

THE PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT ON SHORT-ANSWER TESTS

A STUDY IN PROGRESS

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INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE

Short answer tests are often used in 3rd & 4th year classes

- ✓ Test multiple levels of learning
- ✓ Produces original answers
- ✗ Labour intensive to grade
 - TAs often grade, faculty re-grading is permitted

Anecdotal evidence suggests students are performing **academic misconduct (AM)** by **resubmitting altered tests** for re-grading!

STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. Determine the **prevalence** and **impact** of AM on short-answer tests with a re-grade policy.
2. Identify **how** AM is being performed and the **characteristics** of those performing AM.

It was hypothesized that the prevalence of AM would be higher in:

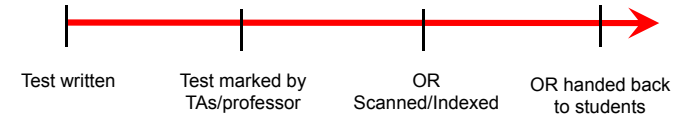
- Tests written in pencil
- Males
- Weaker students
- Heavily weighted tests
- Subsequent tests throughout the semester

STUDY DESIGN

n = 2311 students
enrolled in 11 courses

Scanned copies of Original Tests (OR) were compared to Re-grade Tests (RG)

All students



Only students who resubmitted test for RG:



ANALYSIS

1. To determine the prevalence and impact of AM we looked at:

- i. Only questions asked to be re-graded by the student for assessment for alterations in text and addition of marks
- ii. Repeat offences (AM in more than one test)
- iii. Pre- and Post- re-grade marks

2. To determine the characteristics of those who perform AM we correlated those that committed AM with:

- i. The use of pen or pencil
- ii. How the student alters the original answer (alterations in text/addition of marks)
- iii. Sex
- iv. Overall grade

STUDY ETHICS

Research Ethics Board approved that **Informed Consent was not required**

- Instructors are permitted to monitor academic misconduct using the methods we employed
- No risk to the student, i.e. faculty not informed of AM cases, no names identified
- Level of academic misconduct would be underreported.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS: COURSE ONE

- The largest class, n= 460
- More than double the credit weight of all other courses (1.25 vs. 0.5)
- 3 exclusively short-answer term tests, weighted 10%, 20% and 30% of the final grade
 - Test 1 and 2 were optional
 - Test 3 was mandatory
- Pencil allowed
- Open RG policy made known early in semester, re-grading done by professor



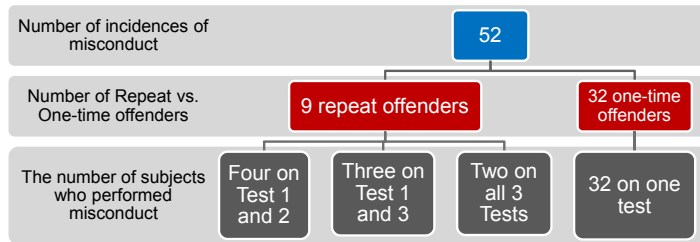
1. PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF AM i. The Prevalence

The prevalence of AM is low relative to the number of subjects who wrote the test

	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3
Number of ORs	403	347	451
Number of RGs (% of OR)	77 (19%)	96 (28%)	120 (27%)
Number of Misconductees	20	12	20
% of Misconductees of RGs	26%	13%	17%
% of Misconductees of OR	5%	3%	4%

1. PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF AM

ii. Repeat Offenders



Therefore, due to repeat offences, there were 41 misdoctors among all three tests

1. PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF AM

iii. The Impact

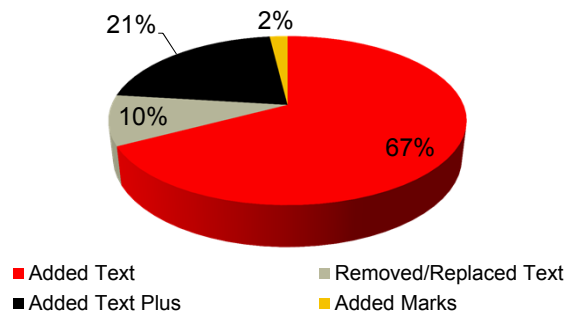
	Test 1 (worth 10%)	Test 2 (worth 20%)	Test 3 (worth 30%)
Change in mark (/30)	1.08	1.08	0.85
Change in mark (%)	3.58	3.6	2.83
Change in final grade (%)	0.36	0.72	0.85

NOTE: two subjects who performed AM in all three tests benefited 4 and 6 % in their final grade

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO PERFORM AM

i. Test Alteration

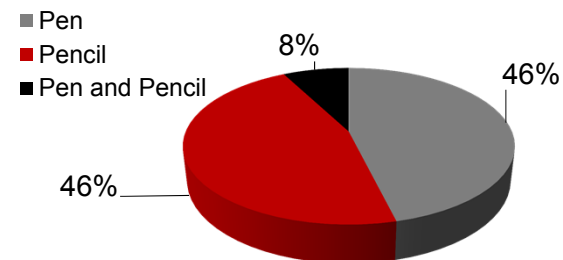
The majority of those who perform AM add text to their original answer



2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO PERFORM AM

ii. Pen vs. Pencil

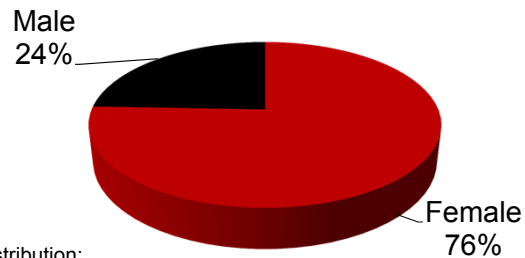
Not differences in prevalence of AM in those that use pen or pencil



2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO PERFORM AM

iii. Sex differences

The majority of those who perform misconduct are female

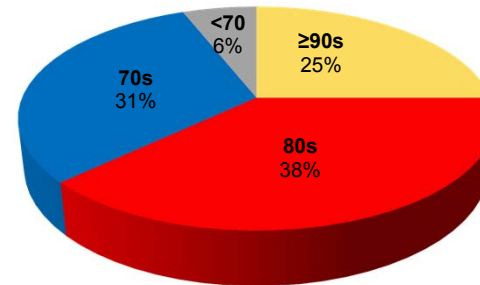


*Class Distribution:
66% Female, 34% Male

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO PERFORM AM

iv. Overall Grades

The majority of those who perform academic misconduct have higher overall grades



DISCUSSION

1. The Prevalence and Impact of AM

i. Prevalence: What is the right number?

- # misconductees/ # total RG (13-26%)
- # misconductees/ # total OR ($\leq 5\%$)
- 41/460 students (9%) enrolled in the class performed misconduct

ii. Impact: Could it be too much?

- Average benefit is low ($<1\%$)?
- But, the two students benefited 4-6%

2. The Characteristics of those who perform AM

Can we truly profile those who perform misconduct?