Plagiarism: A Canadian Higher Education Case Study of Policy and Practice Gaps

Sarah Elaine Eaton, Cristina Fernández Conde, Stefan Rothschuh, Melanie Guglielmin, Benedict Kojo Otoo

University of Calgary

This mixed methods case study investigated faculty perspectives and practice around plagiarism in a Western Canadian faculty of education. Data sources included interviews, focus groups, and a survey. Findings showed that participants (N = 36) were disinclined to follow established procedures. Instead, they tended to deal with plagiarism in informal ways without reporting cases to administration, which resulted in a disconnect between policy and practice. The emotional impact of reporting plagiarism included frustration with the time required to document a case, and fear that reporting could have a negative effect on one's employment. Recommendations include approaches that bridge the gap between policy and practice.

Cette étude de cas à méthodes mixtes s'est penchée sur les perspectives et les pratiques du corps professoral relatives au plagiat dans une faculté d'éducation dans l'ouest du Canada. Les sources de données ont inclus les entrevues, les groupes de discussion et un sondage. Les résultats indiquent que les participants (N=36) étaient peu portés à suivre les procédures établies. Ils avaient plutôt tendance à employer des moyens informels pour traiter le plagiat, sans signaler les cas à l'administration, ce qui entrainait un écart entre la politique et la pratique. L'impact émotionnel découlant du signalement du plagiat comprenait le temps nécessaire à documenter un cas et la peur que le signalement puisse avoir une incidence négative sur son emploi. Les recommandations proposées incluent des approches visant à combler l'écart entre la politique et la pratique.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the gap between institutional policy and educator practice around plagiarism in a Canadian faculty of education. Academic integrity breaches in general, and plagiarism in particular, remain a concern in higher education despite years of research, policy, and advocacy work (Bretag & Mahmud, 2016; Colella-Sandercock & Alahmadi, 2015; Jendrek, 1989; Leonard, Schwieder, Buhler, Beaubien Bennett, & Royster, 2015). There is an overrepresentation of student perspectives and self-reported data in the research literature, but less understanding about how faculty perceive and act on suspected or actual cases of plagiarism (Eaton & Edino, 2018; Jendrek, 1989). In our study, we endeavoured to give voice to faculty members to better understand their views and actions related to student plagiarism in higher education. This is particularly relevant in the discipline of education, given that pre-service teachers have typically received little direct instruction on how to prevent academic misconduct (Bens, 2010; Mammen & Meyiwa, 2013; Maxwell, 2017).

Literature Review

Our review of the literature focuses on three major themes related to our project. First, we explore the development of academic integrity as a field of scholarly inquiry. Second, we focus on faculty perspectives and experiences related to academic integrity. Finally, we situate our study within the existing body of research relating to academic integrity in Canada.

Foundations of Academic Integrity Research

Research on academic misconduct began to emerge in the early part of the 20th century; it centred mainly around cheating, and specifically cheating on tests and examinations (Bird, 1929; Coiner, 1932). In the mid-20th century, more research around plagiarism began to emerge from the field of education (Anderson, 1957; Hetherington & Feldman, 1964). In the 1990s, a major shift in the field became evident with the work of McCabe, whose early scholarship also focused on cheating (e.g., McCabe, 1992), but later expanded to institutional, national, and international survey research; this positioned him as arguably the first researcher to undertake large-scale research on the topic of academic misconduct broadly (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, 2006b; McCabe, 2003, 2009, 2016; McCabe & Treviño, 1993, 1995; 1996). In turn, this led to a focus on academic integrity, as opposed to academic misconduct, with the former being rooted in moral values that guide behaviour (Christensen Hughes, 2017; International Center for Academic Integrity, 2014). The term *academic misconduct* remains in use (MacLeod, 2014) and is sometimes used interchangeably with "academic integrity," though using the terms synonymously is inaccurate. It is more precise to speak instead about "breaches" or "violations of academic integrity" (Marsden, 2016).

Defining Plagiarism

Institutional policy and procedure documents often outline a suite of behaviours or actions that fall under the category of academic misconduct (Eaton, 2017; Stoesz, Eaton, Miron, & Thacker, 2019). There are no universally accepted definitions, even in Canada, though academic misconduct often includes, but is not limited to, cheating and plagiarism (Eaton, 2017; Stoesz et al., 2019). Plagiarism and cheating are often named as different behaviours in policy documents, precisely because there can be differences between them (Curtis & Vardenega, 2016). Howard (2000) declared that it is impossible to define plagiarism in absolute terms. Contemporary Canadian institutional definitions of plagiarism include using written materials, ideas, designs, data, computer code, and creative works such as musical compositions without acknowledging the creator of the original work (Eaton, 2017). Canadian institutional policy documents are often purposefully vague about definitions in order to allow educators and administrators some latitude in determining how to address an alleged case of plagiarism (Eaton, 2017).

Academic Integrity and Faculty Perspectives

Much of the research that has been conducted on academic integrity has focused on students (Eaton & Edino, 2018). Key studies that have examined the experience and attitudes of faculty members include Jendrek's (1989) oft-cited study, in which survey results from 337 faculty members at one university revealed that approximately 60% of respondents had witnessed some

form of cheating among their students, but fewer than 20% actually complied with the university policy of meeting with the student and the department chair. Later studies corroborated Jendrek's earlier findings, noting that faculty members tend to bypass formal policies and guidelines in favour of dealing with plagiarism directly with the student (Flint, Clegg, & Macdonald, 2006; Hamilton & Wolsky, 2019; McCabe, 1993).

A survey of over 850 faculty members from Canada and the United States revealed that over 40% of faculty members admitted to ignoring student academic misconduct entirely on one or more occasions (Coren, 2011). A number of factors result in faculty members' failure to report cases of academic misconduct. A key deterrent to reporting cases of academic misconduct, and plagiarism in particular, is the amount of time and effort required to compile sufficient evidence to present an irrefutable case to a department chair or administrator (Coalter et al., 2008; Hamilton & Wolsky, 2019; McCabe, 1993; Taylor et al.,2004). A second disincentive to faculty reporting academic misconduct is institutional policy definitions that are unclear (Flint et al., 2006; Paterson et al., 2003). When faculty members are uncertain if what they suspect to be a case of academic misconduct actually is a violation of institutional policy, they may be less likely to report it. A third aspect influencing a faculty members' decision to report breaches of academic integrity is a lack of confidence with university policy being applied consistently and fairly (Flint et al., 2006; McCabe, 1993; Paterson, et al., 2003; Taylor, et al., 2004). If faculty members observe that some students receive harsh sanctions while others are given only a warning, they may view this as inconsistent policy application, leading to diminished confidence in how policies are applied. Related to this is a fourth factor, which has to do with a mismatch between a faculty members' personal views of how academic misconduct should be handled and institutional responses that individual faculty members view as either being too lenient (Flint et al., 2006; MacLeod, 2014; McCabe, 1993) or too harsh (Taylor, et al., 2004). This mismatch between individual and institutional views can also lead to diminished confidence that a case of academic misconduct will be handled by the administration in a way that the individual faculty member feels is appropriate. In turn, this leads to diminished cases of reporting.

Two final considerations merit mention as well. Faculty members experience an emotional or psychological drain, the prospect of which can deter them from reporting (Coren, 2011; Crossman, 2019). Finally, faculty members are less likely to report breaches of integrity if they fear repercussions or confrontations with administrators as a result of doing so (Crossman, 2019; Flint et al., 2006; Paterson, et al., 2003).

Academic Integrity in Canadian Higher Education

Several Canadian studies have examined faculty roles within larger institutional and policy contexts (Austin, Simpson, & Reynen, 2005; Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a, 2006b; Hamilton & Wolsky, 2019; MacLeod, 2014; McNeill, 2019; Stoesz et al., 2019; Thyret-Kidd, 2012). Canadian researchers have also examined student and faculty perceptions together (Evans-Tokaryk, 2014; Paterson et al., 2003; Taylor, 2004; Usick, 2005; Zivcakova, Wood, Baetz, & De Pasquale, 2012). However, when it comes to academic integrity, Canada lags behind other nations such as Australia, the UK, and the US in terms of policy and research (Eaton & Edino, 2018). There has been scant research in Canada about how faculty members experience and address the issue of academic integrity and none examining the issue through the particular lens of education faculty, whose work focuses on teacher education and educational research (Eaton & Edino,
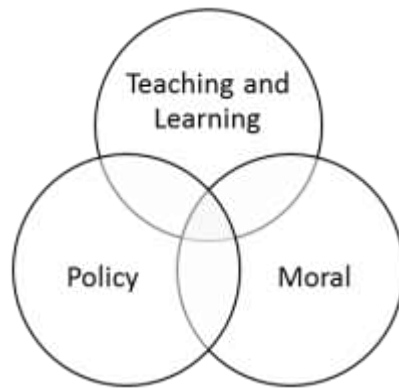
Figure 1. Conceptual lenses for academic integrity inquiry (adapted from Adam, 2016).

2018). This current study adds to the body of research about academic integrity in Canadian contexts and offers a unique perspective by examining the issue through the lens of education faculty.

Conceptual Framing

Conceptual and theoretical framing is an important aspect of mixed methods research (Turner, Cardinal, & Burton, 2015). Academic integrity is usually examined from one of three perspectives: as a moral issue, a policy issue, or a teaching and learning issue (Adam, 2016) (see Figure 1).

The teaching and learning, moral, and policy lenses through which academic integrity is studied overlap and intersect, but there are fundamental differences among them. Analysts of academic integrity policy have concerned themselves with how institutions develop, interpret, and apply policy (Bretag & Mahmud, 2016; Foltýnek & Glendinning, 2015; Grigg, 2010; Stoesz et al., 2019). Others cast a lens to administrative law and the principles of natural justice to inform their understanding of academic integrity policy (Kelleher, 2016; Strawczynski, 2004). Those concerned more with the moral development of the individual may draw from the work of Piaget (1932) or Kohlberg (1973, 1981) to study moral judgements of those who engage in academically dishonest behaviours. Then there are those who focus on academic integrity as a teaching and learning issue. Advocates of this approach promote moving away from punitive approaches to academic misconduct in favour of more supportive educational approaches that help students learn with integrity (Bertram Gallant, 2008; Christensen Hughes & Bertram Gallant, 2016; Howard, 2016; Price, 2002). Bertram Gallant (2008) has called academic integrity a "teaching and learning imperative" (p. xiii). There are tensions within and among the various conceptual frames through which academic integrity is studied. We situate our study in the "in between" space in which policy and teaching and learning practice overlap, in an attempt to uncover and disentangle some of the complexities and tensions between formal institutional policy and informal educator practice.

Research Design

The purpose of this mixed methods case study was to investigate how faculty in a Canadian faculty of education perceive and act upon cases of plagiarism in student work. This project was registered on the Open Science Framework (Eaton, 2019), where the data collection instruments

are publicly available for the reader to consult. The focus was on plagiarism as a particular type of breach of academic integrity precisely because there are minimal numbers of tests or examinations given in this program, so the emphasis on plagiarism reflected the teaching and learning context of the faculty under study. The central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Merriam 1998) we aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of was the perception and treatment of plagiarism by faculty members in a faculty of education. It was important for us not only to investigate how faculty members and administrators understood plagiarism, but how they acted upon it. As a result, two inter-related research questions guided this study: (a) How do faculty members perceive plagiarism? And (b) how do faculty members act upon suspected or actual plagiarism cases?

We used a mixed methods approach (Turner et al., 2015; Shorten & Smith 2017) with a sequential exploratory design (QUAL→QUAN) (Creswell, 2012; Shorten & Smith 2017). Qualitative data were gathered first through focus groups and semi-structured interviews (Fylan, 2005), while quantitative data were subsequently collected through the use of a previously published questionnaire, adapted for use with this particular research population. The case was primarily bounded organizationally, by virtue of it focusing on academic members of the faculty of education; secondarily, it was bounded temporally since data were collected during a 12-week semester (Elger, 2010). This study received institutional Research Ethics Board (REB) approval.

Institutional Context: Description of the Case

This study was conducted at a large urban university in Western Canada, with over 30,000 total students and more than 1,800 academic staff, including those both full-time and part-time. This study focused on the Faculty of Education, with over 1,900 full-time and part-time students in programs at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels (University of Calgary, 2017). The faculty of education is non-departmentalized, led by a dean supported by six associate deans, of whom three were associated with program areas. In turn, the associate deans of program were supported by academic coordinators and directors, who interacted directly with academic staff members on matters regarding day-to-day operations relating to academic programming.

We mention the governance structure of the faculty because of its relevance to the case. The procedures and guidelines for reporting plagiarism within the Faculty of Education required the individual academic staff member to document the case first. Then, the academic staff member reported the case to the relevant administrator who worked with the faculty member to determine if plagiarism occurred. Documenting the case involved the academic staff member finding the original source material that was plagiarized, and then highlighting the copied passages in the student's work. If the academic staff member was able to provide sufficient documentation to demonstrate a clear case of plagiarism, as agreed upon by the academic staff member and the administrator, then the matter was referred to the relevant associate dean for case management. From there the associate dean proceeded to inform the student in writing of academic misconduct due to plagiarism, and imposed a sanction on them, ranging from failing the assignment to failing the course for a first offence. A key element of this procedure is that it was the academic staff member's responsibility to identify, document, and prove a case of plagiarism prior to reporting it to an administrator. Academic staff members were not permitted to confront students directly, but instead, once all the evidence has been assessed, it was the administrator, not the individual academic staff member, who communicated with the student. All communication was conducted in writing as part of the procedural management of the case.

Participants

We used a purposive sampling method for recruitment (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 1998), inviting academic staff and administrators by e-mail, using publicly accessible e-mail addresses available through the online institutional directory. In this study, we use the term "academic staff member," as synonymous with "faculty member" or "course instructor." We chose this language because it is the official designation used at the institution according to the collective agreement, with other terms being commonly understood, but not official. At times we used the term "faculty" when quoting the McCabe survey (2003), as this was the language that appeared in the original data collection instrument. We note that administrators are also academic staff members, but the ways in which their work intersects when there are breaches of integrity differ. For example, in the context under study, it was administrators who had the responsibility of managing cases of academic misconduct and determining what penalties, if any, would be applied. Thus, the responsibilities of administrators were different and so, they were treated as a separate group within the case. We extended an invitation to all full-time and part-time academic staff ($N = 132$), including both tenured and non-tenured positions. We included administrators in this number, as all those with such roles within the faculty also hold academic appointments. In addition, we invited graduate teaching assistants ($N = 16$) to participate. So, the total population from which participants were recruited was 148. Seventeen individuals took part in the qualitative phase of the study including academic staff ($n = 13$) and administrators ($n = 4$), representing 12.9% of the total population of faculty members included in the case. None of the teaching assistants took part in the qualitative phase of the study.

Participants either chose or were assigned a pseudonym for the purposes of anonymizing the results.

Data Sources

Data were collected in two phases, beginning with qualitative data. In the sections that follow, we explain how we collected data, providing a rationale for the selected methods.

Qualitative data: Interviews and focus groups. We used a semi-structured approach to develop our focus group and interview questions. This approach can be particularly effective when research participants have the characteristics of key informants, insofar as their role or responsibilities provide them with a deep understanding of the problem being explored and also have a major interest in the population affected by the problem (Laforest, 2009). It is noteworthy that in the original research design we planned for focus groups to be the primary method through which qualitative data were collected. We modified the research design to include individual interviews using the same semi-structured questions. The rationale for the modification (approved by the REB) was two-fold. Firstly, we wanted to accommodate administrators' busy schedules. Secondly, prospective participants indicated to the principal investigator that they were reluctant to discuss plagiarism in a group setting but would be willing to share their perspectives in a private individual interview. As a result, we sought and received approval from the REB to modify to accommodate individual interviews in addition to focus groups. A copy of our semi-structured interview questions is available on the Open Science Framework (Eaton, 2019).

Quantitative data: Survey. The McCabe survey (2003) has long been regarded as the

premier quantitative data collection instrument in the academic integrity field. To create his own surveys, McCabe drew from Bowers's seminal survey administered to 6,000 students across 99 US campuses in the 1960s (Bowers, 1966; McCabe, 2016). McCabe's surveys included versions for high school and college students, as well as faculty. McCabe (2016) administered his surveys from 2002 to 2013 at two- and four-year post-secondary institutions in the US and Canada, with a cumulative response from over 134,000 students (including missing data and "not relevant" responses). Scale reliability is reported on the survey in a variety of publications, each highlighting different applications of the survey, with the resulting Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.70 (McCabe & Treviño, 1995) to 0.824 (McCabe & Treviño, 1993).

The faculty version of McCabe's survey was administered in the US in the 1990s (McCabe, 1993). It was later administered across ten Canadian higher education institutions in the early-2000s with over 1,900 faculty members participating (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006a). Our process replicated this earlier administration of the same survey. A publicly available version of the electronic *Academic Integrity Faculty Survey* is housed on the Rutgers University website (McCabe, 2003). The survey asks participants to respond to three broad categories: (a) the academic environment in which the participants work, (b) participants' views on the severity of specific acts of academic misconduct, and (c) demographics. Casting an eye to the ethical use of data instrumentation, and given McCabe's passing in 2016, we obtained posthumous permission from Rutgers University to administer the survey. We replicated the survey questions into a localized version we could administer and analyze from our own institution (e.g. substituting "Rutgers University" on the original with the name of the institution where our study was conducted). We acknowledge that a limitation of the McCabe survey is that it is dated but given that no other similar instrument has been developed or administered since, we made the methodological decision to proceed with its use. More specifically, we believe our use of the metric is appropriate because in our explanatory sequential research design (Creswell, 2012), quantitative data played a supporting role to the qualitative data, the latter of which were more heavily weighted during our analysis.

Findings and Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data sets were analyzed separately, though combined they offer a more fulsome perspective. In this section we present the findings of the focus groups and interviews first, followed by the survey results.

Qualitative Findings

In total, data from 17 participating faculty members were collected using a qualitative process. Ten participants participated in focus groups. An additional seven individuals participated in individual interviews, of whom four were administrators and three were faculty members without administrative roles.

The focus groups and interviews resulted in 203 pages (51,940 words) of transcripts. Drawing from Saldaña's (2016) notion of coding as a heuristic, we initiated a rigorous process facilitated by the use of NVivo (Version 11.4.1). Two team members independently read and coded each transcript, resulting in an inter-rater reliability of coding (calculated using NVivo) of 98.73%, with a Cohen's Kappa = κ = 0.85. Once we had established coding reliability, we further undertook a collaborative interpretive analysis (Saldaña, 2016) to determine repeated themes emerging across

the focus groups and interviews, arriving at three key themes from the qualitative data, on which we elaborate further in the following sub-sections.

Finding #1—Participants' understanding of plagiarism. Participants understood and defined plagiarism from ethical and procedural perspectives. The word cloud below is a visual representation of word frequency among participants' responses to how they defined plagiarism. The notion of taking ideas or work from somebody else emerged as a consistent result. Less frequent, though still relevant, are participants understood "words," "ideas," "thinking," and "property" are important notions to consider when defining plagiarism (see Figure 2).

One example is from Rosa, who offered that students needed to understand it was important "to honour somebody else's intellectual property by not stealing it," highlighting the notion of stealing and intellectual property as important aspects of plagiarism. Cyril had a similar understanding, explaining that for him, plagiarism is about "using work which is not your own, and not attributing it correctly." The notion of attribution was frequent in participants' responses. The word cloud shows that "acknowledge," "acknowledging," and "acknowledged" emerged with some frequency among participants, as did "credit" and "reference."

Although definitions of plagiarism are contested and there are differences among institutions about how plagiarism is defined (Eaton, 2017), we noted that participants defined plagiarism in ways that related mostly to text or ideas, although the words "art" and "artwork" appeared with some frequency. Rosa further noted the complexities of teaching students to cite digital work, including multimedia sources, concluding that "it's super complicated."

Finding #2—Tensions between official and informal responses. A repeated finding across the data was the tension and gap between institutional policy and instructional practice. Faculty guidelines require instructors to document a suspected case of plagiarism and then bring the matter to a director or academic coordinator for further discussion. In our study, we found that instructors tended to circumvent this procedure, instead approaching students directly and then making a decision about whether or not to report it to an administrator.

Figure 2. Visual representation of word frequency among participants when defining plagiarism (Word cloud generated by NVivo).

Emily noted:

My first suspicion is not that it's deliberate, I think. My first suspicion: Are you aware of what you've done? And then kind of approaching it in a gentle way like that and then finding out what the reasoning was behind it. And then I make a determination.

In this instance, Emily's pre-disposition to believe that students did not plagiarize deliberately led her to want to investigate further before deciding whether or not to report it, indicating she felt a desire to exercise her own agency determining whether to report it.

Similarly, Bob and Laura also shared that they often dealt with plagiarism directly with the student, rather than reporting it. Bob recalled a case saying, "I decided that I can't accept this assignment. I gave them a remedial assignment." Laura reported a similar approach, saying, "And there have been times that I didn't report them, but I worked with [the student] and allowed them to redo the work." These examples show faculty members' practice of addressing suspected or actual cases of plagiarism with the student without reporting it to an administrator. These findings are consistent with previous research that shows that faculty members may be reluctant to report plagiarism and there is often a disconnect between what individual instructors do and what institutional policy requires (MacLeod, 2014; Taylor et al., 2004; Wideman, 2008).

Finding #3—Emotional impact of plagiarism on academic staff. The emotional impact of student plagiarism on faculty emerged in three ways: (a) frustration caused by the process of documenting a case, (b) feelings of disenfranchisement, and (c) fear. We elaborate on each sub-theme individually.

Frustration caused by the reporting process. Participants commented that the amount of time required to document a case before presenting it to an administrator caused frustration. Nicole explained that "You have to go through kind of line by line the whole paper … and it can really be quite time consuming." Similarly, Laura commented on the amount of work for the instructor, noting that the burden of responsibility for establishing a case rested mainly with the individual instructor, stating, "It's definitely a lot of work when you make the decision to alert the department to it." Related to the amount of time, Clive noted that the burden of responsibility was on him to present an air-tight case, saying "I had to provide all the evidence." Nicole offered similar comments, remarking that she would like to have more support in documenting a case before taking it forward to an administrator. These findings corroborate earlier research that found that the amount of time required to document and report a case of plagiarism can be a barrier for individual instructors (Coalter, et al., 2008; Coren 2006, 2011; McCabe, 1993; Taylor, et al., 2004).

Feelings of disenfranchisement. Participants reported feelings of disenfranchisement, lack of agency and lack of authority in terms of their official role in terms of dealing with breaches of academic integrity. Mark was particularly emphatic on this point, stating, "I honestly feel like we don't have any authority, and we're not to be involved …. I certainly felt disempowered." Other participants reported similar feelings, with one noting that once a case is reported to an administrator, instructors are not informed about what happened with the student. One participant reported that they were told that because of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*, the administrator who handled the case was not at liberty to disclose the outcome of the case to the instructor, resulting in frustration for the instructor.

Feelings of fear. In addition to feelings of disenfranchisement, participants recounted being fearful of student reactions, and also being afraid of a negative impact on their career if they

reported a case of plagiarism. Halifaxiumus reported that she felt "terrified to meet the student because I didn't know... what to expect of the student. Whether I'd get yelled at or whatever." Bob had a similar experience, sharing that "I had a student who I was .... [pauses] .... Literally, there was fear that he was going to go postal."

Further complicating the matter, participants feared that reporting a case of plagiarism could have a negative impact on their employment both in terms of poor course evaluations or the potential for their employment to end. Laura commented, "You can tick your students off .... And you pay for it ... in your evaluations." She continued, noting that poor evaluation comments can become public artefacts saying, "[students] write about you on, on, what do you call it? Rate your Professor. Yeah. You know, it comes back. [Reporting plagiarism is] a dangerous thing to do in some cases." Other participants described similar situations, where one consequence to reporting plagiarism could be negative comments on course evaluations and how poor course evaluations, in turn, could have an impact on employment.

These findings corroborate earlier research indicating that when faculty members fear repercussions if they report breaches of academic integrity, they are much less likely to report it (Crossman, 2019; Flint et al., 2006; Paterson, et al., 2003). Rosa lamented that part-time contingent academic staff (e.g., sessionals) face a particular vulnerability, saying "If you're a sessional instructor, and you make a big wave, suddenly nobody offers you a course anymore, right?" This remark aligned with previous research that found that part-time academic staff may be at a particular disadvantage in terms of reporting breaches of academic integrity (Bertram Gallant, 2018; Crossman, 2019).

Quantitative Findings

Nineteen individuals took part in the survey, representing 14.3% of the total academic staff population ($N = 132$) included in the study. Given these results, we do not claim that the survey results in our case study are statistically significant. We present these results to further elaborate on the focus group and interview findings, noting connections to the qualitative data and research literature when relevant. Table 1 shows the academic rank of the survey respondents. Table 1 shows a diverse distribution of faculty rank among survey respondents. The survey responses did not differentiate between those who held administrative roles and those who did not.

Almost half of respondents (47.4%) agreed that cheating was a serious problem at the university, while 31.6% were unsure, and 21.1% disagreed (Table 2). Despite over half of respondents being unsure or disagreeing with the statement that cheating was a serious problem

Table 1

Academic rank of faculty survey respondents (n=19)

Academic Rank	% of Respondents
Sessional Instructor	21.1%
Instructor	15.8%
Assistant Professor	26.3%
Senior Instructor	10.5%
Associate Professor	10.5%
Professor	15.8%
Total	100.0%

at the university, when respondents were asked how they would rate the average student's understanding of university policies concerning cheating (including plagiarism), only 5.3% answered "high," while 89.5% considered students' understanding to be low to medium (Table 3).

These survey results may reflect academic staff members' perception of how well students understand institutional policies regarding cheating, but they do not communicate the intensity of participants' opinions on the matter. This was better captured in the qualitative data. For example, Rosa noted, "I think that there is an evil or laziness component to plagiarism. There are people who quite deliberately plagiarize without any qualms. They're just trying to cut corners."

Conversely, respondents indicated that overall, academic staff had a much better understanding of institutional policies, with 42.1% rating their understanding as high to very high, while only 10.5% were rated as having a low understanding and none ranked as having very low understanding. During one of the interviews, Cyril (administrator) commented, "I think I understand the rules … As long as I don't get a test on them."

Comparative survey analysis. Because we opted to use a previously published instrument, we have also compared our results to existing findings, exploring the implications for this particular case and beyond. We note that this comparison is based on published results (McCabe, 2009), rather than on the comparison of raw data. We further recognize that since the response rate of our survey was low, we offer this comparison as a starting point for deeper dialogue about how academic integrity is treated in professional schools generally and the field of education specifically.

McCabe (2009) found that in professional schools, faculty may be less likely to ignore

Table 2

Faculty members' agreement with the statement: "Cheating is a serious problem at the University"

Agreement level	% of Respondents
Disagree	21.0%
Unsure	31.6%
Agree	47.4%
Total	100.0%

Table 3

Faculty ratings of the average student's understanding of institutional policies on academic integrity

Rating	% of Respondents
Very Low	5.30%
Low	31.60%
Medium	57.80%
High	0.00%
Very High	5.30%
Total	100.00%

suspected cases of academic misconduct, finding that only 25% of nursing faculty admitted to ignoring such instances, compared with 38% of non-nursing faculty. A noteworthy result of our survey was that only 10.5% of education faculty respondents reported ever having ignored a suspected incidence of cheating in one of their courses for any reason. Taking into consideration the qualitative results of this study, we could infer that although the survey results may indicate that education faculty may be more likely to follow-up on suspected cases of misconduct, this does not necessarily mean they would follow institutional protocol when doing so.

It is also not known if some faculty members participated in both qualitative and quantitative data collection.

Discussion

Circling back to the two questions that guided our study, we wanted to know how academic staff perceived and acted upon cases of plagiarism. In this study, the process for addressing a case of plagiarism was found to be problematic. The faculty guidelines require individual academic staff members to document an alleged case of plagiarism and present it to an administrator without speaking to the student about the allegations. If the administrator, in consultation with the academic staff member, found that there was a substantive case to be made, the matter was then taken to the associate dean who undertook case management. There are several gaps in this process that proved problematic. Firstly, the academic staff member was not permitted to speak with the student about the allegation, but instead was required to document and report it. This resulted in the student being informed of the allegation by an associate dean in writing, meaning that the first communication the student received about the allegation would be from a senior administrator whom they had potentially never met. This procedure did not sit well with some of the study participants, who felt those who instruct the student should be the first one to address an alleged case of plagiarism directly with the individual(s) involved.

Second, a case of suspected or confirmed plagiarism was only moved forward if sufficient evidence to pursue it was presented, requiring a significant investment of time on the part of the individual faculty member, who was responsible for presenting an air-tight case in order for it to be accelerated. Participants found that the burden of responsibility to collect and present substantive evidence, along with the amount of time required to document the case, proved to be emotionally draining for faculty members. One participant remarked that she would have liked to have support with that process, but no mechanisms were in place to provide faculty members with such support.

Finally, case management is handled by an associate dean. The rationale for this is that individuals in such roles can apply sanctions in an impartial and consistent manner. Furthermore, associate deans are in a position to track any alleged or actual previous cases of misconduct whereas an individual instructor would not have access to such details. However, this approach is at odds with previous research, which found that 96% of faculty felt they should be involved in the responses to cases of academic misconduct (McCabe, 1993).

Significance

This study serves to highlight the gap between policy and practice with regards to academic integrity in a particular case in Canadian higher education. The research around plagiarism in Canada is limited and the results of this study further our understanding of the current situation

in our country, providing a basis for further discussion, as well as opportunities to further advance the research in this area, and to develop more effective policies and practices at the local level.

Since undertaking this study, there have been positive changes at the institutional and unit (e.g., departmental) levels on how to address academic integrity breaches in a more consistent and pro-active manner. These changes include revisions to policy, procedures, and processes for individual educators, teaching assistants, and administrators. The institution has invested significant resources in ensuring that academic integrity us upheld and enacted in ways that support student learning and when breaches occur, that they are managed in ways that are equitable and consistent across departments and faculties.

Limitations

This study was limited to one faculty of education at a single university. The findings may not be generalizable to the entire institution; nor might they be representative of all faculties of education. A further limitation to this study is that even though teaching assistants were invited to take part in the study, none participated. As a result, the perspectives of teaching assistants were not included. More research is needed to understand how teaching assistants understand and act upon alleged cases of plagiarism.

The context of this case focused on a faculty of education, and we acknowledge there are connections between academic integrity and ethical professional practice, particularly in the field of education (Bens, 2010; Maxwell, 2017). However, expanding on such linkages was beyond the scope of the current study, and as such, we recommend more substantive study to investigate the links between academic integrity in higher education and professional classroom practice for pre-service and even in-service teachers.

Recommendations

Academic staff members can develop capacity and competence with regards to upholding the principles of academic integrity in a productive way (Colella-Sandercock & Alahmadi, 2015; Griffith, 2013; Hamilton & Wolsky, 2019). The disconnect between institutional policy and procedures and individual practices around academic integrity have been documented in the literature (Coren, 2006, 2011; Flint, et al., 2006; McCabe, 1993, 2009). It is unlikely that there is a single solution to ensure that individuals follow formal policies, but including academic staff members in the response to alleged cases of plagiarism could be one way to increase the likelihood that instructors will report such cases in the first place. Establishing procedures that alleviate academic staff members' distress as well as the drain on their time can be key considerations when departments or institutions undertake revisions to procedures for reporting violations of integrity (Hamilton & Wolsky, 2019). Finally, educational administrators (particularly those responsible for hiring, promotion, and tenure) need to be sensitive to the possible real or perceived negative consequences to faculty members who report breaches of academic integrity. It is up to those in institutional positions of leadership to ensure faculty members feel safe enough to bring forward a possible breach of academic integrity.

Conclusion

Although plagiarism and other breaches of academic integrity continue to pose a problem in

higher education, opening up the conversation about what is occurring on Canadian campuses may be a first step to taking a more pro-active approach. Research can inform policy and this study may help provide the basis for more evidence-informed decisions about how to support faculty members in reporting alleged cases of plagiarism, as well as developing more effective practices around case management. Campuses need "academic integrity champions" (Bretag & Mahmud, 2016, p. 464) not only to uphold institutional policies, but ultimately, to support students' learning. We argue that individual instructors, as well as faculty administrators can be those champions, providing they have the support from institutional administration and the motivation to do so.

Acknowledgements

References

Adam, L. (2016). Student perspectives on plagiarism. In T. Bretag (Ed.), *Handbook of academic integrity* (pp. 519–535). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

Anderson, W. F. (1957). Attitudes of university students toward cheating. *Journal of Educational Research, 50*(8), 581–588. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27529969

Austin, Z., Simpson, S., & Reynen, E. (2005). 'The fault lies not in our students, but in ourselves': Academic honesty and moral development in health professions education—Results of a pilot study in Canadian pharmacy. *Teaching in Higher Education, 10*(2), 143–156. https://doi.org/10.1080/1356251042000337918

Bens, S. L. (2010). *Senior education students' understandings of academic honesty and dishonesty* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10388/etd-09192010-154127

Bertram Gallant, T. (2008). *Academic integrity in the twenty-first century: A teaching and learning imperative*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Bertram Gallant, T. (2018). Part-time integrity? Contingent faculty and academic integrity. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 183*, 45–54. https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20316

Bird, C. (1929). An improved method of detecting cheating in objective examinations. *Journal of Educational Research, 19*(5), 341–348. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27523857

Bowers, W. J. (1966). *Student dishonesty and its control in college* (Doctoral dissertation). Columbia University, New York, NY.

Bretag, T., & Mahmud, S. (2016). A conceptual framework for implementing exemplary academic integrity policy in Australian higher education. In T. Bretag (Ed.), *Handbook of academic integrity* (pp. 463–480). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

Christensen Hughes, J. (2017). *Understanding academic misconduct: Creating robust cultures of integrity*. Paper presented at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/1880/110083

Christensen Hughes, J., & Bertram Gallant, T. (2016). Infusing ethics and ethical decision making into the curriculum. In T. Bretag (Ed.), *Handbook of Academic Integrity* (pp. 1055–1073). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

Christensen Hughes, J. M., & McCabe, D. L. (2006a). Academic misconduct within higher education in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 36*(2), 1–21. Retrieved from www.ingentaconnect.com/content/csshe/cjhe

Christensen Hughes, J. M., & McCabe, D. L. (2006b). Understanding academic misconduct. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 36*(1), 49–63. Retrieved from http://journals.sfu.ca/cjhe/index.php/cjhe/article/view/183537/183482

Coalter, T., Lim, C. L., & Wanorie, T. (2008). Factors that influence faculty actions: A study on faculty responses to academic dishonesty. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 1*(1). https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2007.010112

Coiner, G. E. (1932). *An experimental study of the personality of the college cribber* (Master's thesis). University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA.

Colella-Sandercock, J. A., & Alahmadi, H. W. (2015). Plagiarism education: Strategies for instructors. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 13*(1), 76–84. Retrieved from http://ijlter.org/index.php/ijlter/article/view/395/190

Coren, A. (2006). *Faculty responses to academic integrity violations* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE.

Coren, A. (2011). Turning a blind eye: Faculty who ignore student cheating. *Journal of Academic Ethics, 9*(4), 291–305. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-011-9147-y

Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Crossman, K. (2019). Is this in my contract?: How part-time contract faculty face barriers to reporting academic integrity breaches. *Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity, 2*(1), 32–39. https://doi.org/10.11575/cpai.v2i1.68934

Curtis, G., & Vardanega, L. (2016). Is plagiarism changing over time? A 10-year time-lag study with three points of measurement. *Higher Education Research and Development, 35*(6), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1161602

Eaton, S. E. (2017). Comparative analysis of institutional policy definitions of plagiarism: A pan-Canadian university study. *Interchange: A Quarterly Review of Education, 48*(3), 271–281. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-017-9300-7

Eaton, S. E. (2019). *Plagiarism: A case study in a faculty of education*. Retrieved from https://osf.io/95q6r/

Eaton, S. E., & Edino, R. I. (2018). Strengthening the research agenda of educational integrity in Canada: A review of the research literature and call to action. *International Journal of Educational Integrity, 14*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-018-0028-7

Elger, T. (2010). Bounding the case. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n24

Evans-Tokaryk, T. (2014). Academic integrity, remix culture, globalization: A Canadian case study of student and faculty perceptions of plagiarism. *Across the Disciplines, 11*(2), 1–40. Retrieved from https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/atd/articles/evans-tokaryk2014.pdf

Flint, A., Clegg, S., & Macdonald, R. (2006). Exploring staff perceptions of student plagiarism. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 30*(2), 145–156. https://doi.org/10.1080/03098770600617562

Foltýnek, T., & Glendinning, I. (2015). Impact of policies for plagiarism in higher education across Europe: Results of the project. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis, 63*(1), 207–216. https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun201563010207

Fylan, F. (2005). Semi-structured interviewing. In J. Miles & P. Gilbert (Eds.), *A handbook of research methods for clinical and health psychology* (pp. 65–77). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Griffith, J. (2013). Pedagogical over punitive: The academic integrity websites of Ontario universities. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 43*(1), 1–22. Retrieved from https://journals.sfu.ca/cjhe/index.php/cjhe/article/view/2216/183994

Grigg, G. A. (2010). *Plagiarism in higher education: Confronting the policy dilemma* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia.

Hamilton, M. J., & Wolsky, K. L. (2019, April 18). *Looking the other way: Why faculty in post-secondary education chose not to report academic dishonesty*. Paper presented at the Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity (CSAI), Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Hetherington, E. M., & Feldman, S. E. (1964). College cheating as a function of subject and situational variables. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 55*(4), 212–218. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0045337

International Center for Academic Integrity. (2014). *The fundamental values of academic integrity* (2nd ed.). Clemson University: Clemson, SC. Retrieved from https://academicintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Fundamental-Values-2014.pdf

Howard, R. M. (2000). Sexuality, textuality: The cultural work of plagiarism. *College English, 62*(4), 472–491. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/378866

Howard, R. M. (2016). Plagiarism in higher education: An academic literacies issue?—Introduction. In T. Bretag (Ed.), *Handbook of academic integrity* (pp. 499–501). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

Jendrek, M. P. (1989). Faculty reactions to academic dishonesty. *Journal of College Development, 30*, 401–406. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00991924

Kelleher, W. E. (2016). *Canadian laws relevant to university student academic discipline* (Doctoral dissertation). Northcentral University, San Diego, CA.

Kohlberg, L. (1973). The claim to moral adequacy of a highest stage of moral judgment. *The Journal of Philosophy, 70*(18), 630–646. https://doi.org/10.2307/2025030

Kohlberg, L. (1981). *The philosophy of moral development: Moral stages and the idea of justice*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Laforest, J. (2009). *Guide to organizing semi-structured interviews with key informant* (A. McGain, Trans.). Institut national de santé publique du Québec: Montréal and Québec City, Canada. Retrieved from https://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/guide_entretien_vol11_eng.pdf

Leonard, M., Schwieder, D., Buhler, A., Beaubien Bennett, D., & Royster, M. (2015). Perceptions of plagiarism by STEM graduate students: A case study. *Science and Engineering Ethics, 21*(6), 1587–1608. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-014-9604-2

MacLeod, P. D. (2014). *An exploration of faculty attitudes toward student academic dishonesty in selected Canadian universities*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/24891

Mammen, K. J., & Meyiwa, T. (2013). Perceptions and concerns on plagiarism and its implications for teacher education: A case study of a South African university. *International Journal of Educational Sciences, 5*(2), 99–108. https://doi.org/10.1080/09751122.2013.11890066

Marsden, H. (2016). Breaches of academic integrity: Introduction. In T. Bretag (Ed.), *Handbook of academic integrity* (pp. 161–180). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

Maxwell, B. (2017). Codes of professional conduct and ethics education for future teachers. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education, 24*(4), 323–347. Retrieved from https://journals.sfu.ca/pie/index.php/pie/article/view/932

McCabe, D. (1992). The influence of situational ethics on cheating among college students. *Sociological Inquiry, 62*(3), 365–374. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1992.tb00287.x

McCabe, D. (2016). Cheating and honor: Lessons from a long-term research project. In T. Bretag (Ed.), *Handbook of academic integrity* (pp. 187–198). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

McCabe, D. L. (1993). Faculty responses to academic dishonesty: The influence of student honor codes. *Research in Higher Education, 34*(5), 647–658. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2FBF00991924

McCabe, D. L. (2003). Academic integrity: Faculty survey. Rutgers University: New Brunswick, Newark, and Camden, NJ. Retrieved from https://honesty.rutgers.edu/rutgersfac.asp

McCabe, D. L. (2009). Academic dishonesty in nursing schools: An empirical investigation. *The Journal of Nursing Education, 48*(11), 614–623. Retrieved from https://europepmc.org/article/med/19650608

McCabe, D. L., & Treviño, L. K. (1993). Academic dishonesty: Honor codes and other contextual influences. *Journal of Higher Education, 64*(5), 522–538. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2959991

McCabe, D. L., & Treviño, L. K. (1995). Cheating among business students: A challenge for business leaders and educators. *Journal of Management Education, 19*(2), 205–218. https://doi.org/10.1177/105256299501900205

McCabe, D. L., & Trevino, L. K. (1996). Individual and contextual influences on academic dishonesty: A multicampus investigation. *Research in Higher Education, 38*(1), 379–396. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.1996.10544253

McNeill, L. (2019). *Pedagogies of academic integrity: Reciprocal learning for faculty, institutions, and students*. Paper presented at the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Paterson, B., Taylor, L., & Usick, B. (2003). The construction of plagiarism in a school of nursing. *Learning in Health & Social Care, 2*(3), 147. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1473-6861.2003.00047.x

Piaget, J. (1932). *The moral judgment of the child* (M. Gabain, Trans.). Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Price, M. (2002). Beyond "Gotcha!": Situating plagiarism in policy and pedagogy. *College Composition and Communication, 54*(1), 88–115. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/1512103

QSR International [Computer software]. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/support-services/nvivo-downloads

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shorten, A., & Smith, J. (2017). Mixed methods research: Expanding the evidence base. *Evidence Based Nursing, 20*(3), 74–75. http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/eb-2017-102699

Stoesz, B., Eaton, S. E., Miron, J. B., & Thacker, E. (2019). Academic integrity and contract cheating policy analysis of colleges in Ontario, Canada. *International Journal for Educational Integrity, 15*(4), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-017-0022-5

Strawczynski, J. (2004). When students won't Turnitin: An examination of the use of plagiarism prevention services in Canada. *Education & Law Journal, 14*(2), 167–190.

Taylor, K. L., Usick, B. L., & Paterson, B. L. (2004). Understanding plagiarism: The intersection of personal, pedagogical, institutional, and social contexts. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching, 15*(3), 153–174. Retrieved from http://celt.muohio.edu/ject/

Thyret-Kidd, A. (2012). *One university's reported cases of academic dishonesty* (Master's thesis). Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario, Canada

Turner, S. F., Cardinal, L. B., & Burton, R. M. (2015). Research design for mixed methods: A triangulation-based framework and roadmap. *Organizational Research Methods, 20*(2), 243–267. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428115610808

University of Calgary. (2017). *Fact Book 2016–2017*. Retrieved from https://oia.ucalgary.ca/fact-books/fact-book-20162017

Usick, B. L. (2005). *Is plagiarism an issue in graduate education? An examination of two graduate programs* (Master's thesis). University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Wideman, M. (2008). Academic dishonesty in postsecondary education: A literature review. *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching & Learning Journal, 2*(1), 1–12. Retrieved from http://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/Teaching%20and%20Learning/TD.2.1_Wideman_Academic_Dishonesty_in_Postsecondary_Education.pdf

Zivcakova, L., Wood, E., Baetz, M., & De Pasquale, D. (2012). How do faculty members respond to their students' discussions of academic misconduct and academic integrity? *International Journal for Educational Integrity, 8*(1), 25–40. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.21913/IJEI.v8i1.782

Sarah Elaine Eaton, PhD, is a full-time faculty member in the Werklund School of Education and the Educational Leader in Residence, Academic Integrity, at the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning at the University of Calgary. She specializes in research on academic integrity in higher education. She is the co-founder and co-editor of Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity and the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal for Educational Integrity (BMC Springer Nature).

Cristina Fernandez Conde, M.Sc., is a doctoral student in the School and Applied Child Psychology program at the University of Calgary. Her research interests focus on teacher burnout, the use of positive behavioural strategies in the classroom, and academic integrity in postsecondary settings.

Stefan Rothschuh, M.Ed., is a Ph.D. Student in mathematics education at the University of Calgary. He received a B.Ed. and a M.Ed. in mathematics education from the University of Potsdam, Germany. Stefan is a former high school mathematics teacher. His research investigates the interconnectedness of action-, image-, and symbol-based mathematics learning, embodied learning designs for mathematical functions and calculus, as well as technology integration in secondary school settings. Stefan teaches STEM education in the undergraduate education program.

Melanie N. Guglielmin, B.Ed., B.F.A., M.A., is a teacher with Westmount Charter School in Calgary, AB. Having recently finished her Masters journey, she continues to be curious about how creativity, innovation and school based leadership intersect.

Benedict Kojo Otoo, M.A., is a PhD Candidate in Educational Research with a specialization Adult Learning at the University of Calgary. His research focus is on building intercultural capacities in higher education contexts to support international students.