

SYNOPSIS

FOUNDATION FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Alice Schmidt Hanbidge, Amanda McKenzie

Abstract: With the persistence of cases of student cheating in higher education, significant efforts undertaken by institutions encourage students to participate in learning about academic integrity (Boehm, Justice and Weeks, 2009; Carroll, 2007; Ludeman, 2005). It is crucial for educators to determine the most effective ways to deter student plagiarism. Most universities rely on instructors to cover this information; however, variation exists in the consistency and quality in the delivery of this information. Academic integrity (AI) resources and policies posted across post-secondary institution websites tend to be non-interactive and difficult to locate. Academic misconduct is on the rise despite these well-intentioned efforts (Dee and Jacob, 2012); this formed the basis for us to develop a mobile solution that benefits and supports students for any time anywhere AI learning.

This paper describes the research project development, administration, and assessment processes of the Foundations for Academic Success (FAS); our academic integrity mobile learning tool for undergraduate university students. Mobile learning (m-learning) entails using mobile devices to deliver learning materials with integrated strategies to allow access to knowledge from anywhere at any time (Ally, 2004). M-learning or “education on the go,” through devices such as phones and tablets, expands the boundaries of anytime, anywhere learning (Wu et al., 2012).

A mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) non-experimental research methodology includes both pre- and post-tests, student questionnaires, interviews and tool testing. Best strategies are explored, from a student user perspective, by students who provide feedback about accessing and learning this information with mobile technology (m-learning). Given that technology is rapidly changing the way that information is delivered and processed, the transfer of knowledge about academic integrity needs to keep pace with the best and most innovative ways to educate students.

The new FAS tool provides information about institutional academic expectations for students in advance of the first day of classes well before they set foot on campus. Specifically, this tool educates students about the values of “honesty, trust, respect, responsibility, fairness and courage”, which form the basis of academic integrity as set out in “The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity” (1999, p. 4). By providing visually stimulating multi-media interactive content as well as gamification in our mobile application, it appeals to students’ desire to engage with content rather than being passive recipients. Six interactive academic integrity modules make information readily available via mobile phone or portable tablet without the limitations of on-campus classroom sites or learning management systems. Each module depicts challenging case scenarios involving diverse student life challenges, such as peer pressures, time constraints and cultural differences.

As strong advocates of mobile learning, our intention is to enhance effective student academic integrity m-learning experiences while augmenting their educational interactions. Increasing student’s knowledge about academic integrity presents a unique opportunity to encourage the