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Academic Integrity Institutionalization in an Online RN-BSN Program

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Academic Integrity Institutionalization in an Online RN-BSN Program

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Background

The number of universities and colleges offering online programs continue to expand. Online education is still a relatively new method of instruction that warrants extensive classroom research and evaluation. Previous research on academic integrity reported higher levels of cheating among students that are male, single, and with lower GPA. (Rakovski & Levy, 2007; Finn & Frone, 2004; Hughes & McCabe, 2006; Lanier, 2006; McCabe & Revino, 1997). Current research also indicates there may be more cheating in online classrooms (Lanier, 2006).

Results- Stage 2- Response Generation

The traditional classroom cohort reported higher levels of cheating compared to the online cohort. The traditional classroom students aged 40 and younger reported more instances of cheating than the 41 and over age group. The majority of the cheating that occurred involved student collaboration.

Stage 3- Response Implementation

As online nursing programs continue to proliferate, academic nurse educators must thoroughly evaluate academic integrity and outcomes of online nursing programs. Measures to increase the awareness of academic integrity policies and to clearly delineate academic integrity expectations should be included in all nursing programs. An academic integrity intervention study is in progress in the online cohort. For the intervention study students are randomized into a class as usual or a class with a message board discussion about faculty expectations for academic integrity and a testing policy pop up before each exam.

Stage 4-Future Research

Although the McCabe survey of academic integrity has been used extensively for over a decade, the survey is not tailored to assess online programs. An academic integrity tool designed to specifically assess online programs is in development. This study will be replicated with a larger population from different universities.

Table 1: Academic Integrity Behavioral Expectations by Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Behavior</th>
<th>Traditional Class RN</th>
<th>Online RN</th>
<th>BSN</th>
<th>P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copying from another student's paper</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using electronic crib notes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a false or forged excuse to obtain an extension on a due date</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test/Policy

Testing is an essential mechanism faculty use to evaluate student learning. Since examinations are completed online, it is important to maintain an environment of academic honesty.

Tests are considered closed book tests, using any written or electronic material to answer questions is prohibited. The student was not and the test was not accessible during the exam.

The test/quiz is designed by the student without the assistance of others, the questions cannot be copied or reproduced. Test questions are not to be discussed with anyone except the course faculty.

Students who fail the test/quiz will fail the course. Violations will be reported to the Director of the Online program, Dean of the School of Nursing, and the Dean (or President for Academic Affairs).

By checking this box and entering the test site, I am verifying that I have read and understand the above testing policy for the BSN/Bachelors program.