Distance Education IS Different

Issues with Academic Integrity in DE Modalities

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Distance Education Growth

- In 2005-6, distance education enrollment in the CCCs was 328,372 students (unduplicated), or 12.48% of total enrollment.
- In 2011-12, distance education enrollment in the CCCs was 643,255 (unduplicated), or 26.93% of total enrollment.
- Source: The CCCCO's Report on Distance Education, 2013

(http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/reportsTB/
REPORT_DistanceEducation2013_090313.pdf)
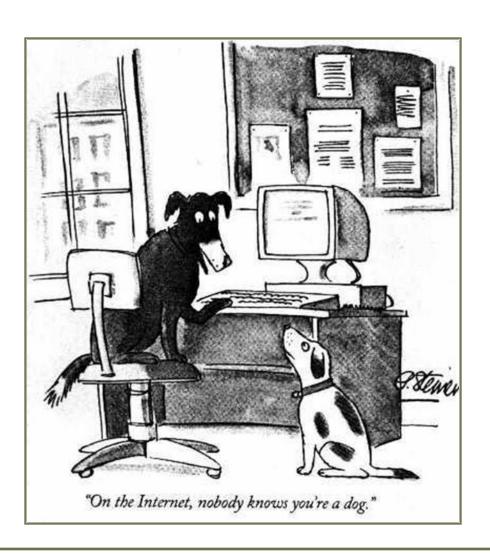
This Isn't Just Us

- In 2012, more than 6 million students in the US took a distance education course (excluding MOOCs)

- Institutions indicated ''Online education is critical to the long-term strategy of my institution'' at a rate of 65.5% in 2011.

- The recent initiatives by the CSU and UC systems make it clear that DE is expanding.

Concerns about Distance Education

- Federal and National Concerns

  - A few cases of significant institutional growth and transformation triggered Congressional concerns with exploitation of institutions, students

  - Growing amount of federal student aid funds, proportion going to private institutions and for profit institutions offering DE

  - Financial aid fraud for which Distance Education may be particularly suited

  - Growing number of degree mills that operate as "distance only" institutions leading to problems for transfer institutions, employers

    ACCJC Web Seminar Spring 2012

Student Authentication

"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

Academic Integrity and Authentication

HEOA (Higher Education Opportunity Act) requires accreditors to require institutions "to have processes through which the *institution* establishes that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit."

(emphasis added)

Why Is This Important To Us?

- Accreditation

- Financial Aid

- Department of Education

- Integrity of our Programs

- Expansion of Online Degrees

Examples of Processes and Practices of Authentication

1) College CMS

2) Proctored assessment

3) CMS log-in statement (*Sample*)

"Through the entry of my username and password I affirm that I am the student who enrolled in this course. Furthermore, I affirm that I understand and agree to follow the regulations regarding academic integrity and the use of student data as described in the Student Conduct Code that governs student rights and responsibilities. Failure to abide by the regulations may result in disciplinary action up to expulsion from the college."

4) Academic integrity in DE training

5) Plagiarism detection software

Student Authentication

Institutions must use:

a) secure log-in and password, OR proctored examinations, OR

b) and/or new or other technologies

c) and/or practices that are developed and effective in verifying each student's identification.

Financial Aid Fraud Issues

- Last Date of Attendance is NOT determined by log in information;
- Online courses must have regular and effective contact that is **academically** relevant, is defined, and is enforced;
- Instructors should save the work of the student dropped and document when the activity stopped;
- Institutional definition of Excessive Absences should be clear;
- For all of this, integrity in a distance education setting is clearly different from integrity in an in person face to face class.

And then…there's cheating.

Is cheating in an online class more widespread

than

cheating in a traditional class?

Myth or Reality?

Literature shows that though the expectation that online cheating is greater, the **incidence** of cheating is not.

Why?

- Studies show two areas of difference when comparing online classes to F2F classes:

- Assessment;
- Students' definition of cheating.

Also, students have a better idea of what to expect in an online class.

Assessment

- While the studies show no significant different between cheating in an online classroom and in a traditional classroom, one finding was important for discussion:

  The data showed that students were significantly more likely to obtain answers from others during an on-line test or quiz.

  http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring131/watson131.html

Combating the "assessment problem"

- *changing tests;*
- *using subjective exams rather than exam questions that can easily be looked up;*
- *changing objective questions so that they are specific to reading and activities in class thereby necessitating involvement, understanding, or at least more work trying to find the answers;*
- *devalue the percentage of the quiz if using an objective exam so that it has less bearing on overall grade;*
- *assign more group projects, rather than exams;*
- *use turnitin.com.*

Definition of cheating

- Students **understanding** of the definition of cheating in an online course is different from a face-to-face class.

- Study showed clear differences between expectations in an online mode of delivery vs. traditional;

- Students noted they are influenced by the boundaries of the learning behaviors established by the faculty;

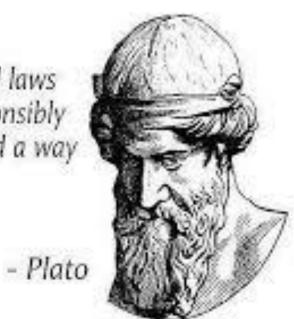- Students look to faculty to set boundaries of acceptable behaviors.

Ways to implement clearer understanding of cheating in an online course

a) Begin the semester with a module on Academic integrity – set expectations early.

b) Have students post a discussion comment on Academic integrity, having other students respond so that the conversation becomes clear, robust, and sets a standard for class.

c) The assignment also becomes a way to compare students writing at the beginning with forthcoming papers that are submitted by them (to ensure that the writing is the same).

Strategies for minimizing cheating in an online course

1) *Not sure who is actually taking your course?*
   a) log in;
   b) utilize several short assessments throughout the semester;
   c) include assessments that require *some degree of cooperation and coordination among students;*
   d) build a course with high level of student/faculty interaction.

2) *I can't control student's unauthorized use of resources in completing an assessment!*
   a) make all assessments open book;
   b) create questions that require students to relate subject matter to personal life or experience;
   c) focus on process as much as the final product.

Good people don't need laws
to tell them to act responsibly
and bad people will find a way
around the laws.

- Plato

Discussion / Questions?