their use of course terminology in contexts outside the specific class.

Certain courses, such as Business Communication, Advertising and Sales Promotion, Accounting, and Finance lend themselves especially well to hands-on practice and experiential learning in the classroom. In his theory of adult learning, Knowles (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005) points to the important contributions of experience to adult learning. Age appears to be positively correlated with academic performance (Salamonson & Andrew, 2006). One reason for this may be that many younger adults lack the breadth and depth of life experiences of more mature adults, making hands-on practice of skill-based learning in the classroom essential and very beneficial for the young adults that constitute my practice. Following a brief explanation of the objectives of the session and explanation and demonstration of the skills to be practiced, students are engaged as a class in working through one or more sample problems and then turned loose to practice on their own, in pairs, or small groups. During the last segment of the session, the class is called together, and groups or individuals are called upon to share their responses to assigned material. Work is collected and credited to the students' class work collection for the term and returned during the next session.

Theories of Teaching and Models of Adult Learning

The spectrum below places adult learning theorists (and others who have made important contributions to the field) on a spectrum from theories that are more mechanistic or scientific, and focusing on the elemental, to theories that seem more organismic, or holistic, artistic, or reflective and intuitive. The spectrum is not exhaustive; not all theorists are included, and the spectrum reflects my current understanding and is open to discussion and revision. Basically though, Thorndike is on the mechanistic end of the spectrum because his work set the scientific basis for the field of adult learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005) and was more focused on "the parts." Lindeman, on the other hand, contributed a more holistic view to the field (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005) and felt that an understanding of the whole was more important.
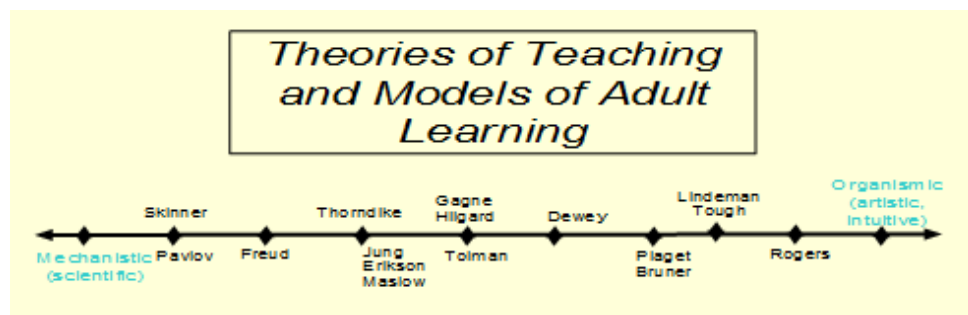
Interestingly (though not surprisingly), the two learning theories that resonate most with me come from opposite ends of my spectrum. In my classroom, I do as Skinner suggests and arrange reinforcement contingencies (as cited in Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005) to help students achieve desirable outcomes (which for many of them is a good grade, but also learning something new!). For example, in written case analyses, if students can summarize the salient facts of the case, they will earn a minimum number of required points, but if they can, in addition to that, also successfully argue an opinion regarding actions to be taken in the case, they will receive more points. Further still, if they can correctly utilize course concepts and terminology in arguing their opinions, they receive even more points. I have from the beginning of my teaching career relied on Skinner's concepts, perhaps because, at least in the beginning, that was all I knew. I believe they have, nevertheless, been instrumental in helping me direct students' behaviors toward positive learning outcomes.

At the same time, Rogers' ideas of viewing the "teacher" as a learning facilitator (as cited in Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005) are also very relevant to me. I truly believe that it is my responsibility to set the tone for the class and create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Bolte Taylor (2008) describes the neuro-anatomical and neuro-physiological basis for taking on this responsibility. Basically, the area of the brain responsible for learning and memory is in close proximity to the area that processes fear. In order for learning to take place optimally, a safe environment should be provided to reduce interference from the brain's fear center. Bolte Taylor's more detailed and technical explanation supports Maslow's emphasis of safety for optimal learning (as cited in Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005) and my own belief that students learn best in a non-threatening, "psychologically safe" environment (one in which learners can feel comfortable revealing their ignorance as well as their current knowledge) that the teacher must strive to create.

Also consistent with Rogers' theory, I make myself a flexible learning resource for students and attempt to provide as many other resources (other readings, websites, workbooks, audiovisual materials, field trips, etc.) as I can. In all, my views are basically congruent with Knowles' theory that adult education is meant to be a guided interaction between learner and teacher-facilitator, supporting my assumption that democratic environments are conducive to learning. Also consistent with Knowles, I recognize, for example, the basic assumptions that a person's self-concept moves from dependent to self-directing, that he or she has developed (or is developing) a large and growing body of experience from which to draw for learning purposes, and that adults need to understand the importance of what they are to learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Part of that flexibility of which Rogers writes may include responding to students from outside the instructor's preferred learning style. Wheeler and McLeod (2002) point out that an important determinant of how much students learn is a direct reflection of their professor's flexibility in responding to learning styles that differ from his or her own.

Does Practice Match Philosophy? Evaluative Criteria for Deciding

Renowned scholar K. Patricia Cross (1999) explains the epistemological basis for current ideas about student learning. She states that society is moving away from the positivist view of knowledge as fixed and objective, a quest for discovering the "truth," to a constructivist view that knowledge is constructed by people through collaborative efforts based on their view of reality and its meaning. The roles of "teacher" and "student" are different in these two epistemologies. The positivist view fosters *cooperative* learning which involves the more traditional approach of students working on assigned tasks, perhaps in groups, under the supervision of the teacher who observes the groups, making sure they stay on task to arrive at the "right answers." In contrast, the constructivist view encourages more *collaborative* learning in which student groups develop their own answers through consensus, and the teacher interacts alongside students as a co-learner, since arriving at one "right answer" is not the ultimate goal, and the teacher is not the foremost authority. To explain current society's readiness to embrace a more constructivist perspective, Cross (1999) references Naisbitt, who views society as in a parenthesis between eras, and Perry, whose nine positions of intellectual development she collapses into three stages. Cross (1999) believes we are in a parenthesis between the first two of these stages—low intellectual development, where right answers are revealed by those in authority, and the mid-level stage which moves society to view knowledge as relative to a person's experience and each one's experience is equally valuable. She

concludes by encouraging readers to evaluate principles of good teaching practice at the highest stage of intellectual development in which commitment comes through thoughtful evaluation of truth in context. Given Cross' assertion, perhaps truth can be viewed as a cut diamond, with many facets that reflect its beauty. Thoughtfully reflecting on and evaluating knowledge may, therefore, best be done collaboratively between teachers and learners.

Classroom assessments provide excellent reflective and evaluative criteria from which instructors can justify or adjust pedagogy and grading decisions (Brookhart, 2004) collaboratively with students. If feedback from a classroom assessment indicates a practice is incongruent with a basic philosophy, the practice can be discarded. For example, if a critical incident questionnaire (CIQ) reveals that a practice or statement intended to encourage a safe environment for discussion, is actually shutting down discussion, it can be discarded.

Generally, assessments gather data about a subject to be used for some purpose; measurements are a quantitative subset. Assessments can be further categorized as formative and summative, which means they can be used for either developmental purposes and continued student learning, or administrative purposes which, in classroom situations, entails assigning final grades. Assessment methods include paper and pencil assessments such as tests, performance, and oral-communication based assessments which are often formative, such as questions asked of students in class, and portfolios. Feedback on these assessments can be objectively

scored numerical, subjectively scored numerical, or written. Options regarding types of grades, scores, and scales include test scores and rubrics, or short scales designed to rate the quality of student work against predefined performance levels. Regarding scales, Brookhart (2004) recommends criterion-referenced scales in which students are compared to one fixed standard rather than norm-referenced scales in which students are compared to one another. All summative assessments in my practice are criterion-referenced. She further admonishes instructors to relate assessments to course and unit objectives to ensure validity. Reliability can be maximized by sharing with students clearly stating grading criteria and sample papers where appropriate.

Brookhart's (2004) recommendations have been part of my teaching practice for many years, but were learned through experience. The case analysis method discussed earlier, for example, can also be viewed as a formative assessment, underscoring Shameem's and Ho's (2007) point that they shift the focus from evaluating to learning. In the specific area of feedback theory, Brookhart (2004) reports studies that show that constructive feedback has a positive effect on student performance and attitude toward learning. Formative assessments, particularly student-involved, classroom assessment techniques enhance student achievement, especially among poor performers (Stiggins & Chappuis 2005).

The scholarship of teaching can be well implemented through classroom research. Like Brookfield (1995), Cross (1998) recognizes that college teaching is often done in isolation from colleagues and

others who have the potential to contribute to educators' knowledge base. She observes that innovation through a common pool of knowledge about how people learn is oddly absent in this profession. She advocates classroom research, in which teachers collaborate with their students directly in the classroom, as an antidote to this condition. Teachers analyze the results of Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) such as the minute paper or the diagnostic learning log together with their students, and in so doing, illuminate the nature of the learning process, allowing for substantive, positive change in teaching methods, study strategies, motivation, and other changeable variables. To implement classroom research, a teacher would begin by asking the class to complete (assumingly with appropriate prior explanation) an indeterminate number of CATs such as a diagnostic learning log following an out-of-class assignment. The teacher would collect and analyze the data, then share it with the class, taking some class time to discuss the results and collaboratively plot a course for learning improvement for the next assignment. In this way, the assessment is formative and may increase student motivation, for example. This approach may be helpful in improving both outcomes and enjoyment of case analysis work in my own marketing, management, and business ethics classes.

Critical Reflection in Teaching Practice: Using the Four Lenses for Sharper Focus

"How can we apply what research on human learning can tell us to both higher education institutions and the many other places where adults learn?" (Halpern & Hakel, 2003, p. 38). Responses to this question from a meeting of thirty experts

from a broad array of fields from psychologists to physicists are summarized by Halpern and Hakel (2003). The authors set the tone by articulating the overall purpose of formal education—transfer of learning for future use. What are those uses? Purcell's, Wilton's and Elias' (2007) findings indicate that mature adult graduates would more likely work in education and the public sector, while younger adult graduates tend to take jobs in information and communication technology, finance, and other business services. Also, the frequency of changing jobs is negatively related to age. Further, Purcell et al (2007) believe their work implies that while mature graduates may more carefully consider their return on investment in higher education, they are still more likely to appreciate its non-economic rewards as well.

Given the long-term uses adult learners have for their education, Halpern and Hakel (2003) derive ten basic principles for long-term remembering and education transfer. Practice at retrieval is the most important element for promoting long-term retention. Students need the opportunity to retrieve information learned earlier to formulate responses to new questions later on. Other principles include varying the learning conditions, which requires more effort on the part of learners but results in better retention, and requiring learners to repackage what they have learned in a different format (dual-coding theory). Instructors should assess students' prior experience and learning, understand how students' (and the instructor's) epistemological assumptions influence learning, and realize that experience alone often results in poor learning. Lectures should be supplemented with other class

formats that meet higher-order learning objectives; "testing for the footnotes" will likely result in retention of footnoted material at the expense of main learning points. Finally, according to Halpern and Hakel (2003), what students do is more important than what teachers do with respect to retention. The level of detail needed for their future should guide the level of detail in a particular lesson today.

Given all that adult learners need to know in order to take their future places in society, wise educators can use the four lenses of critical reflection—student perspectives, perceptions of colleagues, academic literature, and their own autobiographical experiences (Brookfield 1995) to sharpen their practice. Below I reflect on specific ways to use these different perspectives for continuous improvement.

Student Perspectives

CATs can be used to improve student-teacher communication and overall learning outcomes, specifically student learning processes and the importance of course content to them. Eisenbach, Golich, and Curry (1998), all educators at the same institution teaching in different fields (Eisenbach in management, Golich in political science, and Curry in literature and writing), administered three different CATs, the pre-post self-confidence survey, their own teacher-designed feedback forms, and various forms of the one-minute paper, including "the muddiest point," twice a week. The authors share the feedback received from these assessments.

The most relevant findings for me come from Eisenbach and Golich who use case

studies and exams as tools to assess student learning. Students in Eisenbach's class believe the exams cover more material than time allows, while Golich's students find that class discussions of cases arouse in them feelings of incompetence because they were assuming they should have been able to solve problems in the cases on their own. I have long observed that students seem to enjoy case analysis less than I thought they would. The theory that my students assume that they ought to be able to suggest good solutions to case problems on their own prior to class discussion, and are disappointed when that turns out not to be the case will be further investigated. It may account for my students' seemingly lukewarm reception to this learning method. Of course, in order to be effective, assessment results need to be delivered to students in a helpful, comprehensible, and prompt manner (Stiggins & Chappuis 2005).

Brookfield (1995, 1998) lays out the overall plan for using CAT instruments, specifically his own Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) for ongoing practice improvement. The CIQ, coupled with a SWOT analysis of one of my lesson plans, (one that typifies others that I conduct) has already helped me identify a significant opportunity for improvement in my teaching—providing an end-of-session review of how students met the learning goals of the session. I can therefore leave a few minutes at the end of my class sessions to guide students in reflection on what they have learned as a result of participating in that session.

Colleagues' Perceptions

The practice of teaching is traditionally shrouded in secrecy (Brookfield, 1995). Nevertheless, my experience reveals that a trusting atmosphere can develop among long-time colleagues. Informally, my colleagues and I have shared our trials and triumphs in the classroom over coffee at Starbucks with some regularity. Suggestions shared over coffee have resulted in noticeable improvement in my practice. For instance, after sharing my disappointment with student term projects, a colleague recommended sharing exemplars of excellent and poor student work in advance of the project due date. Implementing this recommendation helped me realize a major improvement in final projects for nearly all of my classes. These informal exchanges will likely continue to be used in this way as a source of teaching practice improvement.

Academic Literature

I plan to further cultivate the habit of regularly reading relevant journals for the purpose of learning about cutting-edge teaching methods and new learning and teaching theories and then incorporating them into my practice. I can also contribute my own thoughts and research to journals that I become familiar with through this regular reading.

Autobiographical Experience

I am only now beginning to realize what a deep well of resources each teacher has in his or her own experience. I will use mine to gain additional insight into assumptions that underlie my teaching practices so that I can test them and continue to evolve them.

Conclusion

Through discovering and revealing my deeply held beliefs and assumptions (Schein, 1990) and evaluating theories and

philosophies of learning, teaching, and assessment, I am continuing a journey that I began as a child—a journey toward becoming the best teacher I can be. By reflecting critically through the lenses of students' perspectives, colleagues' thoughts and experiences, the academic literature in the field of teaching, and autobiographical experiences (Brookfield, 1995, 1998), an aspiring teacher can lay out a life-long agenda of learning and press on toward the goal of teaching excellence.

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Does Anybody Really Notice Errors in Mechanics?
Does Anybody Really Care?

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Introduction

Teaching business communication can be challenging at best. The number of hours spent marking papers can be very daunting. Students who receive the papers back often make the comment, "This isn't English class. I don't see why you count off for spelling, punctuation, or grammar! People don't pay any attention to that." So, the question here is, "Do they?" If someone receives letters containing errors, will this impact the impression they get from the letters? Do these errors affect the impression of the reader towards the letter writer or the business itself?

Review of Literature

Perceptions play an important role in the higher education process. According to Ellis, Taylor, and Drury (2007), key aspects of the learning experience that will affect the learning outcomes are, "what the students think they are learning (conceptions), how they approach their learning (approaches), how they regard the context in which they are learning (perceptions), and characteristics that students bring to their experiences of learning " (pp. 207-208). Tomlinson (1989) states that experiential

deficiencies are often debilitating to academic motivation. She defines these deficiencies as a result of, "lack of exposure to people, places, events, customs, and mundane features of life beyond the commonplace of an individual's immediate locale." The social and cultural background of a student will usually have a large impact on that person's communication style.

In Gilsdorf and Leonard's (2001) research, background history is provided on the evolution of the importance of correct writing and speaking. They point out that in the Victorian era, people were very strongly judged on their ability to use "proper" English in both their writing and their speech. The language people used was considered to be a reflection of their social class. The authors go on to say that even today, the abilities to speak and write Standard English are, "a ticket—or a bar—to admission to a desired group, but may change with the group." Additionally they point out that what is advantageous in one group may not be so in another. However, they also state that if our goal is to mold students into successful business people, the writing skills that meet the expectations of business must be taught.

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Sheldon and Willett (2008) maintain that the writer should worry more about the content of the message and less about whether or not that message is grammatically correct. They do agree that everyone in the organization is responsible for effective writing and further state that business writing should be, "positive, succinct, and memorable" and should always be adapted to the audience. Although grammar errors should be avoided because they can send negative messages, it is well known that people disagree on many of the "rules" of grammar. While stating that grammar rules have changed significantly since the 1920s, they contend that writing should be done in plain English, which is often not grammatically correct.

Most of the newer communication technologies (e.g. email, text messaging, tweeting, blogging, social networking sites) lend themselves to less formal English. Gilsdorf and Leonard (2001) discuss email in particular as being characterized by the informality and colloquialism of speech. The authors go on to say that errors that would not be tolerated in more formal writing are widely tolerated in email. Hamilton and Rhodes (1997) also saw email as blurring the distinction between writing and speech. They felt that the guidelines for digital-age writers seemed to be encouraging people to write the way they talk, rather than strictly following the rules for Standard English.

Two of the strongest forces for changes in English predicted by Hamilton and Rhodes (1997) are globalization and technology. As the use of English spreads throughout the world, new rules of usage will inevitably develop. These authors cited the Internet as the driving force behind the colloquialism that purists detest. Along that global line of

thought, a recent study of international business people by Kankaanranta and Planken (2010) in European corporations found that professionals were more interested in getting the message correct rather than using the language correctly (using proper grammatical rules.) They found it was more important to focus on adapting the message to the audience and its needs. But, it was also noted that these same individuals spent considerable time reviewing their communications to ensure there were no miscommunications.

Hamilton and Rhodes (1997) interviewed several English and linguistics academics who agreed that students could not seem to get the rules straight. The further reported a University of Chicago professor as lamenting that students had no comprehension of when and where to use the rules. An executive director of a regional chapter of the Modern Language Association even predicted the demise of the apostrophe within 50 years. These same professors of English labeled many of the rules governing Standard English as "just folklore," stating that today's grammatical conventions are recent inventions anyway. Some went so far as to label those who complain about the demise of grammar as tiresome complainers and snobs.

This seems to be more in line with what our students are saying. They express feelings that the formal language rules of years past should no longer apply. Leonard and Gilsdorf (1990) stated that many of the most hotly contested elements of language usage are matters of taste or personal opinion. In the introduction to Casagrande's book, *Mortal Syntax,* she says of grammar snobs, "Though they claim to be champions of the language, in truth many care more about criticizing

others than about getting their facts straight" (Casagrande, 2008, p. xv). A number of years ago Ted Koppel, moderator of the ABC-TV program Nightline, posed the question, "What difference do errors in grammar and usage make as long as readers and listeners understand what is meant?" He suggested that many of his listeners "couldn't care less" about the preciseness of language because they had no trouble communicating their message to those they had to deal with (Grazian, 1997).

Gilsdorf and Leonard (2001) contend that an error could either annoy a business reader; be noticed, but not bother a business reader; or perhaps pass entirely unnoticed in context. They pose the dilemma that teachers face in trying to decide on standards they will employ to teach, grade, and prepare students to be effective business communicators for their future in the business world.

There are, however, some errors that are unequivocally erroneous, regardless of whom you ask. These include errors such as verb tense, correct word usage (e.g. there for their, to for too, sale for sell), and punctuation, or lack thereof, that make the writing ambiguous or simply hard to understand. Quible and Griffin (2007) believe that not marking errors is a disservice to students because students may be unaware of their errors and will continue to make the same errors. They also suggest that grading of assignments should consist of both grammar and context so as to not focus on grammar only. They state, "Focusing instruction on grammar and punctuation rules is a necessary part of teaching written communication skills" (p. 35).

According to Booher (2005), expressing oneself both orally and in writing is the single most important skill to advancement in one's career. Grazian (1997) also agrees that correct grammar and usage are necessary to achieve success. While many people may not pay attention to grammar and usage errors as long as communication takes place, research findings, according to Grazian, indicate a significant relationship between knowledge of the English language and career success. When employers hire workers whose writing skills are not sufficient, they must spend a lot of money on training to remediate their skills. Additionally, companies incur intangible expenses too. These can include lower productivity, poor images, miscommunications, and poor decision making based on a written report (Quible & Griffin, 2007).

As a worst case scenario, a high price may be paid for errors in business messages that cause misreading and misunderstanding (Gilsdorf & Leonard, 2001). Truss (2006) provides an example of an email message that accentuates the difference that punctuation can make in even a single sentence:

A woman, without her man, is nothing.
A woman: without her, man is nothing.

Obviously these seven little words can take on a completely different meaning depending on how the punctuation is applied.

Quible and Griffin (2007) describe two main approaches to teaching grammar. They describe the traditional school grammar approach as one where rules and drills are used to teach standards and reinforce skills.

This practice has been less used in the last 40 years, and the context-based approach has gained favor. This approach addresses specific problems that students exhibit in their writing. Once a teacher notices an error being made repeatedly, the rule will be covered. Hayes (1998) conducted a survey of undergraduate business communication students in one course at one university. Participants received instruction in aspects of technical writing. Following the instruction, participants completed a post feedback exercise. Hayes concluded that there were large differences in perceived and assessed writing ability.

Pittenger, Miller, and Allison (2006) conducted a study in a junior-level BCOM course using a pre-post method. The EssayPrep assessment by the College Board was used. In the pre-test, 60% of students scored below satisfactory. However, at the end of the semester, 69% scored below satisfactory. Students submitted their writing online. A review of the results indicated that students did not take the test seriously, and that students believed that what they were being taught would not transfer to other situations. The study was repeated the next semester, but this time the instructor spent more time on grammar using more examples in class. In the pretest, more than 80% of students scored below satisfactory; however, this time in the posttest more than 90% scored at least satisfactory. Students were also given extra credit points for completing the posttest.

There is never going to be consensus on how best to teach formal business writing skills. This is evident where Ricks (1994) proposed several reasons why your business writing courses don't work. As a trainer in the corporate world, his experience in developing training modules on business writing led him to conclude the following: 1) grammar correction is not a useful tool in teaching writing skills, 2) traditional grammar courses focus on penalizing mistakes rather than on teaching good writing behaviors, 3) grammatical errors are not the problems that need to be solved, 4) a school-based model of business writing shares the same problems as the grammar-correction model, and 5) business writing courses are often ineffective. His approach to business writing is to define writing behaviors that need to be performed on the job, develop projects to help people experiment with these behaviors in learning situations, and develop a positive feedback system to reinforce the desired behavior.

Various studies have also been conducted on perceptions of correspondence. In a study by Roach and Anderson (2007), questionnaires were sent to graduates of an MBA program from three universities. Respondents viewed email messages as showing the least quality in business writing, probably because of the informal tone they exhibit and lack of proofreading. External messages were seen as exhibiting better quality. It was noted that this view may be because some "unnecessary information" and detail found in external messages may be left out for internal messages, reducing formality. It was assumed that colleagues knew more about the topic, so vital information may be omitted.

In 1990, Leonard and Gilsdorf conducted research on the distraction potential of 45 written usage elements that were traditionally viewed as errors. To do this they used two educated groups as their reading audiences. The groups comprise business communication teachers and executive vice

presidents of large firms. Though they did find that executives were less bothered than academics by most errors, they stressed that this did not reflect on the intelligence of the executives. They gave a couple of reasons why someone might not be bothered by an error. Of course, one of the reasons given was that the person reading may not perceive the error as an error. However, another reason given was that the reader might find other elements of the message more important. They go on to state that if the error is not too egregious, many business and technical readers may feel that as long as the meaning is clear the error is not as much of an issue (Leonard & Gilsdorf, 1990).

In 2000, Leonard and Gilsdorf conducted a follow-up study on the perceptions of business communication teachers and executives. As in the previous study, they found that academics were more bothered about usage errors in general than were executives. It was also noted that the ten most distracting items in the 1990 study were again in the ten most distracting items in the 2000 study. Six of the items in this list involved sentence structure. The authors did state that in the ten years since their earlier study, normal language change had occurred. The two significant factors that appeared to have influenced this change were the increased use of email for business and personal communication and the increase in non-native speakers of English in the workplace. The latter factor includes those who speak English not only in English-speaking countries, but also in countries that use English as a language of business. Business organizations that are increasingly international may be less inclined to be concerned with stylistic structures of grammar and usage that do not interfere

with the meaning of the message (Gilsdorf & Leonard, 2001).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine whether people were influenced by mechanics errors such as misspelled words, improper verb tense, incorrect words, or punctuation errors in letters.

Research Question

Do errors in correspondence have an effect on the impression made on the receiver?

Hypothesis

Given two letters with the same message and only slight variations in wording, readers will show a preference for the error-free message over the letter that contains errors.

Method

Participants
The survey was administered to a convenience sample of students in the business communication classroom (n=189; females=107 males=82) to see if the errors present in one in each set of letters did influence the students' perception of the correspondence. The sample comprised the courses of three different instructors. The survey was given in the first two weeks of class before any papers had been submitted for grading. Only one of the three instructors had provided any instruction on mechanics at this point in the course.

The business communication course is one of the options for the university core courses; therefore, not all students taking business communication are business

majors. The percentage indicating that they were business majors was 54.5% (n=103). After surveying students, researchers decided it would be interesting to see how these results would compare to non-students—people who were already in the workforce. A convenience sample was then taken from Facebook "Friends" (n=23) who were already graduated and email contacts (n=5) already in the workplace who accessed the online survey link. These two samples were combined to create the second "non-student" (n=28) group.

Materials and Procedures
Three sets of letters were prepared. Each set contained two letters that were extremely similar in wording; however, one had various errors (e.g. word choice, verb tense, number usage, punctuation, spelling). A survey that gathered demographic data such as age, gender, and educational level about each respondent was included with the letter links. All respondents (n=217) were asked to complete the demographic information and read the three sets of letters, choosing the letter that made the best impression on them. No criteria were provided to participants for making their choices. All respondents accessed the survey through an electronic survey on an online survey service. Survey responses were then entered into SPSS statistical analysis software for comparisons.

Limitations of the Study
Similar to the Leonard and Gilsdorf (1990) study, these results do not provide an answer to the exact reason a person chose one letter over another. In their study it was pointed out that it might be because a person did not notice the error, or it might be because some other element of the message overrode the bother caused by the error. Since the two letters in each category were not completely identical (though extremely similar), it is possible that the small difference was enough for the reader to discount the error(s) and still choose the message.

In the current study, no criteria were given for making the choice, and no explanation of why they made the choice was requested. This was intentional as the researchers did not want to alert the reader to specifically look for something that would cause him or her to make a decision.

Another limitation could be the method of selection of non-student participants. Because of the informal nature of Facebook, the self-selected participants from that method may not have been inclined to assess the letters in a formal manner.

Results

Shown in the following figures are the three letters containing errors. For inclusion in this article, the errors have been marked for ease of reading. Figure 1 is a persuasive letter. In this letter there are fourteen identified problems with correct word usage, punctuation, and number expressions.

Tired of studying? Want to soak up some of the remaining summer sun? Like to exercise but hate to sweat? If you answered yes to any of these questions, ~~your~~ you're sure to enjoy the University Recreation Center ~~an~~ and what we have to offer.

You automatically become a member of the Student Recreation Center by registering and paying class fees, ~~weather~~ whether you are taking one hour or a full class load. You can use your University Identification Card to access the amenities of the Student Recreation Center.

What will you find there? You will find dozens of exercise machines that have individual televisions attached to them, so remember your earphones. Want to take a jog? ~~7~~ Seven laps around the air-conditioned, upper track will give you a ~~1~~ one-mile jog. There are ~~2~~ two racquetball courts where you can develop your racquetball skills. If rock climbing appeals to you, ~~their~~ there is a rock climbing wall in the facility. If you just want to relax ~~its~~ it's an option ~~to~~ too. You can simply ~~lay~~ lie back on an inner tube and float around the lazy river.

So, what are you waiting for? You ~~to~~ too can be a part of the fun that awaits you at the Recreation Center. Come today and utilize all we have to offer.

Letter 1: Persuasive Letter Errors

Congratulations on your ~~exceptance~~ acceptance to SFA! Your proven academic achievements are what helped you become a future Lumberjack. We're looking forward to your arrival on the campus this fall.

SFA has been undergoing a major ~~transfromation~~ transformation over the last few years. Building projects like the new student center, recreation center, student housing, and parking garages have been completed. Crews have worked on construction throughout the summer to complete the new freshman housing dorm for new students like you, and it will be completed in the ~~Spring~~ spring. However, since it is not ready for your fall arrival, ~~your~~ you're being assigned to Hall 20.

Located between the SFA coliseum and football field, Hall 20 is one of the more popular dorms on campus. You will have quick ~~assess~~ access to the bus that runs to the academic buildings on campus. In addition, the SFA Ag pond is just outside your room.

We hope your first semester is a good one. Remember, the first football game and tailgate party ~~is~~ are Saturday, September 4. We hope to see you there!

Letter 2: Negative News Letter

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The new North Any Street Garage is now open and available for use! It is located behind Steel Library and across the street from the Art Building. Access to the garage is from North Any Street or ~~threw~~ through Lot 14. The parking available in this parking garage will be as follows~~;~~:

Levels 1-3 will be for Campus Residents~~;~~; Levels 4-5 will be for ~~all~~ All Permit Parking.

~~Their~~ There are signs at the top of the ramp going from level 3 to level 4 that ~~distinquishes~~ distinguish between Campus Resident and All Permit Parking. Each of the four corners on all levels ~~have~~ has been designated for compact cars only.

As you probably ~~seen~~ saw on the campus website, the ~~P~~parking and Traffic Office has moved to ~~it's~~ its new location in the North Any Street Parking Garage. The office will be open from 7 ~~AM~~ a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Friday. Parking permits are available from this office. Any parking questions should also be ~~refferred~~ referred to this office at 936-468-2615 or universityparking@university.edu.

Letter 3: Informational Letter

Letter 1 Results:
From the total student group, 56.6% chose the letter that did not contain errors. When broken down by gender, 59.8% of females chose the error-free letter, while 52.4% of males chose the error-free letter.

From the total non-student group, 92.9% chose the letter that did not contain errors. An examination by gender found that 92% of females chose the error-free letter, while 100% of males chose the error-free message.

Letter 2 Results:
Letter 2 was a negative news letter. In this letter there are eleven identified problems, which included incorrect word usage, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

From the total student group, 63% chose the error-free letter. When broken down by gender, 64.5% of females chose the letter that did not contain errors, and 61% of males chose the error-free letter.

There were 78.6% of the non-student group who chose the error-free letter. This included 80% of the females and 100% of the males.

Letter 3 Results:
The third and final letter was an informational letter. In the informational letter shown in Figure 3 there are fourteen identified problems, which include word usage, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and verb tense errors.

In this set, 81% of the students chose the error-free message. When broken down by gender, 85% of females and 75.6% of males chose the error-free message. When examining the results of the non-student group, 100% of respondents chose the error-free message.

Results by Section

As mentioned in the participants section, one of the on-campus instructors begins the semester with an instructional review of the various mechanics important in APA format and business writing. Neither the online instructor nor the other on-campus

instructor had provided any instruction on mechanics prior to conducting the survey. All three include information on their syllabi indicating that all student work should be carefully proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Results for individual instructors were compared to determine whether providing the early instructional review made a difference in the student choices. Table 1 provides the results of this break down.

It was interesting, if not discouraging, to note that the only students who had received instruction on mechanics consistently scored the lowest on the letter choices. Another interesting finding was that the online students consistently scored the highest of any of the classes. There is no clear explanation for this. It cannot be attributed to the instructor or his or her teaching method, as the semester had only just begun. It is possible that since the online students are more accustomed to accessing and completing their work online that they were more attentive to detail in assessing the letter choices.

Table 1: Comparison by Instructor/Mode of Instruction

Student Results by Instructor		
	# of Students Correct	% of Students Correct
Letter 1 - Persuasive		
Instructor #1 - On-campus Course Mechanics Instruction Provided	41	49.40%
Instructor #2 - Online Course with No Mechanics Instruction	18	78.30%
Instructor #3 - On-campus Course with No Mechanics Instruction	48	59.30%
Letter 2 - Negative News		
Instructor #1 - On-campus Course Mechanics Instruction Provided	51	61.40%
Instructor #2 - Online Course with No Mechanics Instruction	16	69.60%
Instructor #3 - On-campus Course with No Mechanics Instruction	51	63.00%
Letter 3 - Informational		
Instructor #1 - On-campus Course Mechanics Instruction Provided	63	75.90%
Instructor #2 - Online Course with No Mechanics Instruction	20	87.00%
Instructor #3 - On-campus Course with No Mechanics Instruction	68	84.00%

Summary and Conclusions

The results of this study were not surprising in that those who were already in the workplace were more likely to choose the letters that did not contain errors. It was surprising, however, that the students who had received recent instruction/review in writing mechanics not only did not perform better than the other students, but actually performed worse on all three letter sets. Consistently the female students performed slightly better than the male students.

It may be inferred from the fact that more than half of the students selected the error-free messages that errors do have some effect on students' perceptions of better writing. There is, however, still a sizeable minority of students who are not significantly affected by the presence of errors. Since business people were shown to prefer the letters which followed a formal Standard English writing format, business students need to learn the fundamentals of proper writing for formal business communication even if they do not use these same standards in their own informal communication.

Implications

In terms of addressing the perceptions of students, it seems that more work may be necessary at the beginning of the course to help them develop and shape their perceptions of the importance of their writing and speaking skills, especially in business communication.

Experiential deficiencies will need to be taken into consideration in the teaching process. Assuming that students know what is considered Standard English may be one

problem that has existed. Perhaps more emphasis on multicultural diversity and its effect on appropriate writing and speaking would help students understand the differences in the speech and writing they have developed in their native environment compared to the way they need to speak and write in the business arena.

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The Years After: Alumni's Perceptions of the Right Stuff

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Introduction

Continued advancements in technology, increased growth in global workforce standards, and increased interest in ethics have created a new framework for job requirements. Employers expect employees to have oral and written communication skills, computer skills, ethical knowledge, and global diversity.

Since spring 1997 the School of Business has been accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSBI). Adhering to accreditation standards, the college is required to provide documentation of student learning experiences in the areas of communication, ethics, information technology (computer skills), and domestic and global environments (global skills). AACSBI does not require a specific course for each area; however, all of the business courses are required to include these vital areas (AACSBI, 2010).

The curriculum in the School of Business integrates these skills beginning with a sophomore course. For example, a business communications course is taught where written and oral communications are stressed and ethical and global issues are addressed in several assignments and lectures. These areas continue to be reinforced by requiring written and oral projects in upper-level business courses. This being said, the authors wanted to collect data which would indicate the degree of satisfaction for these areas—communication, ethics, information technology (computer skills), and domestic and global environments (global skills) as perceived by the alumni in the last two years.

Do alumni feel they have the communication (both oral and written) skills and computer skills needed for employment? Are alumni satisfied with the general educational preparation they have received in global and ethical issues?

Review of Literature

Business leaders continue to lament that many recent graduates lack fundamental skills for success in the areas of communication (Basso, & Hines, 2008). To better understand this issue, The Conference Board (2006) conducted a study

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to examine employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills preparation that the employee brings to the workplace. The findings indicated that employees were deficient in areas of communication, computer skills and global/ethical perspectives.

Employers look to the universities to solve the problem of preparing graduates with the necessary applied skills to not only perform their jobs adequately, but to bring an enhancement to the workplace (Basso & Hines, 2008). The global markets are establishing standards linked to workforce readiness training. These standards include training in skills that the employers believe are necessary to function effectively in the workforce and that the entrants should have when hired (Conference Board, 2009).

Graddol (2006) informs us that the diversity in the workplace demands not only an understanding of basic English in oral and written communication, but the need to prepare graduates in areas of cultural and foreign language. There is a link between business communication, intercultural communication, and internationalization of higher education (Briguglio, 2007). In the context of higher education, Altbach (2004) defines globalization as the "the broad economic, technological and scientific trends that directly affect higher skills and are largely inevitable. Politics and culture are also part of the new global realities" (p.3).

The increasing demand for effective written communication skills dictates that business and industries spend valuable resources in training new hires on fundamental skills. Educators many times find themselves teaching writing styles for a variety of

media while playing catch-up with students who lack fundamental knowledge of proper grammatical structure (Conference Board, 2009). Basso and Hines (2008) point out that more often than not, many business school programs graduate students who never receive any formal communication training.

Universities and colleges must provide documentation that their curricular degree programs are reflective of the needs of the work force (AACSBI, 2010). Aligned with the diversity need for oral and written communication is a direct relation to information technology. Silva and McFadden (2005) reported that employers reported a continued deficient in computer skills and the need to update and maintain a direct relation with the requirements of the workplace. Technology dictates an immediate and ongoing revision to curricula. A study conducted by Landrum and Elison-Bowers (2009) surveyed psychology alumni in relation to their satisfaction level of their degree preparation for the workforce. Overall, alumni in the sample were generally happy with their undergraduate education and the opportunities it has afforded, even though more opportunities are available to those continuing their education.

Educators can use several different sources such as advisory boards, alumni, employers, and professional organizations to determine the skill requirements of the workplace (Kilcoyne, 2003). A previous study conducted by Kilcoyne and McDonald (2006) surveyed undergraduate business communication students about their perceptions of the importance of 57 communication-related competences to their future job. According to Kilcoyne and

McDonald (2006), undergraduate business students appear to believe that using a personal computer is quite essential for their job. In another study,

Porterfield (2004), who surveyed U.S. Fortune 500 Company human resource directors, reported that business school graduates lacked written communication skills. Also, the human resource directors noted that business school curricula should include skills such as communication (written and oral), international/global, information technology, and work ethic. In his 2003-2004 report, Phillip D. Gardner (2005), research director of Collegiate Employment Research Institute, stated that employers want employees with developed communication skills (oral and written). Also, he stated that employees must be willing to continually update their technology-related skills. In the *2002-2003 Recruiting Trends-Executive Summary*, he stated that employers were seeking ethical and honest employees (Gardner, 2004).

Hanneman and Gardner (2010) surveyed business and industry to identify knowledge and skills needed by college graduates. The following skills were identified: higher-order thinking, ability to communicate ideas, ability to function as a member and leader of teams, and ability to utilize technology to make or save the company money. Companies were asked to list the desired qualities and skills needed by applicants. Listed among the top eight desired skills and qualities were computer skills, communication skills, and leadership skills (CollegeGrad.com, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The dynamics and rigors of the changing global workplace create a crucial need for universities to collect feedback from alumni. This feedback is necessary to maintain a high quality curriculum by assessing the perceived satisfaction level and preparedness of the alumni to meet the standards set in the workplace.

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the satisfaction levels and perceptions of preparedness of recent alumni from the School of Business at a regional southern university. The areas investigated were communication (oral and written), ethical issues, global issues, and computer skills.

Methodology

Instrument
An existing instrument used for AACSBI purposes and in a previous study was converted into an electronic version. It consisted of 10 questions. The first section included alumni demographics. An alumni job satisfaction section, which was divided into two areas and an alumni current occupation section, which determined the degree of relationship between their major and their current occupation were included. Also included was an education preparation section, which was divided into specific business-related subject areas and general knowledge education areas. Three open-ended questions were included. One question asked the alumni to suggest areas/subjects to be emphasized either more or less in the curriculum. The next question asked the alumni to provide at least one thing that the COB could have done better to prepare them for their jobs/careers. The last open-ended question asked them to provide information about their future education plans. Another

section asked the alumni to rate the faculty in their major field of study. At the bottom of the instrument was an area for other comments to be made.

On the alumni demographic section, the alumni provided written responses to five questions. On the two job-satisfaction sections, the alumni used a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*very satisfied*) to 5 (*very dissatisfied*) to rate their degree of satisfaction with their present job. On the current occupation section, the alumni used a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*highly related*) to 5 (*not related*) to rate the relationship between their current occupation and their major. On the specific business-related subject areas, the alumni used a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*good*) to 5 (*poor*) to rate their business-related education preparation to their current job duties. On the general knowledge education areas, the alumni used a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*good*) to 5 (*poor*) to rate their general knowledge education preparation to their current job duties. On the faculty rating section, the alumni used the same Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*good*) to 5 (*poor*) to rate the faculty in their major field of study.

For reporting purposes only data and findings from a few sections are provided. A copy of the instrument is available upon request.

Population and Data Collection
From fall 2008-fall 2009, a total of 323 students graduated from the College of Business with degrees in business administration, accounting, or computer information systems. Of 323 alumni only 255 listed non-university e-mail addresses

on their graduation application form collected by the College.

For this particular study, the faculty members delivered an existing instrument electronically using Survey Monkey. All 255 alumni were sent an e-mail message requesting assistance with the study. Embedded in the body of the e-mail message was the link to the survey on Survey Monkey.

After the first e-mail, 25 alumni responded and then after a follow up e-mail, seven more responded. Our alumni association was contacted about the availability of e-mail addresses for our alumni. Since the 2008-2009 alumni could not be separated from the other university alumni, the alumni association sent out an e-mail blast with the survey link to ALL university alumni. Eight more responses were collected after the alumni e-mail blast. Therefore, a total of 40 2008-2009 alumni (15.6%) responded to this survey.

An interesting note, after the alumni association's e-mail blast 268 additional university alumni responded to the e-mail request even though it specified business alumni ONLY. The researchers sorted the responses by degrees and had 234 business alumni (Accounting, Business Administration, and Computer Information Systems). The oldest alumni listed his or her graduation date as 1949.

Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) we calculated descriptive and inferential statistics using Spearman's *rho*s and linear regression both full model and stepwise. The alpha level was set at .05 *a priori.*

Findings and Conclusions of the Study

Spearman's *rho*s were computed for satisfaction with degree preparation for jobs and the variables oral communications skills, written communications skills, ethical issues, global issues, and computer skills. Spearman's *rho* was used to determine the magnitude and direction of the relationship when the data is either ratio or interval (Spearman, 1904). Results are depicted in Table I.

TABLE I

		Oral Communication Skills	Written Communication Skills	Ethical Issues	Global Issues	Computer Skills
Sat W Prep	Corr.	.321	.311	.445	.436	.419
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.056	.065	.006**	.007**	.010**
	N	39	36	36	37	37

** Significant at the α = .05 (two tailed)

The mean satisfaction score for the 39 respondents was 1.90 (1 being very satisfied and 5 being very dissatisfied). This finding is consistent with Kilcoyne et al. (2007), in their study, in which the mean satisfaction score was 1.94. Both results indicate a high degree of overall satisfaction with job preparation. Moreover, mean scores for all five skill variables measured were between 1.62 and 2.05. On a scale in which 1 is very satisfied, this leads us to believe that alumni are, on average, satisfied with their preparation in each one of the measured areas.

Additionally, there is a significant positive correlation between the satisfaction with degree preparation and three specific areas of academic preparation. The relationship between satisfaction with the preparation obtained at the university and ethical issues, global issues, and computer skills is significant at the .05 level of analysis. This finding only partially supports Kilcoyne et al. (2007). The difference in skill significance may be due to two different factors. First, the number of observations used in the Kilcoyne et al. (2007) study was much larger (125 observations vs. 39). Second, there is a difference of seven years between the studies. In those seven years, the degree program has been modified to adapt to AACSBI requirements in which a strong emphasis is placed on writing and oral skills.

The surveyed alumni completed their degree during this period; hence, it is reasonable to assume that their perceptions of writing and oral skills preparation, apart from being high, lacks enough variability to be highly correlated with the overall degree preparation. In other words, the acquisition of oral and written skills may be an assumed element in the alumni perceptions of degree preparation due to the strong emphasis placed on them in the degree plan. The second step of our analysis required a division of the observations based on the degree received by the alumni (e.g., Business Administration, Accounting, and Computer Information Systems). Observations were then correlated to the overall satisfaction with the preparation

received at the university. Results suggest that writing skills are an important factor for business majors as it is significantly related to satisfaction with degree preparation (significant at the .05 level). For Computer Information Systems majors, global issues had a significant relationship with satisfaction with degree preparation (significant at the .05 level). Accounting majors strongly related their satisfaction with degree preparation to their computer skills (significant at the .001 level).

Finally, a full and stepwise linear regression model was performed with satisfaction with degree preparation as the dependent variable and writing communication skills, oral communication skills, ethical issues, global issues, and computer skills as independent variables (see Table 2). Results from the full model provide an R-square of .411, significant at the .05 level of analysis. When all the independent variables are in the model, we can explain around 40% of the variability present in satisfaction with degree preparation. The stepwise model provides a final R-square of .396, also significant at the .05 level of analysis. However, this model only takes into consideration two of the five variables, ethical issues and computer skills. The difference in R-square for both models is small at .015 (less than 2%). We can observe that the explanatory power of the model resides with the two variables, ethical issues and computer skills, selected by the stepwise procedure

TABLE 2

Model Type	R	R Square	F	Sig
1 Full Model (all variables)	.641[a]	.411	4.195	.005
2 Stepwise Model (Ethical Issues & Computer Skills)	.629[a]	.396	10.799	.000

** Significant at the α = .05 (two tailed)

In conclusion, alumni believe that they do have the communication skills and computer skills needed for current employment. Additionally they feel that they are knowledgeable in global and ethical issues.

Results suggest that the alumni perceive themselves to be educationally prepared for their first jobs after graduation in the specific areas of oral communications skills, written communications skills, ethical issues, and global issues. When satisfaction with degree preparation was correlated with the five skills, three skills were significant, meaning that satisfaction with the degree program was related to computer skills, global issues, and ethical issues. We can only assume that written and oral communication skills are so embedded into the current courses that they are perceived as essential parts of curricula and are not specific skills that drive satisfaction. Moreover, out of the three skills that were significant, we found that two of them, ethical issues and

computer skills, were able to explain over 39% of the variability found in satisfaction with degree preparedness.

Data collected from this study provides insight into the effectiveness of our current curricula. With that said, it is crucial that we now focus on those advanced skills that will be required in the work place. Pursuant to the rapidly changing technology field, students must be provided the most current and future skill sets for success.

The conclusions from this research study clearly provided us with the insight that alumni perceived the curricula courses adequately present a framework for reinforcement of written and oral communication skills. However, it appears that our curricula courses do not have adequate reinforcement opportunities for global and ethical issues and computer skills. Future research should be conducted to compare the satisfaction levels of both employers and alumni regarding these five variables—oral communication skills, written communication skills, ethical issues, global issues, and computer skills.

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Teaching and Learning with an iPhone and iPad

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Introduction

Clearly, today's students embrace new technologies as natural ways of communicating and accessing information, staying connected, and having fun. With current smartphones, mp3 players, and tablets, students as well as business professionals are reaching out and electronically touching the web, email, music, photos, videos, and books. Productivity tools, word processing, presentations, and spreadsheet files are created and accessed in novel ways with a simple tap or flick of the wrist. The iPhone and iPad are examples of technologies that have revolutionized the way we communicate, gather information, and entertain ourselves. They also have potential for revolutionizing the way we teach and learn.

Review of Literature

iPhones and iPads have wide appeal across age groups. The iTunes app store logged 65,000 apps and 1.5 billion downloads in its first year of use (Yee & Hargis, 2009) and continues to add apps on a daily basis. In addition to being portable, the apps that can be added to both iPhones and iPads are personalized to the user's interests. While many apps are geared toward social and recreational purposes, some have specific business functions. For instance, Apple has created $10 productivity tools for the iPad which include a word processing program called Pages, a spreadsheet program called Numbers, and a presentation application called Keynote (Kharif, 2010). iPad's Mail program is robust, as are its Contacts and Calendar functions. The serious business user would likely prefer a wireless portable keyboard to the iPad's virtual keyboard. The iPad and iPhone support both Apple's iBook store and the Kindle book store. File exchange problems can occur between iPads and computers, though they are becoming less frequent with subsequent software updates (Weber, 2010).

iPhones are in wide use among college students and are even required in some programs such as University of Florida's College of Pharmacy (Martin, 2009) and the University of Missouri's School of Journalism (Eddy, 2009). Abilene Christian University issues incoming freshmen either an iPhone or an iPod touch for daily use. Early data suggest that since the advent of universal iPhone usage, students are more connected with instructors and teaching assistants. Marking a student "absent" in class, for example, generates an automatic email to the student, who then responds with an explanation. While most faculty reported the devices generally did not increase student effort, a majority thought the device somewhat increased student participation and class involvement. And even more

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teachers said the devices definitely increased contact with students outside of class. Each device has about a dozen applications pre-installed, on one "page" of the iPhone screen. Many instructors have identified or created their own apps for their classes, the majority with two or more pages of apps. Duke University and Oklahoma Christian University have similar required iPhone technology programs (Cox, 2010).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to present information about ways that iPhones and iPads can be used in educational settings.

Findings

Companies and individuals are scrambling to write content, tools, and new apps for educational uses of iPhones. Thousands of apps are now available, many for free or at a low cost. Some practices and apps that hold potential for instruction include the following:

- Interactive polling, especially in large classes, can enhance active learning methods and provide quick assessment of student learning. Polleverywhere.com offers free accounts, each allowing up to 32 responses per poll. Using the polling app on an iPhone eliminates the need for students to purchase clicker devices (Yee & Hargis, 2009).
- Phone cameras eliminate the need for whiteboards, as students can photograph individual or group work or displayed notes and email them to the instructor. The instructor can choose which student samples to display and discuss. Students can share photos and videos of actual events that illustrate

concepts or integrate them into presentation slide shows. Students can take pictures of handouts and class-related documents and organize information into a convenient virtual library.

- Students browse the Internet with their iPhones to locate information and resources for in-class projects. Instructors provide convenient access to interactive websites and software that engage students in finding the answers to questions and solving problems.
- Instructors eliminate the need for handouts by emailing or posting copies of resources, grading rubrics, class activities, etc. that students can access via their iPhones or iPads. In addition to enrichment content delivered to live classes, online classes can be delivered via mobile devices.
- YouTube videos that can be easily created and downloaded to iPhones and iPads can be integrated into course assignments.
- Pictures, maps, process flowcharts, etc. can be accessed and viewed via iPhones to complement group discussions.
- Puzzle and touch screen apps can be used for vocabulary crossword puzzles and concept reinforcement.
- Students can use iPhones and iPads to access and listen to narrated apps of historic speeches, business interviews, repurposed podcasts, editorial voiceovers, narrated slide shows, etc.
- iPad communication facilitates spontaneous, physical, face-to-face collaboration during in- and out-of-class activities. Sharing with an iPad can be more democratic and intimate,

much like sharing a family photograph album, which connects individuals more effectively than peering over the shoulder of another to see a laptop (Kirschner, et al., 2010).

- Students can use Twitter and Facebook for "backchannel discussions," seeking clarification, for example, about a lecture, while it is ongoing. Questions can also be sent throughout a lecture to the instructor who can check and answer them toward the end of class.
- The Calendar app on the iPhone and iPad allows students to receive email homework alerts and organize their schedules effectively.
- Notes apps allow students and instructors to generate to-do lists and notes using a virtual keyboard and record voice memos; the notes can be organized into folders or emailed to others. In addition, students can use the productivity tools for the iPad for more powerful mobile communication. These apps include a word processing program called Pages, a spreadsheet program called Numbers, and a presentation application called Keynote.
- The Dropbox app allows instructors and students to automatically sync files from one computer or mobile device to another and to the Web for access and sharing. This cloud storage and file syncing service eliminates the need to email files to oneself or carry external storage devices (Barret, 2010).
- Etextbooks downloaded to iPhones and iPads allow students to read closely, highlight text, access glossaries of key terms, search the pages, and add their own notes. Interactive etextbooks engage students with embedded videos, lectures linked to chapters,

interactive charts, equations, sentences, and self-assessment. The tactile involvement required to read via a touch screen produces an intimacy with the media that is absent with the layer of abstraction of mouse use ("Steve Smith's Eye," 2010). Students can access etextbooks at an average 50 percent savings over print texts (Rivero, 2010).

Despite the flexibility and potential for instruction afforded by iPhones and iPads, some downsides exist in using them in classroom settings:

- Some course management software may not function well on iPhones and iPad, however, since they lack Flash and Java capability.
- Phones can be used for off-task behavior. To curb such misuse, instructors might consider imposing technology free periods during class, with phones used only at designated times.
- Excessive dependence on "spotreading" enabled by iPhone use exacerbates the decline in reading habits and general knowledge of students (Bauerlein, 2008).
- The cost of iPhones and iPads may be prohibitive to some students.
- Screen resolution, unusable formats, glare, and difficulty holding the device can pose problems to some. Using screens created for rapid grazing and fast reading may be less pleasurable than a print book (Rivero, 2010).
- Not all books are available as ebooks yet. The price of some etextbooks is nearly the same as the print book making the purchase of an e-reader and the textbook cost-prohibitive.

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Challenges that exist with iPhone and iPad use for instructional purposes will lessen as costs decline and compatibility issues with other technologies are addressed. Integration of the familiar devices into the classroom experience will continue as new apps and product offerings continue to expand at a rapid rate.

Summary

Instruction and student learning can be enhanced with appropriate iPhone and iPad applications. Students are comfortable with technology and can naturally extend its use into classroom settings. Free and inexpensive apps can be utilized for communication, collaboration, research, and learning reinforcement. While challenges in using portable computing devices exist, portability and ease of accessing and sharing information make iPhones and iPads popular alternatives to traditional computer options.

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The Relationship Between Leader Motivating Language and Self-Efficacy: A Partial Least Squares Model Analysis

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Introduction

Today's workplace faces daunting challenges. These environmental stresses include an economic downturn with increased global competition, which serve to place enormous pressure on available organizational resources. Most specifically, the worth of human capital must be nurtured (Friedman, 2005; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Yet many popular organizational responses are ineffective. Case in point: downsizing has been evaluated to be a general failure as a cost saving measure, with an average success rate of about 10% in most cases (Cameron, 2002; Cascio, 2000, 2006).

Fortunately, other promising opportunities exist to enhance human productivity. Among these avenues is the positive relationship which employee self-efficacy shares with performance (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). In fact, noted scholars assert that the optimal strategy is to "grow" an organization's work force. In particular, self-efficacy, which is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (Bandura, 1986, p. 395)

appears to be a potential significant target for such development (Bandura, 1997; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Pajares, 2002). Still, much remains to be understood about the transmission processes that leaders can adopt to nurture this vital affect in employees.

Leader language strategies, particularly Motivating Language Theory (MLT), offer a hopeful avenue. MLT has well established links with positive employee outcomes, such as performance, job satisfaction, attendance, loyalty, and retention (J. Mayfield & M. Mayfield, 1995, 2007, 2009). Furthermore, the model has been hypothesized to serve as the foundation for achievement of higher internal employee motivational states (Sullivan, 1988). An exploration of MLT's link with self-efficacy could deliver valuable knowledge.

As a result, this study will use a partial least squares (PLS) model to evaluate the relationship between motivating language and employee self-efficacy beliefs. Research and practice could benefit from improved insights into this relationship, the capabilities of the MLT, and potentially create new

training agendas, interventions, and rewards to foster employee self-efficacy.

Therefore, the following hypothesis will be investigated in this article: Leader motivating language use will be significantly related to worker self-efficacy, and to performance. To achieve this objective, this hypothesis will be explored in the following sections: theoretical and research backgrounds for self-efficacy's relationships to performance and motivating language (respectively), methodology, including a partial least squares (PLS) analysis, and subsequent discussion and conclusions.

Self-Efficacy: Conceptualization and Impact on Human Performance

The concept of self-efficacy is vital to individual motivation and has assumed a variety of definitions. To begin, a working construct for the study will be scoped out. The tenets of more robust self-efficacy models will then be explored. Ultimately, the critical link between self-efficacy and human performance will be discussed.

The foundations of self-efficacy are found with Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Peterson and Arnn (2005) describe this theory in Bandura's words as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and to execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). As a prime factor in Social Learning Theory, self-efficacy can be defined as "how individuals interpret their capability and potential goals" (Pajares, 2002). This information becomes motivational since individuals make their performance decisions based on perceived aptitude and ability. As highlighted by Pajares (2002) from Bandura's work, self-efficacy beliefs are the foundations from

which "people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2).

While self-efficacy is an important component of Social Learning Theory, it should also be differentiated from convergent factors. For example, self-efficacy is related to, but distinguished from, the concepts of self-confidence, effort, resilience to career challenges, self- esteem, and self-monitoring (Bandura, 1997; Peterson & Arnn, 2005; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Also, self-efficacy is not the equivalent of key organizational outcomes, such as performance, job satisfaction, attendance, retention, and loyalty. Instead, self-efficacy is an affective state that interacts with these measures, at times as a reinforcement. Notwithstanding these distinctions, much evidence exists or is hypothesized to assert that self-efficacy has significant connections with these results (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008; Larson & Luthans, 2006; Pajares, 2002).

An insightful model for the processes that include self-efficacy and performance is the The New Human Performance Model . The schema runs as follows:
Human Performance = f (self-efficacy x ability x motivation) + situational factors such as gender, management development policies, and technological knowledge. In addition, Pajares (2002) envisions self-efficacy in the larger context of Social Cognitive Theory. Here, self-efficacy is an integral part of a three-way interactive triangle between personal factors, including self-efficacy, and other physiological, and emotional attributes, and their interchange with behavior and environmental influences. Furthermore, self-efficacy has also been

portrayed as a moderator in the relationship between transformational leadership and the motivation of employee behaviors (Ilies, Judge, & Wagner, 2006).

Self-efficacy manifests itself in four major experiences: social persuasion, vicarious, physiological, and mastery. Social persuasion experiences typically refer to feedback from others, including leaders (e.g. goal setting conversations). Vicarious education happens when the behavior of others is observed, and individual assessments of competency are formed by observers. For example, a leader who serves as a role model could be a vicarious self-efficacy experience for an employee. Physiological self-efficacy results from biological reactions, such a resilience to physical types of stress. Finally, mastery refers to the learning that accrues from skill practice.

When these facets of self-efficacy are strengthened, positive organizational outcomes should be nurtured. A thorough meta-analysis concluded that the weighted average correlation between self-efficacy and performance was .38 (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Many other researchers in organizational behavior concur (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008). The Positive Organizational Behavior movement identifies development of employee self-efficacy as a focal intervention to grow human capital (Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006). Equally important, the role of leader communication in various forms, such as feedback, goal setting, and training, is recognized as a crucial source of self-efficacy enhancement. In sum, leaders behave as agents for organizational self-efficacy in their strategic communication practices (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Bandura, 2001; Latham & Pinder, 2004). This influence paves a future

avenue for self-efficacy, since actual operationalization of its transference is a central issue for training and development efficiency and effectiveness (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

Leadership Motivating Language

Leader verbal communication is a critical channel for transmission, since many forms of self-efficacy experiences are generated by this source. Fortunately, Motivating Language Theory (MLT) provides a bridge that embodies this process. Furthermore, a number of studies indicate that MLT may well serve as a moderator in the relationship between leader speech and such vital organizational outcomes as performance, job satisfaction, innovation, attendance, and retention (J. Mayfield & M. Mayfield, 2009; J. Mayfield, M. Mayfield, & Kopf, 1998; M. Mayfield & J. Mayfield, 2004; Sharbrough, Simmons, & Cantrill, 2006).

Motivating Language Theory (Sullivan, 1988) proposes that strategic leader speech can positively influence employee affective states and hence, motivation and behavioral outcomes. The model is based on the three basic, linguistic categories known as speech acts. Speech acts are defined as "the basic and minimal units of linguistic communication …where language takes the form of 'rules governed', intentional behavior" (Searle, 1969, p. 16).

These three speech acts were conceptualized by Sullivan (1988) to occur in the following leader expressions:

1) Empathetic (illocutionary) language takes place when a leader shares concern for the emotional well-being of a direct report. For example, a leader may praise

an employee for a well done task, or validate an employee's work place stressors. In brief, a leader uses empathetic speech to convey a genuine sense of humanity to an employee. The roots of this talk are congruent with the person-oriented behavioral management theories of leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

2) Direction-giving (perlocutionary) language happens when leaders articulate performance expectations and assist with guidance on task achievement. For instance, a leader uses direction-giving speech with goal-setting or when articulating evaluations, such as with performance feedback. These types of speech are also founded with the task-oriented behavioral management, expectancy, and goal setting theories (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

3) Meaning-making (locutionary) language occurs when leaders share organizational cultural interpretations with their direct reports. All organizational cultures are unique, and often governed by unwritten rules. For example, joining a golf game may be a "command performance" for a professional seeking organizational advancement. These communications can readily be indirect, shared by metaphors and tales also. One such story would be the telling of organizational success achievements. While meaning-making language is less literal than the two preceding forms, its role can be potentially crucial in organizational socialization and change processes. This type of speech is most compatible with transformational leadership models (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

These three types of speech encompass a few major assumptions for organizational benefits to be supported. First, motivating language is based on all major forms of leader-to-employee speech, and is also a unidirectional dyad which must be understood by the recipient. Second, leaders must "walk their talk" and support their discourse with congruent behaviors. Third, research shows that all three types of motivating language must be applied appropriately to optimize organizational results (J. Mayfield & M. Mayfield, 1995, 2009; McMeans, 2001; Sullivan, 1988).

To date, MLT research indicates that this theory may be a substantial organizational intervention. A valid and reliable scale has been created (J. Mayfield, M. Mayfield, & Kopf, 1995, 1998). Equally significant, the theory was tested as having a positive influence on job satisfaction (up to 70%), performance (between 2 and 17%), attendance (up to 28%), retention (up to 5%), and innovation (up to 20%) (J. Mayfield, 2009; J. Mayfield & M. Mayfield, 2007; J. Mayfield et al., 1995, 1998; M. Mayfield & J. Mayfield, 2004). Important strides were made by Sharbrough and colleges (Sharbrough & Simmons, 2009; Sharbrough et al., 2006), when theory generalization was extended to predominantly male technology professionals. Sharbrough (Sharbrough et al., 2006) also recommended new investigative vistas with MLT that include electronic communications and employee loyalty.

While this progress has happened, much remains to be explored in the actual operationalization of motivating language. In other words, how does leader speech influence the emotional internal states of employee motivation? What proactive steps

should be encouraged to enhance this interchange?

Methodology

From the literature review, the following propositions have been developed: 1) Both leader motivating language use and worker self-efficacy are expected to positively affect worker performance; 2) Leader motivating language use will positively affect worker self-efficacy. Based on these propositions, the following hypotheses have been made:

H1: Leader motivating language use has a positive and significant relationship with employee self-efficacy.

H2: Leader motivating language use has a positive and significant relationship with employee performance.

H3: Self efficacy is positively and significantly related to employee performance.

These hypotheses will be concurrently tested through the use of a causal model: specifically a partial least squares model. (Greater details on this analysis method are provided later in this section. A graphical representation of the hypotheses is presented in Figure 1, and this model provides a comprehensive model of the expected relationships.

Figure 1.
The Effects of Motivating Language and Self-Efficacy on Worker Performance
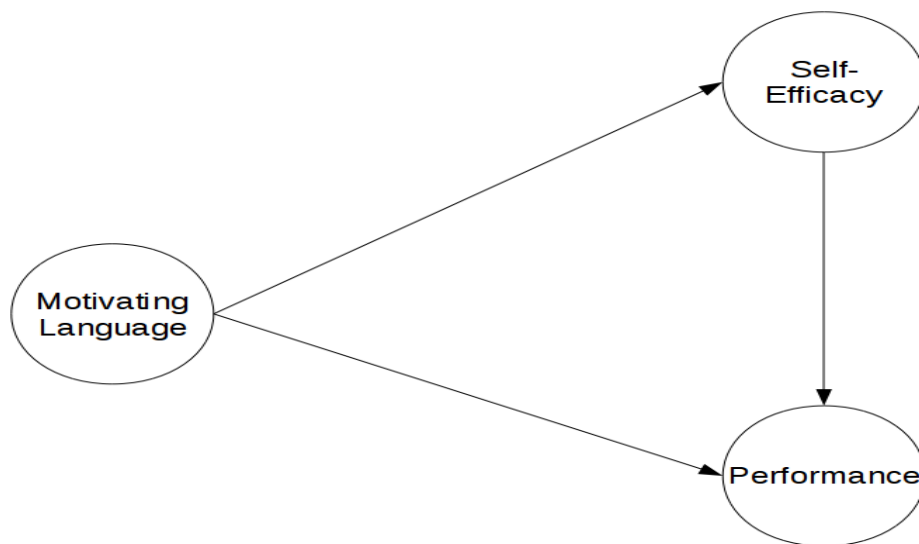
For this study, three scales were used: the motivating language scale (J. Mayfield & M. Mayfield, 2006, 2009; J. Mayfield et al.,

1995), the employee rating scale (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976), and a reduced form version self-efficacy scale

(Sherer et al., 1982). These three measurement scales have been thoroughly tested and validated across many sample groups. The employee rating scale (ERS) was used to measure a given worker's performance, and the information was provided by the employee's supervisor. The worker's self-efficacy was measured using a reduced form of Sherer and colleagues' (1982) self-efficacy scale. This scale was completed by the employee. A leader's motivating language use with a given worker was measured using the motivating language scale. The ML scale was completed by the worker.

All scales were pen and pencil tests. While these type of measures introduce some bias, having the supervisor complete worker performance ratings, and the worker complete a rating of the leader's motivating language use reduces this bias. In addition, it is unclear if self-efficacy could be measured without asking a respondent to complete some self-response measure (Price, 1997; Spector, 1992).

The proposed model was tested using partial least squares analysis (PLS). PLS is a type of causal modeling (SEM) and was developed as an alternative to covariance-based methods structural equation models such as LISREL. It uses regression-based calculation methods instead of the maximum likelihood estimation methods used in SEM analysis. PLS methods, because of their regression-based analysis, require fewer data assumptions (especially the multivariate normality assumptions), and provide more accurate coefficient results with smaller sample sizes than SEMs.

This greater flexibility makes PLS a powerful analysis tool in its own right, especially if the usual SEM requirements cannot be met. Specifically, PLS can test complex models with multiple independent and dependent variables, when particular relationships (paths) are proposed that cannot be easily tested by standard regression analysis. (In the proposed model, the hypothesized mediating relationship of worker self-efficacy between ML and worker performance, as well as ML's direct effect on performance would make regression analysis outcomes more difficult to implement and interpret than a PLS analysis.) PLS, additionally, offers tests for determining overall model adequacy and provides information on the relationship strength between various constructs.

As with SEM, PLS has no single generally agreed upon measure of overall model adequacy. Instead, there are multiple model tests that must be examined to determine model adequacy. Once model adequacy has been determined, the significance of the links between the latent variables can be tested and how well the manifest variables measure the latent variables

A standard analytic PLS model adequacy measure provides two versions of scale reliability: a Cronbach's alpha measure and a composite reliability measure. The composite reliability measure is useful because it relaxes the Cronbach's alpha assumption that (often unrealistic) all scale items have the same relationship to the attendant latent variable.

The composite measure, instead, uses the manifest variable's observed relationship with its associated latent variable to weight the calculations in determining the reliability. Such a method gives a reliability score that is equivalent to Cronbach's alpha

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if all items are equally related to a latent variable and gives a more accurate reliability measure if this assumption is violated. For examining measure adequacy, these measures should both be higher than 0.70 for reliable scales.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is the next model adequacy measure that needs to be examined. The AVE gives evidence if a set of manifest variables from a given measure is a reasonable representation of the underlying latent construct. The more variance that can be extracted by PLS, the greater confidence there should be that the manifest variables are measuring a common latent variable. When the AVE score is above 0.50 (on a 0 to 1.00 scale), there is a reasonable amount of confidence that the manifest variables are doing a good job in measuring the latent variable.

In addition to examining the AVE, item cross-loadings must be examined. Conceptually, cross-loadings are similar to factor analysis factor scores. The cross-loading scores give information on how a given manifest variable relates to all latent constructs. Items that are empirically distinct will have their highest loadings on their associated latent construct and will have low loadings on all other constructs. In order to be considered to have appropriate cross-loadings, an item should load at least 0.71 on the intended construct.

Helpfully, PLS provides a measure of how well the model can be used for predictive purposes with the Q^2 measure. The Q^2 measure helps determine how generalizable the model is across future samples by using a jack-knifing procedure. In order to calculate this measure, the PLS algorithm successively removes portions of the original data and then re-analyzes the model using the remaining data. Higher Q^2 scores indicate better model predictive properties and thus greater generalizability. A positive score indicates that the model has appropriate predictive ability. A negative score indicates that the model does not have good predictive properties, and its generalizability should be suspect.

Once model adequacy has been established, the model results must be examined to determine the strengths of the relationships between the latent variables. First, the paths between the latent variables should be tested for significance and if the coefficient signs are in the predicted direction. (Significance is calculated through a boot strapping procedure since parametric significance determination is not possible with current PLS algorithms.) In addition to path coefficients and their significance, PLS also provides information on how much variance a set of exogenous variables explains for their attendant endogenous variables. This information is given through associated R^2 measures for the latent variables.

Results

The sample for this study came from a southeastern US health care facility. This sample consisted of 475 workers with 151 of the staff providing usable responses. This number provided a 32% response rate. Female respondents were somewhat more prevalent and accounted for 68.9% of the sample group. Work groups size averaged 11.6 members per supervisor. The average organizational tenure was 11 years, and the average team tenure was 4.8 years.

All scales demonstrated good reliability levels. The Cronbach's alpha for the motivating language scale's was 0.87 and a 0.92 for its composite reliability score. Worker self-efficacy had Cronbach's alpha of 0.84 and a composite reliability of 0.88. Finally, the ERS scale showed very high reliabilities with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.96 and a composite reliability of 0.97.

SmartPLS version 2.0 M3 was used for all PLS analysis. The model showed a good data fit. All latent variables indicated good AVE scores (an ML score of 0.80, performance 0.84, and self-efficacy 0.61). The cross-loadings were all within acceptable guidelines, and the Q^2 scores were positive. Based on the results, the model appears to be an adequate fit to the data.

In testing the model path coefficients, all manifest variables were significantly related to their attendant latent variables. In addition, the latent variable paths showed significant relationships as predicted in the hypotheses. The model and coefficients are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2.
The Effects of Motivating Language and Self-Efficacy on Worker Performance
PLS Model Results
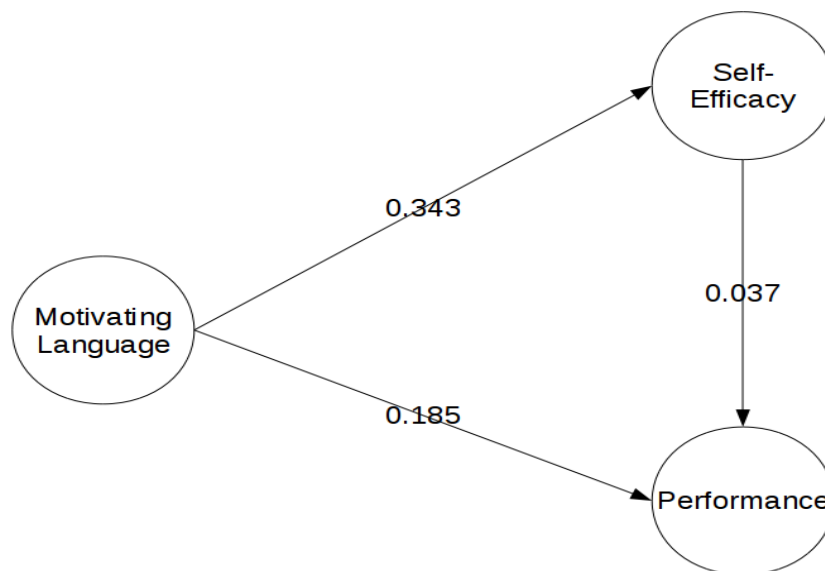
Discussion and Conclusions

The Partial Least Squares analysis supported all three of the proposed hypotheses; Leader motivating language will have a positive and significant relationship with employee self-efficacy; Leader motivating language use will have a positive and significant relationship with employee performance; and Employee self-efficacy will have a positive and

significant relationship to his/her performance. The remainder of this section will discuss study contributions and limitations. Then, some recommendations will be shared that may boost future understanding of the optimal ways with which to harness the synergy of Psychological Capital (Larson & Luthans, 2006) with leader training, and evaluation.

This study has contributed to improved understanding of the motivational messages of leader-initiated language. In so doing, we have garnered support to clarify the self-efficacy-Psychological Capital link (Larson & Luthans, 2006). Furthermore, this study responds to prominent researchers' call for more dynamic motivational models and time effective response training (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008). This last topic is not extensively treated in the academic literature. And scholars are being encouraged (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008) to investigate alternatives to the observation that "equivocality persists regarding the most appropriate way of conceptualizing task and concept specific self-efficacy" (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008, p. 16).

Equally important, this study offers insights into improved training methods that can readily be evaluated and adopted for leader development and incentives. The motivating language scale and theory have been well-established and validated (J. Mayfield & M. Mayfield, 2009). As a result, the scale could serve as a cost effective training framework that augments employee self-efficacy. Furthermore, the survey could be applied as data intervention, creating a base for assessment and employee learning progress. Control groups and motivating language learning progress could be tracked and

hopefully be supported by the organization's reward system.

These potential opportunities need more data and multi-method strategies. This study includes such limitations as a cross-sectional sample, gender bias, lengthy organizational tenure, and geographic restrictions. Most of the responses came from long employed female nurses in a government hospital in the Southeastern U.S. Therefore, generalizability is limited. Other factors that may diminish the study's findings are the response bias that is inherent in self reporting, and the codependencies between self efficacy and ML.

Yet despite these concerns, a wide range of opportunities can be explored in new investigations. Hence, the recommendations for future studies will be presented here. First, more generalizability could be established with diverse and global samples (back translation methods of the motivating language scale are underway (Personal communication with Japanese researcher, Mayfield & Mayfield, 2010). Also important, certain organizations have developed ML training programs, which reach into the crux of Aguinis' & Kragers' (2009) argument that optimal training platforms should be gleaned from ineffective ones. Longitudinal and multi-trait measures can be introduced to clarify such questions. Also unexplored are the researchers' appeals for the written/electronic influence of motivating language, and with development of ML qualitative measures (Sharbrough et al., 2006; Zorn, Jr. & Ruccio, 1998).

In conclusion, there is compelling evidence that leader language has a nurturing influence on self-efficacy and performance. Both researchers and professionals may find

that increased understanding and operationalization of ML strategies will be highly beneficial to many organizations.

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Faculty on the Frontline: Predicting Faculty Intentions to Address College Student Plagiarism

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Introduction

There are over seven million results from a Google search today on the term "plagiarism." There have been hundreds of news media and academic articles written about college students and cheating (Perry 2010). The claims that cheating is increasing—and specifically plagiarism—are based on anecdotal evidence (Perry 2010; Park, 2003). However, there are strong arguments that the Internet is contributing to the increase in cases of plagiarism in higher education including distance education (Decoo, 2002; Kennedy, Nowak, Raghuraman, Thomas, & David, 2000). McKenzie (1998) puts it bluntly, "The New Plagiarism may be worse than the old because students now wield an Electronic Shovel that makes it possible to find and save huge chunks of information with little reading, effort or originality." To further complicate the issue, many scholars argue that the issues of plagiarism and originality are historically mercurial and impossible to define (Freedman, 1994).

Studies indicate that there are many different causes for student plagiarism (Perry, 2010; Park 2003). The most common causes found in the literature are articulated by Williams (2007) who suggests that students plagiarize because they are

A. Deceitful and trying to put one over on their teachers
B. Lazy and trying to get by with the least amount of work possible
C. Confused about how to use and credit other sources of information
D. Struggling to write with new information and new genres
E. All of the above

In addition, there are also several types of plagiarism identified in the literature (Park, 2003). There are several variations on using others' materials as one's own: buying a paper, copying a paper, and using another student's work. Then there are cases where students have others do the work and submit it as their own. The obvious copy and paste plagiarism aside, the identification of plagiarism often depends on methods faculty use in identifying plagiarism. One study found that students' writing was sometimes considered as 'plagiarized' or 'non-plagiarized' based on professors' own practices of writing and particularly paraphrasing (Roig, 2001). A five-year study using the software Turnitin.com to identify plagiarism acknowledges a major limitation in the fact that the different graders used their own judgments in evaluating the originality of reports (Walker, 2010).

With the Texas A&M University-Kingsville provost's goal to establish clear and consistent policies and processes for handling suspected cases of plagiarism, the first challenge is defining plagiarism. Although that issue is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting a university-wide definition of plagiarism may be challenging. One psychology department found how difficult it is to reach agreement on the definition of plagiarism, even within a single department (Sutherland-Smith, 2005)

Institutional processes to address plagiarism can get bogged down with trivial cases (Decoo, 2002). In addition, institutions and faculty have concerns about legal battles. Decoo (2002) argues that when plagiarism cases are addressed, the more serious offenses often cause devastating effects on the institution, the offender, and the faculty member who charges plagiarism.

Faculty on the Front Line

A 2006 study of 147 faculty found that "faculty beliefs about the frequency of student academic misconduct were positively related to…prevention measures and efforts to challenge students suspected of misconduct" (Hard, Conway, & Moran, 2006, p. 1061). Although examining a broader concept of academic misconduct than the single focus here on plagiarism, this study confirms an earlier finding (Koljatic & Sylva, 2002) of a significant relationship between faculty beliefs and behaviors.

Howard's (2007) analysis of the relationship between the Internet and plagiarism explores the historic context of

intertextuality. The Internet is not the first revolution of increased access to text and the challenge that access brings to a cultural understanding of authorship and textual culture. "In all its forms, new media constitutes yet another revolution in access to text, and one of its controversies is the anxiety of authorship" (Howard, 2007, p. 6). A result of this "anxiety" is the pressure for gatekeepers to monitor, identify, and often determine the punishment for plagiarism. One survey of 270 faculty shows considerable variation in faculty characterization of both severities of offense and appropriate actions; however, there was a common theme that the "punishment should fit the crime" (Robinson-Zanartu et al., 2005). Martin (1994) asserts that there is a wide variation in types and severity of plagiarism offenses and that because of the relative ease of detection, faculty most often focus on the least serious offenses and ignore the more egregious offenses.

Although there is an assumption that faculty is on the front line in the issue of college student plagiarism, researchers have not studied faculty beliefs about their role in addressing student plagiarism.

Research question: What are faculty beliefs about their role in addressing student plagiarism?

Methodology

The survey was designed according to the theoretical framework of Ajzen's (2002) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and questions developed based on a literature review of TPB and research on plagiarism in colleges and universities. Figure 1 is a model of the theory as applied in this study.

Figure 1. Applied Model for Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior has been the basis of hundreds of research articles, and the efficacy of the theory was demonstrated in a meta-analysis of 185 TPB studies (Armitage & Conner, 2001). In short, a well-designed TPB survey predicts the subject's likelihood of enacting the target behavior. The survey measures a subject's attitude towards a behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intention to enact the behavior.

In this study the target behavior is faculty intention to address suspected acts of student plagiarism. The subjective norms are faculty beliefs and attitudes about social pressures to enact the behavior--in this case, beliefs about social norms among students, other faculty, and administration. Perceived behavioral control identifies faculty beliefs about the ease or difficulty of addressing suspected acts of plagiarism.

The subjects for the survey were the entire faculty at Texas A&M University-Kingsville (348 faculty members as of spring 2010),

including tenured, full- and part-time instructors. The University Institutional Review Board approved sending out the survey via faculty email.

In order to send the survey questionnaire to the interest population, the entire questionnaire was uploaded on the Survey Monkey® (Internet-based response collection tool) by enrolling in the Pro Plan for two months. Special care was taken not to record the respondents' computer IP addresses in order not to reveal the identities of the same. The anonymity of response was also conveyed to the population of interest.

An email was sent to the entire faculty on April 21, 2010 requesting their participation in the survey and included the online link to the survey questionnaire. Faculty members had more than four weeks to access the link and complete the survey. After the first email, four subsequent reminder emails along with the survey link were sent to the faculty members. The link to the survey on

the Survey Monkey® was disabled on May 22, 2010, after which the results were downloaded in the Microsoft Excel® format.

Survey Design

Out of 42 questions in the survey, 35 were aimed at recording faculty beliefs, attitudes, and intentions; three were related to the past behavior, and four regarded demographics. Out of the 35 belief-based questions, two questions had three categorical response options, and one question had two options. So in all there were a total of 40 queries to be answered regarding the beliefs and attitudes through 35 questions.

All the belief-based questions could be answered on a scale of 1 to 6 with 1 being affirmative response to the question and 5 being the negative and with 6 having the option of N/A (not applicable to the respondent). The N/A option was intended to measure accurate response rate. Sometimes the length of survey can prompt the respondent to skip some questions in order to complete the survey in a short time. So an adjustment was made through the survey tool, Survey Monkey®, used for data collection. It was set to require the respondent to answer all the questions before the survey could be submitted. It was designed to encourage the respondent to read all questions before the survey could be submitted. However, when a respondent concludes that a particular question does not relate to her/him, the respondent could provide a fuzzy response. In order to avoid such false response, N/A option was included in the overall scale. Two out of three questions concerning past actions were open-ended, and one had the option of eight responses. All the questions

in the survey with the exception of questions regarding demographics had to be answered in order to submit the response. Each variable is identified by a VAR code. The last two digits refer to the original question number in the survey. The number(s) before the last two digits refers to the variable the question represents.

Demographic Results

In all, 109 faculty members responded to the survey for a response rate of about 31 percent. Population demographics were requested from the University's Institutional Research Department for comparison with the respondent demographics. Of the 109 total respondents, 106 answered the demographics about gender. There were 56 percent male respondents compared to a population demographic of 64 percent males; the 44 percent female respondents compare to a 36 percent population. The survey respondents fairly represented the population gender proportions. Moreover, 84 percent of the respondents were full-time faculty, and the rest were part time. This breakdown is extremely close to the 87 percent full-time faculty in the entire university.

Identification of Belief Sets

After gaining a clearer understanding of the TPB and methodologies used in numerous studies applying the theory, we reviewed each survey question for close fit with the three belief sets; we also reviewed each survey question for close fit with the intention to enact the behavior. As a result of this review, the most applicable questions were identified. The questions selected in each of the belief sets: 1)

behavioral beliefs;2) normative beliefs; and 3) control beliefs are as follows:

Behavioral Beliefs (independent variable)
VAR 1201 How important is it for students to avoid plagiarism?
VAR 1203 How important is it for students to credit resources used in class work?
VAR1205 How important is it for students to be punished for acts of intentional plagiarism?
VAR1208 How important is it for students to be punished for acts of unintentional plagiarism?
VAR1237 The definition of plagiarism in the student handbook is adequate for students to understand expectations.
VAR 1238 Most students know when they are plagiarizing.

Normative Beliefs (independent variable)
VAR422 Generally, how much do you care about others regarding what you should do about suspected acts of student plagiarism?
VAR422A Care about what other faculty think (A)
VAR422B Care about what students think (B)
VAR422C Care about what university administration think (C)
VAR432 Most of my students think I should report all suspected acts of student plagiarism.

Control Beliefs (independent variable)
VAR514 How difficult is it for me to directly address suspect acts of student plagiarism? Reverse coded*
VAR515 Whether or not I directly address suspected acts of student plagiarism is completely up to me.
Intention Questions (dependent variable)

VAR 317 How likely am I to directly address suspected acts of student plagiarism (Target behavior #1)?
VAR 321 I intend to report future suspected acts of student plagiarism to administration (Target behavior #2).
*the scale was reverse coded in order to seek uniformity in the response for all questions as the scale for all questions, except for 14, implied the most affirmative response to the question at the scale of 1 and the most negative at 5.

Results - Significant Predictors of Target Behaviors

The data were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS®. The N/A option on the scale was considered as a no response. Respondents who selected N/A on any question were removed from the step-wise linear regression. The SPSS automatically selects the number of respondents who have answered all the questions in a given analysis. So the number of respondents for individual regression analysis for different belief sets varied depending on the selection of N/A by some of the respondents. Moreover, the frequency analysis in SPSS was accomplished separately for every question, which identified the number of respondents for each individual question and removed the ones who had N/A responses. The results were analyzed based on scale of 1 to 5. Questions pertaining to particular beliefs and attitudes were identified so that step-wise linear regression against dependent variable of intention (Target behavior #1 and target behavior #2) questions could be run.

All the questions in each belief set were grouped as independent variables, and one

intention question was set as a dependent variable to do step-wise linear regression. The regression, in addition to finding the correlation coefficient between dependent and set of independent variables, also omitted the non significant independent variables from the set. The correlation coefficient represented by 'R' was given at a high level of significance represented by 'p-value'.

The results of the step-wise linear regression analysis are given in the following tables separately for different belief sets. Table 1 contains the R at a given level of significance (p-value) for each belief set regressed against intention VAR 317. Table 2 provides the results from regression analysis based on the same belief sets but this time regressed against intention variable 321.

Table 1: *Correlation Coefficient of different belief sets with target behavior 1*

Variables	R (correlation coefficient) with VAR 317
Behavioral Beliefs	0.842*
VAR1205	
VAR 1208	
VAR 1238	
Normative Beliefs	0.812*
VAR 422C	
VAR 432	
Control Beliefs	0.909*
VAR 514	
VAR 515	

*p = 0.000

Table 2: *Correlation Coefficient of different belief sets with target behavior 2*

Variables	R (correlation coefficient) with VAR 321
Behavioral Beliefs	0.920*
1203	
1205	
1238	
Normative Beliefs	0.938*
422C	
432	
Control Beliefs	0.893*
514	
515	

*p = 0.000

Table 3: *Target Outcome Behaviors – Response Percentages*

Target Behavior #1 VAR 317. How likely am I to directly address suspected acts of student plagiarism? n=107	Extremely likely	Likely	Somewhat likely	Unlikely	Extremely unlikely	N/A
	49.5	38.5	9.2		0.9	1.8

Target Behavior #2 VAR 321. I intend to report future suspected acts of student plagiarism to administration. n= 104	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
	20.2	33.9	32.1	6.4	2.8	4.6

Table 4: *Behavioral Beliefs- Significant Predictors of VAR317 and VAR321 Target Outcome Behaviors – Response Percentages*

	Extremely important	Important	Somewhat	Not important	Extremely unimportant	N/A
How important is it for students to be punished for acts of intentional plagiarism? n= 108	59.6	33.0	4.6	0.9	0.9	
Most students know when they are plagiarizing. n= 109	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
	11.9	34.9	30.3	20.2	2.8	

Table 5: *Behavioral Beliefs- Significant Predictor of VAR317 Target Behavior #1 – Response Percentages*

How important is it for students to be punished for acts of unintentional plagiarism is n= 108	Extremely important	Important	Somewhat	Not important	Extremely unimportant	N/A
	8.3	28.4	45.0	13.8	3.7	0.9

Table 6: *Behavioral Beliefs– Significant Predictor of VAR321 Target Behavior #2 – Response Percentages*

How important is it for students to properly credit the resources they use in class work products? *n= 109*	Extremely important	Important	Somewhat	Not important	Extremely un-important	N/A
	89.1	8.3	2.8			

Table 7: *Normative Beliefs - Significant Predictors of VAR317 and VAR321 Target Outcome Behaviors – Response Percentages*

	Very much	Much	Somewhat	A little	Very little	N/A
Care about what university administration think* *n= 108*	23.9	20.2	30.3	11.9	12.8	0.9
Most of my students think I should report all suspected acts of student plagiarism. *n= 93*	Extremely likely	Likely	Sometimes	Rarely	Extremely unlikely	N/A
	4.6	12.8	30.3	24.8	12.8	14.7

Note. The survey question (Generally, how much do you care about others regarding what you should do about suspected acts of plagiarism?) asked about several stakeholders.

Table 8: *Control Beliefs - Significant Predictors of VAR317 and VAR321 Target Outcome Behaviors – Response Percentages*

How difficult is it for me to directly address suspected acts of student plagiarism? *n= 107*	Extremely difficult	Difficult	Somewhat	Not difficult	Extremely easy	N/A
	7.3	32.1	27.5	24.8	6.4	1.8
Whether or not I directly address suspected acts of student plagiarism is completely up to me. *n= 107*	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
	11.9.	32.1	20.2	22.0	11.9	1.8

Table 9: *Mean and Standard Deviation of Identified Variables*

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Behavioral Beliefs		
VAR 1201	1.19	0.45
VAR 1203	1.13	0.40
VAR 1205	1.56	0.75
VAR 1208	2.75	0.89
VAR 1237	2.52	1.14
VAR 1238	2.60	1.02
Normative Beliefs		
VAR 422A	2.80	1.36
VAR 422B	2.67	1.42
VAR 422C	2.69	1.31
VAR 432	3.33	1.08
Control Beliefs		
VAR 514*	2.88	1.08
VAR 515	2.90	1.24
Target Behavior #1		
VAR 317	1.62	0.74
Target Behavior #2		
VAR 321	2.35	0.98

*Reverse coded

The mean and standard deviation for the identified variables are based on response scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being absolutely affirmative to the question and 5 as negative. Response of 3 is neutral to the question, but skewed towards the affirmative side. Most of the respondents agree at least "somewhat" in their responses to all the questions except for VAR 432 that asked whether or not students want the cases of plagiarism to be reported. Questions pertaining to behavioral beliefs regarding importance of avoiding plagiarism, crediting resources, and punishing intentional plagiarism had extremely positive responses with almost all respondents agreeing strongly with less scattered results evident from the low standard deviation. Respondents are less agreeable on questions regarding normative beliefs and control beliefs with some of the respondents choosing responses on the either side of scale. This is evident with the mean for all the normative belief and control belief questions to be close to 3 and standard deviation of more than 1. As for the target behaviors (#1 and #2), respondents agree to directly address and report cases of plagiarism in the future.

Discussion

Both target behaviors are evaluated through intention questions, which have high response rates with less than 4 percent respondents choosing not applicable (N/A). For target behavior #1, more than 97 percent of the responses are skewed positively, which indicates the high likelihood of faculty's intention to directly address student plagiarism. As for the intention to report, target #2, more than 86

percent of the respondents are in agreement.

The significant predictors for both the target behavior questions #317 and #321 have high response rates (98 percent). However, the response rate for question #432 pertaining to students' expectations for faculty to report all suspected acts of plagiarism is low (85 percent).

Faculty beliefs regarding punishing intentional cases of plagiarism and that students know when they are plagiarizing (all plagiarism is intentional) are significant predictors for both target behavior questions. It suggests that the faculty members, who think punishment is an apt course for both intentional and unintentional plagiarism, are more likely to directly address student plagiarism. Beliefs that students should credit resources for all class work is a significant predictor for target behavior #2 of faculty's intention to report cases of student plagiarism. The faculty members, who take an all-encompassing approach to plagiarism by expecting students to credit resources for all class work, intend to take a more formal course of dealing with plagiarism by reporting it to the appropriate authorities.

Motivation to comply regarding caring about administration and the normative belief that most students expect the faculty to report plagiarism are significant predictors for both target behavior questions. Faculty's intention to directly address and to report plagiarism is highly correlated with these beliefs. Hence, students play a major role of influencers on how faculty members deal with plagiarism. Moreover, the concern about university administration, indirectly, suggests faculty's

willingness to have an organizational policy in place to deal with student plagiarism. This notion is supported by responses to some of the questions in the complete survey questionnaire, which were asked about having a university-wide committee of students, faculty, and administration to deal with cases of plagiarism. Collectively more than 70 percent of responses, for all the questions related to having a committee, were positively skewed expressing most of the respondents' willingness for having such a committee.

Future Research

Most research, including this study, does not establish a standard definition for the term plagiarism. Therefore, because of different definitions there could potentially be a wide variation in how faculty perceives their role in addressing suspected student plagiarism (Flint, Clegg, & Macdonald, 2006). Also, because of different definitions there is likely variation even in what faculty identify as suspicious. Future research that calls for faculty selection from a list describing known varieties of faculty definitions of plagiarism (Sutherland-Smith, 2005; Pickard, 2006; & Park, 2003) could help identify biases in perceptions of plagiarism and suspected student plagiarism.

Sutherland-Smith (2005) describes the challenges faced in an unsuccessful attempt to come to agreement on a definition of plagiarism among 11 faculty members who teach English; this exemplifies the challenges of establishing institutional definition. Another study found that even having an institutional definition of plagiarism and a policy for addressing plagiarism, students and faculty alike found

them unsatisfactory. This institution embarked upon a mixed methods study among administration, students, and faculty, which led to the development of multiple tools and approaches with a goal of changing the institutional culture (Pickard, 2006).

Students receive mixed messages from faculty about plagiarism and want a specific framework, definition, and training to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it (Ashworth, Freewood, & Macdonald, 2003). Future research is needed to measure the effects of faculty participation in defining plagiarism and consequences in the classroom (Hard, Conway, & Moran, 2006).

Limitations

This study was conducted at one university. The main goal was to get a picture of faculty perceptions of their role in addressing student plagiarism in order to contribute to the future revision and development of definitions, policies, and procedures for addressing student plagiarism at this institution.

Conclusions

Faculty at Texas A&M University-Kingsville who responded to the survey indicates they are extremely likely (49.5 percent) and very likely (38.5 percent) to address suspected acts of student plagiarism. Over 98 percent think is it important for students to properly credit resources used in coursework. Additionally, they overwhelmingly believe (over 90 percent) that students should be punished for intentional acts of plagiarism. Over 70 percent of the faculty care about what the university thinks about how they handle suspected acts of plagiarism.

Over 50 percent of the faculty has doubts about whether students actually know when they are plagiarizing, which may contribute to mixed responses on punishment for unintentional plagiarism. Two thirds of the respondents admit to having difficulty addressing suspected acts of student plagiarism.

These results support calls for better education of students about research methods in general and how to summarize and paraphrase the sources they find. Reference librarians are more qualified for this task than faculty. Additionally, each college, or in some cases individual departments, should standardize the style guide for each discipline so that students, faculty, and administration all have a baseline, which can be used to examine suspected acts of plagiarism.

These findings also support the concept of having a university-wide process to support faculty in addressing suspected acts of student plagiarism. This could help ease the difficulty faculty have with directly confronting students by providing faculty and students with clear guidelines.
The large number of respondents (nearly one third of the faculty) to this survey, coupled with the results described here, clearly indicates a high level of concern and interest among Texas A&M University-Kingsville faculty about the challenge of student plagiarism. This response level, coupled with the results described here, clearly indicate a high level of concern and interest among Texas A&M University-Kingsville faculty about the challenge of student plagiarism.

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