



Need concise academic integrity lessons? Try these!

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Benefits of Concise Academic Integrity Lessons

Integrity is a core value in the Student Code of Conduct at Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) that aligns with the desire to improve academic integrity competencies. While promoting academic integrity is recognized as essential, the perennial shortage of class time often interferes with faculty's ability to incorporate academic integrity instruction into their courses. Seeking to ameliorate this situation, I developed concise academic integrity lessons that can help students develop sound academic integrity practices and help faculty interweave brief academic integrity lessons into their courses. This workshop provides an opportunity for participants to consider the pros and cons of this educational initiative and how it could be adapted for their institutions.

For students, concise academic integrity lessons interspersed at opportune times throughout the semester can help prevent academic misconduct. The lessons are based on the principle that mastering skills, understanding concepts, and applying practices is an incremental process. Students do not master writing skills, or research skills in one lesson, nor can they master academic integrity practices in one lesson, such as those offered to first semester college students at many colleges. While academic integrity lessons for freshmen are essential in higher education institutions the persistence of academic integrity breaches makes it evident that that other approaches also need to be implemented. Concise academic integrity lessons targeted to specific assignments during the semester are one such approach.

From the faculty perspective, brief, ready-to-use academic integrity lessons are appealing. As faculty explain an upcoming assignment, they can devote five minutes to engaging students in a conversation that cultivates an understanding of discipline-specific academic integrity concepts. No one lesson, or policy, or sanction is the magic bullet that will result in zero academic integrity breaches, but the approach of utilizing concise lessons throughout the semester is based on the premise that timely, incremental lessons will further the academic integrity competencies of some students.

Theoretical Background & Goal of Concise Academic Integrity Lessons

Academic integrity literature notes many reasons that educational initiatives are an essential component in improving academic integrity outcomes (East, 2015; Morris, 2015). While studies do not focus on concise academic integrity lessons, they note that students develop academic integrity practices and understand academic integrity concepts through targeted incremental instruction (Bretag et al, 2011; Carroll, 2009).

I have explored various models in developing academic integrity lessons that classroom faculty can incorporate into their daily lessons (Bealle, 2017). Over the years, based on feedback from faculty regarding maximizing the use of class time, I have developed ever

shorter lessons, until most recently I created the brief lessons explored in this workshop. The lessons are designed with the goal of encouraging classroom faculty to intersperse academic integrity lessons in their courses. Although the impact of these lessons has not been systematically studied, personal reports from SCCC students and faculty convey an appreciation for this educational approach. In addition, a 2017-2018 qualitative assessment of SCCC students in library research classes emphasizes that students value academic integrity instruction. Of the 95 students who participated in the study, 64 noted that instruction regarding academic integrity practices such as joining the scholarly conversation through synthesizing information and citing sources improved their confidence and competency with successfully completing college research projects. The data from this study is being analyzed and an article will report on the findings.

Institutional Fit

The premise of incremental improvement of academic literacy skills is particularly appropriate for community college students in the United States. Open-admission policies at community colleges result in student populations that demonstrate a wide-range of academic preparedness; the Center for Community College Student Engagement notes that 68% of students take at least one developmental course (2016). Consequently, community colleges provide extensive services to improve student academic literacy skills, including academic integrity conventions such as understanding plagiarism and documenting sources (Maddox, 2008).

As a library faculty member at a community college, I teach library instruction sessions that engage students in the scholarly conversation, including how and why we cite sources. The sessions aid the students who attend, but the sessions are not systematically infused throughout the curriculum and consequently don't reach all students. Therefore, as chair of the college Academic Integrity Committee, I seek opportunities to disseminate additional avenues for educational initiatives promoting academic integrity instruction. In particular, I share lessons at Professional Development workshops and at other venues with the goal that some classroom faculty will incorporate them into their courses.

Future Implications of the Workshop

Developing a holistic academic integrity strategy at SCCC has been a long-term goal, but it is slow going. In the meantime, educational initiatives such as concise academic integrity lessons can be a step towards promoting a culture of integrity and improving academic integrity outcomes. This workshop is an opportunity to discuss how viable this approach might be at other institutions.

Workshop Aim and Activity

Main aims of the workshop are to explore concise lessons and consider with the participants how this approach could improve academic integrity outcomes for students at their institutions.

Individual lessons are designed to take about five minutes of class time. The lessons engage students in focused conversations about working with integrity and strive to:



- increase student's academic integrity knowledge
- heighten student's academic integrity awareness
- provide academic integrity conversation starters for the classroom

The lessons are question-based prompts that can be used at opportune moments throughout the semester. For example, when students are preparing for an exam, the academic integrity lesson can pose a question regarding exam cheating at their institution as pictured in the menti slide in figure 1. With a simple poll, the professor gains a glimpse into the students' perceptions and has the opportunity to heighten student's academic integrity awareness.

It is powerful to engage students in a conversation regarding personal reactions when a student:

- knows that a classmate has cheated;
- appreciates that his professor implemented anti-cheating precautions;
- realizes that in her new job she may be working with individuals who cheated on their accounting exams in college.

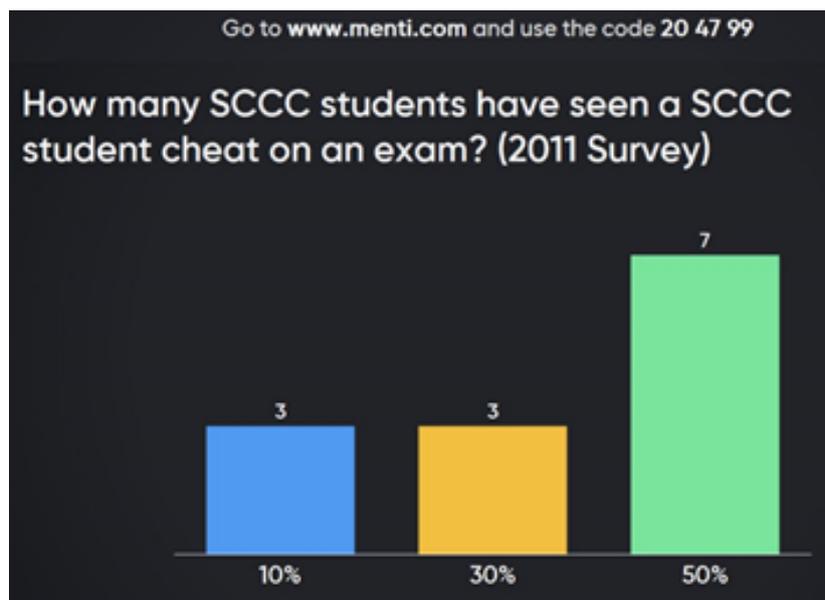


Figure 1. Menti question

Or as another example, when students are writing lab reports, a lesson can offer simple scenarios about copying homework as in the LibWizard question in figure 2. The scenario broaches many discussion points including the:

- purpose of writing lab reports;
- ability to evaluate the extent to which students have mastered the content if they copy their homework from classmates;
- effect of the relative worth (5% for example) of a weekly lab report on how students should approach the assignment from an academic integrity perspective.

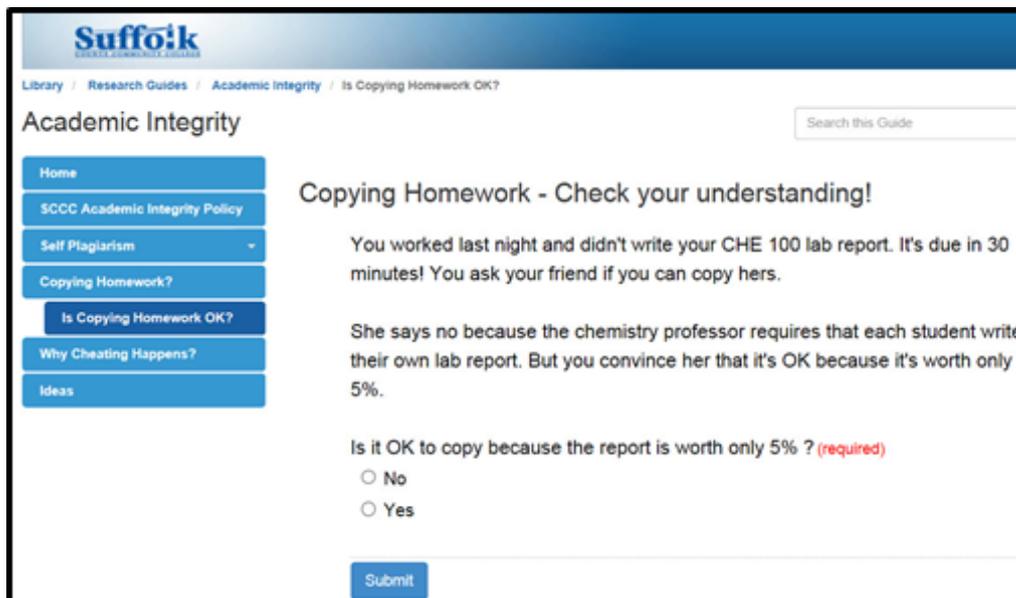


Figure 2. LibWizard question

While exploring sample lessons, workshop activities will ask participants to converse and reflect as they consider:

- How could this educational approach apply (or not) to your institution?
- What are the benefits of class-based lessons, rather than asking students to master academic integrity practices and concepts outside of class time?
- Which of the specific lessons would be relevant to your student body, or your discipline?
- What are specific academic integrity questions that would be relevant to your discipline?
- Workshop participants will gain insights regarding the lessons and these questions. They will consider how these lessons and questions could apply at their home institutions.

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