

Implementing an Honor Code at Japanese Universities to Improve Academic Honesty

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As a teacher at several Japanese universities, I have witnessed various forms of cheating on many occasions. Some forms are more “benign” in character, such as copying homework answers on cloze tests during required English classes, while others seem more serious. For example, students have been known to use cell phones to photograph assignments that have already been marked by their peers’ instructors in the same program. During the interval between classes, students often compare their answers on various assignments and required course work. Also since attendance is often necessary in order to pass a class and ultimately to graduate, students sometimes turn in signed attendance cards or answer roll call for their absent friends. This form of cheating has prompted an unusual response from a well-known university in Tokyo.

According to the Japan Times, 550 students in the School of Social Informatics at this university will receive “free” iPhones (“University to use iPhones”). Administrators plan to use the GPS in the iPhones to keep track of the students’ whereabouts during class hours. The administrators believe that students are unlikely to hand over their phones to their friends in order to fake attendance because of the personal nature and large amount of data stored in the phones. The university expects the number of Social Informatics students using the phones to reach 1,000 (“University to use iPhones”).

In light of what I’ve seen in my own classes and, in my opinion, the rather heavy-handed and expensive response of the university described above, I will compare and contrast cheating behavior in America and Japan and propose a better, more effective way to reduce cheating, the use of an honor code.

Why do some students choose to cheat? I don’t believe there is one, simple answer to the question. In fact, one group of researchers believes that, “[r]easons for cheating are as numerous as cheating culprits” (Burns, et al. 590). I do, however, feel that Bandura’s Social Learning Theory does shed some light on why students may decide to cheat and how a culture of cheating may arise. According to Bandura, “[m]ost human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action” (“Learning Theories Knowledgebase”). In other words, if a student observes her peers cheating, uncovers and remembers the methods used to cheat, reproduces that cheating behavior, and

is motivated to cheat by receiving a good grade, then she may be apt to adopt that behavior. Other reasons why students cheat may have to do with their circumstances. Baird (qtd. in Burns, et al. 591) attributes cheating to situational factors such as the seating arrangement and surveillance during exams. Baird also notes some specific external reasons to justify cheating like “competition for grades, insufficient study time, and large workload,” among others (qtd. in Burns, et al. 591).

Percentages of Cheaters and Attitudes Toward Cheating in America and Japan

Just how many students are cheating at universities in America and Japan? The results of self-report survey instruments reveal large numbers of cheaters in both countries. For example, research by Burns et al. found that 41.7% of university students in Japan admitted to cheating (592). According to Bernardi et al., 48.4% of American men and 22.2% of American women admitted to cheating, while 35.7% of Japanese men and 31.3% of Japanese women acknowledged that they had done so (16-17). Diekhoff et al. looked only at cheating on university examinations. In the Japanese sample, 55.4% confessed to cheating on tests, while among American students, the figure was 26% (347). American students at nine large public institutions indicated cheating rates of over 75% (McCabe and Drinan 1). Regarding plagiarism, McCabe reported that 38% of North American students have admitted to “paraphrasing/copying [a] few sentences from [a] written source without footnoting it” in the last year (6). In the same study, he stated that 29% of surveyed faculty members have received papers produced by paper mills⁽¹⁾ in the last three years (6). Similarly, Norris encountered numerous instances of plagiarism during the courses he taught at Japanese universities. For example, he found that “[o]ver half of the first essays contained an overabundance of sentences and expressions taken directly from the textbook” (1-2). Also, while teaching an Electronic Publishing class, Norris had to contend with “a more blatant type of plagiarism: students copying and pasting long sections from the Internet onto their own home pages” (2). In short, research has produced contrary results regarding which group of students cheats the most, but all results indicate very high percentages of students who have admitted to cheating.

Cheating on campuses doesn’t occur in a vacuum. Instead, students are influenced by their peers and by the academic culture that has formed at university. McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield list several contextual factors that influence cheating behavior, such as “perception of peers’ behavior, student perceptions of the

(1) Paper mills use ghostwriters to produce academic essays or written assignments for a fee. Students may purchase an original essay for a higher fee or choose from a list of previously written essays for a lower fee.

understanding and acceptance of academic policies, the perceived certainty of being reported for cheating, and the perceived severity of campus penalties for cheating, as well as the presence or absence of an honor code” (“Honor Codes and Other Contextual Influences” 359). In fact, McCabe and Trevino assert that,

The strong influence of peers’ behavior may suggest that academic dishonesty not only is learned from observing the behavior of peers, but that peers’ behavior provides a kind of normative support for cheating. The fact that others are cheating may also suggest that, in such a climate, the non-cheater feels left at a disadvantage. Thus, cheating may come to be viewed as an acceptable way of getting and staying ahead. (“Academic Dishonesty” 533)

In this type of environment, students are readily able to neutralize cheating. “Neutralizing or justifying cheating is a cognitive strategy that can protect the individual from the sense of guilt or social stigma that would otherwise accompany deviant behavior” (Diekhoff et al. 351).

The amount of research comparing and contrasting cheating behavior in America versus that in Japan is limited, and the results can be contradictory. For example, McCabe and Trevino assert that American men showed higher rates of cheating some 30 years ago (“What We Know About Cheating”). However, they have found that the percentage of American women who have admitted to cheating has gradually increased, and the rates between men and women are now very similar (“What We Know About Cheating”). In contrast, Burns et al. (592) note that Japanese females (44.87%) are more likely to cheat than Japanese males (36.95%), a finding which contradicts Bernardi et al.’s data (16-17). Unlike American students, Japanese students are more likely to carry over their cheating behavior from high school to university (Bernardi et al. 23), and cheating rates for Japanese men and women increased from high school (20.36%) to university (41.7%) (592).

A comparison of the attitudes about cheating of Japanese and American students reveals some statistically significant differences. One difference among the two groups of students is that Japanese are more likely to neutralize their cheating behavior (Diekoff et al. 347). Diekoff et al. theorize that neutralization occurs more often among Japanese students because they face greater negative consequences for academic failure. As a result, “Japanese students experience more pressure to cheat, engage in more cheating, and have a greater need to neutralize their rule breaking behavior” (Diekoff et al. 351). Diekoff et al. also contend that Japanese students are more typically evaluated on a single, final examination than are their American counterparts. This form of evaluation, combined with such cultural factors as a strong sense of group orientation among Japanese, ratchets up the pressure to cheat. “[T]he social pressure to cheat or assist others may be too much for many Japanese students to resist” (Diekoff et al. 351).

The degree of willingness to report a cheater to the instructor also differs among the nationalities. American students are more likely to inform the instructor that a fellow student is cheating than their Japanese peers (349). Cheaters of both nationalities, however, are unlikely to turn in others who are cheating (349). In addition, American students are significantly more likely to confront cheaters (349).

Diekoff et al. also compare potential deterrents to cheating, such as fear of punishment, guilt and social stigma, and find differences among Japanese and American students. According to Japanese students, guilt is rated as the most effective tool to counter cheating, followed by fear and social stigma. American students, on the other hand, rank fear as most effective, followed by guilt and social stigma. Among noncheaters, “American students [rate] social stigma as more deterring than Japanese students,” and that “American students [are] significantly more deterred from cheating by fear of punishment than [are] Japanese students” (Diekoff 349).

As for similarities among the two groups of students, several stand out. For example, among groups of American and Japanese noncheaters, guilt is ranked as the most effective deterrent to cheating (Diekoff 349). At the same time, American and Japanese students view social stigma as the least effective (349). Reactions to cheating are also similar, with a large majority of both groups choosing to ignore it when they encounter it (350). Of course, cheaters from both nationalities are more likely to ignore their peers’ cheating (350). Furthermore, about one-third of students of both nationalities end up resenting the cheater (350). And finally, less than 5% of all students surveyed say they would report a cheater to the instructor (350).

Honor Codes: History, Definition and Academic Life

Honor codes have a long history in American academics but are virtually unknown in Japan. According to the *Center for Academic Integrity*, 270 colleges and universities in the United States have “self-described honor codes” (Dodd). Melendez defines an honor code as consisting of one or more of these four tenets,

[1] a written pledge in which students affirm that their work will be or has been done honestly; [2] the majority of the judiciary that hears alleged violations of academic dishonesty is comprised of students; [3] unproctored examinations; and [4] a clause that places some degree of obligation on students to report incidences of cheating they learn about or observe. (qtd. in McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield, “Academic Integrity in Honor Code” 213)

In the simplest terms, an honor code is a promise not to lie or cheat academically and helps to govern the actions of all members connected to the university. (For a detailed description of an honor code consisting of all four of Melendez’s tenets, see

<http://students.umw.edu/~honor/documents/Guidebook05-06.pdf>)

The College of William and Mary in Virginia was the first university to enact some form of an honor code, with a documented history going all the way back to 1736. Early College Statutes at William and Mary declared that “special care must be taken of [student] morals, that none of the Scholars presume to tell a Lie...or do any Thing else that is contrary to good Manners” (“Honor System”). Under the leadership of University President Thomas Jefferson in 1779, a formal honor code had emerged (“Honor System”).

The notion of an honor pledge for tests was created in 1842 at the University of Virginia. It marked the first time that students were “to affirm that they had neither given nor received aid on exams” (Barefoot). Over the years, the wording of the University of Virginia’s pledge has evolved, and each college or university that adheres to an honor code may use slightly different vocabulary to convey its meaning, but the purpose of the pledge remains the same: a written and signed promise that your work has been completed honestly (Barefoot). At Mary Washington College (now the University of Mary Washington), where I received my undergraduate degree in 1993, my fellow students and I would write the following pledge on all work that we turned in: I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received help on this paper/test/assignment, etc., followed by our signature. Should students violate this pledge, measures are in place to punish cheaters.

For those who are unfamiliar with honor codes or who have graduated from schools without them, I will provide a glimpse into academic life under an honor code. At the University of Mary Washington, there is an Honor Ceremony held before classes begin. During the ceremony, all incoming students are introduced to the honor code. The ceremony includes speeches from the university president, faculty and administration, and student members of the Honor Council, the body that makes decisions concerning the honor code. All students are clearly informed of the benefits of having an honor code, the responsibilities that exist in an academic environment with an honor code, and the punishments for breaking the code. At the end of the ceremony, all incoming students are required to sign a pledge promising to adhere to the University of Mary Washington honor code and are given a handbook detailing the code. In other words, right from the start of one’s academic career, honesty takes precedence.

For almost all Japanese teachers and students and for quite a few foreign professors as well, unproctored exams come as a shock. In fact, some schools with honor codes may even allow the students to set their own exam schedule. As a student at the University of Mary Washington, most of my exams were unproctored. There were times when a professor would pass out the test, explain it, then leave the classroom and go to his/her office. Meanwhile, the students and I would complete

the test in the classroom. During these times, I never cheated, never felt the urge to cheat and never observed any of my classmates cheat. In fact, I didn't necessarily prefer this style of test-taking because, if one had a question or problem regarding the test, one had to track down the professor in his/her office, thereby wasting precious time needed to complete the test.

Another very popular style of testing used by universities with honor codes is the take home test. Just as the name implies, you are allowed to complete the test at home or any other location of your choice. These tests are typically composed of multiple essay questions, requiring long, typed answers. The professor has the discretion to decide whether to allow the use of notes or textbooks. In most cases in my experience, students could use notes, textbooks and other reference material(s) because the tests tended to require a certain amount of research and analysis. Generally, students were given a week or so in which to complete the exam. I believe this style of testing is far more demanding than a typical, in-class examination, which tends to be more limited in scope due to the tighter time constraints. Take home tests, furthermore, demand far greater detail and insight on the part of the student in order to receive a favorable grade.

For written work, students must also follow the honor code. When I was a university student in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the Internet was still in its infancy, and cut-and-paste forms of cheating were virtually unknown among my peers. Nowadays, copying directly from the Internet has become a major problem. There are also large numbers of websites devoted to selling essays and other written assignments for a fee. While plagiarism using the Internet has become more widespread, there are steps that universities can take to counter it.

In introductory English and science classes at the University of Mary Washington, students learn the essentials of APA and MLA styles of citation in order to correctly record sources. There are also a required number of courses that must be taken, both in major and elective studies, which are "writing intensive." Each course demands that students submit numerous essays or other written assignments in order to pass. Professors stress the importance of properly documenting sources and maintaining academic honesty. At the end of all written assignments, students are required to sign their name under the honor pledge. Thus, armed with knowledge of how to properly cite resources, taught by professors who stress academic honesty on written assignments, and required to sign a pledge stating their work has been completed honestly, few students submit material that violates the honor code.

Honor Codes and their Effectiveness in Reducing Cheating and Promoting Ethics

American universities that make use of honor codes report lower incidences of

academic dishonesty than those that do not. In research dating back to 1935, Campbell, as cited in McCabe and Trevino, “compared cheating among students under an honor system and a proctor system at the same university and found the students under the honor system were less likely to cheat (“Academic Dishonesty: Honor Codes” 524). In 1956, Canning, as cited in McCabe and Trevino, looked at rates of cheating before and after the implementation of an honor code and found “[t]he incidence of cheating was reduced after an honor system was implemented and was reduced by nearly two-thirds after having the honor system in place for five years” (“Academic Dishonesty: Honor Codes” 524). May and Loyd also demonstrated through their research that universities with honor codes had considerably fewer occurrences of cheating. They also stated that honor codes “appear superior to other systems in controlling the incidence of cheating” (129). McCabe and Drinan (“Toward a Culture of Academic”) noted that “on campuses with honor codes, fewer than one in 14 students surveyed in the 1995–1996 academic year acknowledged cheating repeatedly on tests and examinations, compared with one in six at institutions without honor codes.”

In a far-reaching sample consisting of 6,096 students from 14 universities with honor codes and 17 universities without such codes, McCabe and Trevino (“Academic Dishonesty: Honor Codes”) further established the effectiveness of honor codes in reducing the rates of academic dishonesty. They concluded that self-reported rates of cheating were “significantly higher” at universities without honor codes. Moreover, students attending institutions with honor codes typically had a strong understanding and acceptance of the institution’s academic integrity policies. McCabe and Trevino, therefore, found that academic dishonesty was “inversely related to understanding and acceptance of academic integrity policies” (526). In other words, if students weren’t made aware of school policy regarding cheating or ignored or rejected the policy, then rates of cheating would rise. Also, with an honor code, some onus was on the students to report those who violated the code. The threat of being caught cheating seemed more likely on campuses with honor codes, resulting in fewer instances of academic dishonesty. Thus, according to McCabe and Trevino, the benefits of cheating simply didn’t outweigh the consequences of getting caught. Finally, they assert that “academic dishonesty [was] positively related to perceptions of peers’ academic dishonesty” (528). If a student observed that his or her peers were cheating, then that student would be more likely to engage in deviant behavior. Conversely, students in an environment that stressed academic integrity were less likely to engage in academic dishonesty. McCabe and Trevino asserted that “[p]eers’ behavior had by far the strongest influence on academic dishonesty” (532). For example, they quoted several student respondents at non-honor code schools. One said that “[Academic dishonesty] is rampant at, [an unnamed university] so much so that the attitude seems to be everybody does it-I’ll

be at a disadvantage if I don't." A second replied that "If others do it, you're being left behind by not participating." A third stated that "When most of the class is cheating on a difficult exam and they will ruin the curve, it influences you to cheat so your grade won't be affected" (533). Clearly, ample research supports the notion that an honor code is an effective tool for promoting academic honesty on university campuses.

In follow-up research McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield ("Academic Integrity in Honor Code") sought to understand the reasons for the positive relationships between honor codes and academic integrity. The researchers used open-ended comments elicited from student respondents from both honor code and non-honor code universities in order to "delve more deeply into students' thoughts about academic integrity" ("Academic Integrity in Honor Code" 212). Not surprisingly, they found that students' attitudes differed noticeably among the honor code and non-honor code respondents. One very revealing finding was that respondents at universities with an honor code mentioned their school's code or stated that their code was deeply ingrained in a culture of honesty in 15.6% of comments offered (216). These comments were offered despite the fact that the questionnaire made no reference to honor codes. McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield viewed this as evidence that the codes had an influence on respondents' attitudes and behaviors concerning cheating (216). Many of the comments from surveyed students at honor code schools also mentioned how strongly their code "[was] valued, respected, and embedded in a broad culture of integrity on campus" (222). One respondent from McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield's study said

I believe [my school] to be a rare example of integrity in college... The biggest factor which curtails or eliminates unethical behavior ...is our honor code. By signing the Honor Code upon entering [my school], we all agree to conduct our studies, as well as our social lives, in an ethical manner. This results in an atmosphere of trust between students and faculty. ("Academic Integrity in Honor Code" 222)

As a graduate of a university with an honor code, I wholeheartedly agree with the students' sentiments regarding the effectiveness of such codes. However, I don't agree that this example of integrity is rare, but instead can be and is repeated at most schools with a strongly embedded culture of honesty created by an honor code.

This culture of integrity at schools with honor codes creates a strong sense of community and shared responsibilities. McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield contend that students at institutions with an honor code "frame the issue of academic integrity in a fundamentally different way from students at non-code institutions" ("Academic Integrity in Honor Code" 229). Though students at both code and non-code schools felt similar pressures from the larger society, McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield maintain that those studying under an honor code were significantly less likely to

use those outside pressures to rationalize cheating. In schools with honor codes, respondents often mentioned that “they [were] part of a special community that demand[ed] compliance with certain standards in exchange for the many privileges associated with honor codes, such as unproctored exams and self-scheduled exams” (230). They also noted that many of these respondents “talk[ed] of community values, communication, the influence of peer pressure, and mutual responsibility when describing the culture of integrity that exists on campus [which was] rarely heard among non-code students” (230). Having been a member of this type of community, I can unequivocally state that there was a sense of pride and a communal feeling of wanting to maintain the atmosphere of trust of which we were privileged to be a part. To cheat or to engage in deviant activities that violate the code not only brought shame upon oneself, but also caused harm to the community. The inclination to maintain a high standing within this community was far more powerful, and rewarding, than the potential gains derived from cheating.

Studying at campuses with an honor code can impact students long after graduation. Newcomb drew on the results of a three-wave longitudinal study taking place in the 1930’s, 1960’s and 1990’s to propose a “thesis of ‘stability and change’; people’s attitudes do change in college, and these attitudes tend to persist later in life.” (qtd. in McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield “The Influence of Collegiate” 463). McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield suggested that, under certain conditions, studying under a college honor code “may have enduring effects on ethics-related behavior in the workplace” (“The Influence of Collegiate” 473). They found that graduates from schools with honor codes who work for companies with a strongly implemented code of ethics reported the fewest incidences of unethical behavior (473).

To further illustrate the power of honor codes on the ethical behavior of graduates, administrators at Haverford College and Davidson College, two schools with strongly embedded honor codes, “tell stories of alumni who have voluntarily surrendered their diplomas years after graduating for some unconfessed infraction” (Wasley “Anti-plagiarism Software”).

While such extreme examples are rare, I do feel that my experience at the University of Mary Washington had a positive impact on my moral development. As a high school student, I was less than scrupulously honest and, though it pains me to admit it, I did cheat on some small quizzes. Yet, after becoming immersed in a culture of academic integrity at the University of Mary Washington, I no longer engaged in cheating and felt no urge to compromise our shared values. Later, as a graduate student attending a university without an honor code and, frankly, a somewhat undefined attitude toward academic dishonesty, I was approached to join “study circles” and asked to share/compare answers on sets of analyzed data. I chose not to participate. Taking part would have violated my internalized code of ethics. I truly believe that nothing could compel me to cheat and compromise the

values of academic honesty I so strongly believe in. A great deal of the foundation of my beliefs can be traced back to my days as a student at the University of Mary Washington.

Implementing a University Honor Code

Although I'm completely convinced that honor codes are effective in generating a climate of academic honesty, many of my fellow teachers, both Japanese and non-Japanese, and my Japanese students remain doubtful. To alleviate this skepticism, all members of the campus must pledge their support for such a code. McCabe and Pavela list some of the steps necessary to implement an honor code.

The first step is to identify the extent of cheating on campus. McCabe and Pavela recommend listening to the students and creating an informal gathering of various student leaders to discuss the extent and type of academic dishonesty that occurs (36). If the percentages of cheaters determined in previous studies hold true, then students, faculty and administrators will have compelling evidence to take action to promote academic honesty and institute an honor code. In addition, if teachers want to conduct self-report surveys across campus, they will be able to obtain a clear idea of the percentages of cheaters and very likely have publishable research.

The next step according to McCabe and Pavela is to "give interested students and faculty members a voice in setting campus policy" (36). Those who are unhappy with the amount of cheating on campus "will want to take action" (36). This group should be given the authority to review current academic policies and make changes where necessary. The policies should include clear definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty. There is a lot of information available on the Internet about the experiences of other universities that have enacted honor codes which should prove useful⁽²⁾.

The third and perhaps most important step is to "allow students to play a major role in the resolution of contested cases" (36). Students likely have a greater awareness of how much cheating is going on and in what forms it occurs than do administrators or faculty. As McCabe and Pavela point out, "[s]tudent participation also promotes higher standards, since students tend to be strict with their peers, especially when they encounter deception or evasion" (36). I concur with their assessment of strict standards. Peer judges or jury members are under the same outside pressures as the students accused of cheating and tend not to accept rationalizations or neutralizing behavior. When students share control of and

(2) For more information about implementing an honor code, visit Georgetown University or George Washington University websites. Also, there are annual conferences such as The National Conference on Ethics in America and the Center for Academic Integrity that can provide guidance when setting up codes (McCabe and Pavela 38).

responsibility for the process “in the resolution of contested cases,” they can best explain this process to their peers and incoming students (36). As a student at the University of Mary Washington, the speakers at the Honor Ceremony who made the greatest impact on me were the student members of the Honor Council. Frankly, without their involvement, the honor code would have become just another set of rules imposed from above. With the participation of my peers and the opportunity to get involved with the Honor Council, I felt we were responsible for maintaining the academic standards on campus.

The fourth step advocated by McCabe and Pavela is to enforce tough sanctions on those who cheat (36). At several large universities, cheaters are given a course grade of “XF,” Failure Due to Academic Dishonesty (36). This grade goes on the student’s official transcript and, consequently, is a strong penalty. Because of the severity of the penalty, McCabe and Pavela recommend a way for a first-time offender to have the “XF” grade expunged. Students caught cheating should be required to complete an academic integrity seminar.⁽³⁾ “Such a seminar can help students examine the personal and social impact of academic dishonesty, and can become a focal point for academic integrity programming” (36). McCabe and Pavela quote a student who was caught violating an honor code as saying, “The university takes pride in catching [cheaters] early on and turning them around...I knew I made a mistake and I admitted it...I had to take my punches” (36). The student later became a graduate student and teaching assistant and now tells his students, “In my classes...[y]ou do not cheat” (36).

The last step McCabe and Pavela recommend is to “help student leaders educate their peers” (36). A practical suggestion from McCabe and Pavela is to mail a personal letter from a student leader of an honor council to all incoming students before they arrive (36). In addition to an honor ceremony, the letter will allow new students to get an idea of the peer culture on campus. Again, the purpose is to instill the importance of academic honesty before new students have even taken their first class. “Many forms of reiteration should occur thereafter: in orientation, classroom presentations, and course syllabi” (36). When all the members of the campus community actively support and reinforce the values in the honor code, the campus culture will dissuade academic dishonesty.

Why Honor Codes Can Work at Japanese Universities

On those occasions when I have broached the idea of an honor code for Japanese

(3) To view an example of an academic integrity syllabus, go to <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/seminar.html>. The successful completion of the academic integrity seminar at the University of Maryland, along with several other required steps, may only result in a grade of “F.” Again, this is a severe penalty and acts as a strong deterrent to cheating.

universities, the suggestion has been met with healthy doses of skepticism from my peers and students. The data, however, do show that such a code can indeed work. First, Bernardi et al. conclude that Japanese students are less likely to cheat in high school than their American counterparts (21). Burns et al. also note that “the cheating rates for both Japanese men and women increased from high school to college... from 20.36% to 41.70%” (592). If these data are to be believed, then 80% of Japanese students entering university are not predisposed to cheat. Clearly there is something negative occurring in students’ attitudes soon after matriculation. Taking into account the research on academic dishonesty, the most likely cause of the increased rates of cheating is a campus culture that doesn’t value academic integrity. However, through the concerted efforts of administrators and faculty and the involvement of the student body, an honor code has a great chance to take hold, especially with the 80% of incoming students who didn’t cheat in high school. In a climate where the vast majority of students don’t cheat, the pressure to comply with an honor code would be intense. Certainly, the most brazen forms of cheating, including the use of cell phones to photograph completed assignments and the overt sharing of answers during the intervals between classes, would disappear. When I was a student at a university with an honor code, such behavior would have disgusted my peers and me and simply would not have occurred.

Given the results at American universities, a second reason why a code can work in Japan is that it promotes trust between administrators, teachers and students. As a student at Mary Washington, I adhered to the values fostered by the honor code and was inculcated into a culture that encouraged trust. However, when students are given “free” cell phones with GPS so that administrators can spy on their whereabouts, a clear “us vs. them” mentality takes form. The message from the administration is that we don’t trust you and expect you to lie and cheat. The students are very likely to react by living down to these expectations. With an honor code, on the other hand, the message from the administration, faculty, student honor council members and peers is we all trust you to act honestly. All through their academic careers, the students will have ample opportunities to prove that they deserve this trust. In my own classes, for example, students sometimes approach me after class to explain why they were absent the previous week. While the student is explaining the situation, his or her peers often jokingly call out “liar” or “lies” and laugh. In this situation doubts are raised in my mind as to whether the student is actually telling the truth. If an honor code were in place, I would have much greater faith in students’ explanations for absences, missed assignments and other related problems. I feel relationships among classmates and between teacher and students would be more respectful, and definitely not adversarial as one would expect in a situation where students were monitored using GPS cell phones.

One of the things that surprised me when I began teaching at Japanese

universities was the amount of responsibility students are willing to shoulder. I have seen sports teams that are coached entirely by the students. In fact, the coach rarely even shows up for practices. Team members decide the practice schedules, design the workouts, and ensure everyone participates and completes each task. Also, school festivals are often entirely planned and arranged by students who are members of festival clubs or committees. I feel that students at Japanese universities are willing to get involved with honor councils and will assume the responsibility of helping to create an honor code that best fits their particular institution. It is very likely that a workable code can be produced through student collaboration, in conjunction with guidance from faculty and administrators.

A final reason why an honor code can work is our education mission. Teachers and institutions have a responsibility to impart more than just knowledge or facts. We must also instill a sense of honesty and integrity in our students. In fact, a Japanese Education Ministry White Paper produced in 1994 says, “[s]ince education is the process of character formation, moral education can be regarded as a fundamental part of school education” (qtd. in Nemoto 23). Though the White Paper is referencing primary and secondary education, the “process of character formation” should continue at the university level. If universities simply ignore issues of academic integrity or give them short shrift, a culture of honesty is very unlikely to form. Students need to be guided by an honor code, and faculty must stress the importance of academic honesty in order to develop a strong, clear sense of what is right. Fostering these traits builds communities of trust and improves the quality of learning and teaching on campus and produces students of character and integrity. As McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield sum up, “[p]ursuit of initiatives that might move a campus closer to such a culture [of academic honesty] would seem to be worthy of any college or university” (“Academic Integrity in Honor Code” 232).

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—Abstract—

Research has shown that academic dishonesty among university students in America and Japan is prevalent. This paper will compare the percentages of cheaters and attitudes toward cheating in university students in America and Japan. The motivations for cheating, the impact that students' peers have on academic dishonesty and the academic culture that forms at universities will all be discussed. In order to create an academic culture of honesty, I will propose the use of an honor code as a tool to combat cheating. Honor codes at American universities have been shown to be effective in reducing the percentages of cheaters (May, Kathleen M. and Brenda H. Loyd 1993; McCabe, Donald L. and Patrick Drinan 1999; McCabe, Donald and Gary Pavela 2000; McCabe, Donald L., Linda K. Trevino, and Kenneth D. Butterfield 1999); however, the use of such codes is virtually unheard of in Japan. The benefits and responsibilities of being a student at an American university with an honor code will be presented. Steps will be listed on how universities can begin to implement an honor code along with detailed reasons why honor codes could be successfully put into practice at Japanese universities.

論文要旨

調査の結果日米両国の大学生の間でカンニングが一般的であることがわかった。この論文では日米の大学生におけるカンニング率およびカンニングについての考えを比較した。カンニングの動機、同級生のカンニングに対する印象、学生生活について論じた。学生生活からカンニングをなくすためにカンニング禁止令を提案する。アメリカの大学ではカンニング禁止令がカンニング率の減少に効果的であることがわかった (May, Kathleen M. and Brenda H. Loyd 1993; McCabe, Donald L. and Patrick Drinan 1999; McCabe, Donald and Gary Pavela 2000; McCabe, Donald L., Linda K. Trevino, and Kenneth D. Butterfield 1999) が、日本ではほとんど聞かない。カンニング禁止令のあるアメリカの大学の学生の利点および責任について紹介する。カンニング禁止令導入の流れを紹介する。日本の大学においてカンニング禁止令の導入が成功すると思われる理由を詳しく述べる。