A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY OF THE IMPACT
OF STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership

by

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Dedication

To Steve, Jesse, and Jenny
for all your support and sacrifice,
To my Dad for never letting me down,
And to the memory of Dr. Debbie Leidner,
a fearless educational leader and cherished mentor
Acknowledgments

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Stephanie Ann Bluestein
Doctor of Education Degree
in Educational Leadership

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of the faculty-student relationship on academic dishonesty and develop an explanatory model about the impact of student-faculty interaction on cheating. Individual, confidential interviews pertaining to student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty were conducted with 10 students and 11 faculty members at a large, ethnically diverse community college in California. The interviews include the recounting of acts of cheating, types and frequency of student-faculty interaction, the effects of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty, and the effects that academic dishonesty can have on student-faculty interaction, especially after an incident has occurred. Five themes emerged during data analysis: academic dishonesty elicits a range of emotions for both professors and students; cheating has a negative effect on interaction between professors and students; a lack of connection by professors between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty; students underestimate the value of student-faculty interaction; and professors spend energy trying
to prevent students from cheating, with varying degrees of success. After examining the data, a theoretical explanation about the impact of student-faculty relationships was developed that could be applied to community colleges of a similar size and demographic. An I-P-O (input, process, and outcome) model was used in which the students and faculty were the input, their interaction was the process, and the students’ likelihood to cheat was the outcome. The model demonstrated that positive student-faculty has the potential to foster respect for the professor, thus prompting students to try harder, which could reduce the need or desire to commit academic dishonesty.
Chapter 1

Introduction

The teacher “is a most important instrument in the student’s acquisition of intellectual virtue” (Spangler, 1998, p. 24), which Aristotle describes as wisdom and understanding (Curren, 2000). The pursuit of wisdom and understanding goes deeper than the act of learning specific facts associated with an academic discipline. Students are relying on a trusted person to show them how this knowledge will help them be better thinkers. Thus, education begins with the student placing their trust in the instructor (Spangler, 1998). Although the student may have a general idea of what they want to learn, they need an expert to guide them through the vast array of material. The student trusts the instructor to lead them on an extended path of knowledge that will build on what they already know. Since learning is a gradual process that takes time and effort, the student has to believe in the person leading them along this path, philosopher Thomas Aquinas commented in the 13th century (Spangler, 1998).

The significance of student-faculty interaction can be traced to the Greek philosopher Plato, who founded his Academy in Athens circa 387 B.C. and was the great teacher of Aristotle. This early example of student-faculty interaction is a reminder to modern educators that learning is far more than the dissemination of facts. Education fulfills its ultimate purpose when students and educators learn in conjunction, exchange ideas, and create knowledge together. For example, McCabe and Pavela (2004) argue:

From the days of Plato’s Academy, teaching was seen as encompassing conscientious companionship, grounded in the shared pursuit of the truth. While other professions move headlong into the realm of “managed care,”
teachers will find that their greatest impact on students—including inspiring a commitment to academic integrity—will come in the context of personal respect, attention, and connection. (McCabe & Pavela, 2004, pp. 12-13)

When Chickering and Gamson (1987) developed seven codes aimed at improving undergraduate education, a reference to the relationship between student and instructor was at the top of their list. “It is said that good practices in undergraduate education encourages student-faculty contact,” reads one of the codes by Chickering and Gamson, which led to the development of a self-assessment instrument for faculty and institutions. Ultimately, the codes influenced various student assessment instruments including the National Survey of Student Engagement (Chickering & Gamson, 1999). Other scholars have included references to student-faculty interaction in their writings on how to improve higher education (Chickering & Gamson, 1999).

Student-faculty interaction research over the past three decades has shown that such interaction can provide a wide range of benefits to students. When students and faculty interact informally, the results can include students having increased self-worth and confidence (Kuh, 1995) and a greater sense of value in their courses and studies (Thompson, 2001). Out-of-class interaction can increase student perceptions of affective learning (Clark, Walker, & Keith, 2002). Such interactions can boost intellectual development and motivate students to continue beyond their first year of college (Pascarella & Terezini, 1980) and higher quality student-faculty interactions can make a student feel more connected to their college (Strauss & Volkwein, 2004).

More specifically, it has been shown that faculty can influence student behavior in regard to academic dishonesty (McCabe & Pavela, 2004). Faculty attentiveness during
test taking, development of assignments, and tendency to report student misconduct can all have an effect on students. For example, when students think instructors are not paying attention when a test is being given in class, they are more likely to try to cheat (Wexler, 1993) and tests that reward rote memory are a means of justification for some students who cheat (Genereux & McLeod, 1995). Hard, Conway, and Moran (2006) found that faculty who underestimate the amount of cheating in their classroom tend not to question students’ actions and thus might actually be encouraging students to cheat.

Ever since studies on academic dishonesty began in the 1920s, cheating in higher education has increased in frequency and sophistication. Mille, Murdock, Anderman, and Poindexter (2007) examined several studies and concluded that “cheating rates appear to be increasing” due to higher numbers being cited in more recent studies but found that the increase could be attributed to higher rates of self-reported cheating. Academic dishonesty is now considered a social norm by many students, and some even admire those whose cheating skills go undetected (Hulsart & McCarthy, 2009). Students justify cheating on tests and homework assignments for a variety of reasons, including the competitive nature of higher education (Center for Academic Integrity, 2006) and a dearth of engaging assignments (Strom & Strom, 2007). In the three decades since Bowers (1964) surveyed more than 5,000 college students at 99 colleges and universities and found that three-fourths had cheated at least once, subsequent studies have shown that “cheating is prevalent and test or exam cheating has increased dramatically” (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001).

As a right-versus-wrong moral development issue, cheating impacts the social norm. Moral relativism, the concept that one’s ethics are formed based on social
constructs, is strong and pervasive in modern society (Gilligan, 1981). The finding by Hulsart and McCarthy (2009) that dishonest students who evade detection are admired by some of their peers is an example of the impact of moral relativism. It is relevant to note that Kohlberg and Kramer’s (1969) longitudinal study of middle-class teens and adults, ages 16 to 25, found that 20 percent experienced a decline in their moral judgment during their second or third year of college, only to return to their pre-adult state by age 25. Their study is applicable to this research because community colleges, by design, are two-year institutions, although some students matriculate for more than two years. Indeed, all but one of the student participants is in their second or third year of college.

Another type of relativism that impacts cheating is situational relativism, in which a person adjusts their ethical standards to particular circumstances (Scott, 2000). Those participants who justify cheating because they consider an assignment to be irrelevant are displaying situational relativism. McCabe (1992) found that college students justify academic dishonesty by using various neutralization techniques. One strategy called “condemnation of the condemners,” in which students said cheating was justified if the assignment was pointless or if they lacked respect for the professor, was cited by 28 percent of the 6,096 college students who participated in the study.

The powerful effects of moral and situational relativism, combined with a decline in moral judgment during the early college years, point to some of the apparent reasons for cheating in college. However, we also know how student-faculty interaction can impact student development and success in college. When we examine the intersection of these two issues—student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty—we find a rich, albeit still developing, body of knowledge. Numerous studies over several decades
have shown that student-faculty interaction can have a profound effect on learning outcomes and student success. Likewise, we know why students cheat (Cizek, 1999), the methods they use (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002), and how they justify their actions (Anderman & Murdock, 2007). However, we know less about the factors in student-faculty relationships that affect a student’s attitude and actions in regard to academic dishonesty. What also remains unclear is how, and to what extent, this relationship impacts student and faculty behavior and attitudes in relation to academic dishonesty.

Problem Statement

Over the last several decades, research on student-faculty interaction has shown that informal communication between students and faculty can affect the students’ sense of autonomy and purpose (Chickering, 1969) and grade-point average (Anaya & Cole, 2001). Student-faculty interaction has an impact on academic performance and motivation, depending on the quality, setting, and frequency (Kuh & Hu, 2001). However, the three factors may not affect student performance equally. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) concluded that the topic of discussion is more important than how often students and faculty interact. While the literature provides us with considerable knowledge on the subjects of student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty, we do not know as much about how student-faculty interaction affects the likelihood of students to commit academic dishonesty and the effect it has on faculty. Furthermore, our knowledge of this relationship is mostly confined to the four-year university, where the majority of studies have been conducted. Anderman and Murdock (2007) contend that more research is needed. Indeed, they argue: “There is a clear need for more studies that
build on established knowledge about teacher-student and peer relationships in educational settings."

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

Acknowledging the need for more research, it can be argued that we know little about how student-faculty relationships are cultivated and their effects on academic dishonesty at the community college level. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of the faculty-student relationship on academic dishonesty and develop an explanatory model about the impact of student-faculty interaction on cheating. As an instructor who has reported students for cheating, I was curious to know how formal and informal interaction between instructors and students may affect, or not affect, the tendency toward academic dishonesty. Data from the study will inform faculty, students, and college administrators about the potential of the faculty-student relationship to influence student behavior. My hope is three-fold: that faculty will have a deeper understanding of how their behavior affects student behavior; that students will personally take action to foster positive interaction with faculty; and that community colleges will use this information to inform their faculty on ways to improve student-faculty interaction.

**Research Questions**

In reviewing the literature, it becomes apparent that we know about the frequency, methods, motivations, and deterrents of student cheating, in addition to how student-faculty interaction affects student motivation, outcomes, and persistence. However, we do not have much information about whether there is a connection between academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction. Combining these two topics, the focus of how
student-faculty interaction in the community college influences academic dishonesty behavior emerges. This concept generated the majority of these research questions.

The research questions that this study evaluated are:

1. What are the effects of student-faculty interaction on student behavior related to academic honesty in community colleges?
2. What factors of the student-faculty relationship facilitate or mitigate the likelihood of student academic dishonesty in community colleges?
3. How does the community college student-faculty relationship cultivate shared norms with respect to academic dishonesty?

**Operational Definitions**

In this dissertation, academic dishonesty is defined as “an intentional act of fraud, in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization, or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise...(or) forgery of academic documents, intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others, or assisting other students in acts of dishonesty” (Gehring & Pavela, p. 5). The term student-faculty interaction is defined as academic advising, personal counseling, and informal socializing both in and out of the classroom (Pascarella, Terenzini & Hibel, 1978). Of course, students and faculty also interact in a more formal manner during classroom lectures, academic discourse, conducting research on field trips, and taking part in competitions. Thus, not all interaction occurs directly before or after class or during formal office hours. Both in-class and out-of-class interactions were examined as part of this study in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the frequency, purpose, and location of such exchanges.
Theoretical Framework

The primary theoretical framework guiding this study was Pascarella’s general model for assessing student change (1984) because it considers the potential influence that faculty members have in regard to student development. According to Pascarella’s model, faculty—as a key socializing agent—can shape the quality of student effort. The causal model begins with the student’s background and characteristics before they entered college, which influence the institution’s organizational features and environment. These three factors influence the fourth variable, interaction with faculty and peers, which in turn shapes the quality of student effort. According to his model, student effort can be affected by an individual student’s personal traits, the college environment itself, and the people on campus who interact with the student. We know that students performing at a low level are more likely to cheat (Drake, 1941; Scheers & Dayton, 1987; Pino & Smith, 2003) thus, if faculty influences students to do their best work, they might not be as desperate to cheat due to the possibility of failing the course. Simply put, “Direct contact between students and faculty members is a simple and effective way to interest students in learning” (Astin, 1985, p. 163).

The faculty member’s ability to spark their students’ interest is related, in my opinion, to the acquisition of intellectual virtue. Wisdom and understanding, the foundation of intellectual virtue, is acquired with greater analysis on the part of the student. This analysis is possible, in part, due to the feedback received from faculty. Thus, the Pascarella model illustrates the crucial role that faculty play in the attitudinal development of students and provides a foundation to understand how student-faculty interaction can impact academic dishonesty.
Overview of Methodology

In seeking to develop an explanatory model about the impact of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty, a grounded theory case study design was used. Through stratified purposeful sampling and criterion sampling, qualitative data was collected from 10 students and 11 faculty members during private, confidential interviews lasting approximately 60 minutes each. The interviews took place in September and October 2011 at a large community college campus in California.

All of the students interviewed have attended community college for at least two semesters, with some attending for as many as 10 semesters. Two of the students have also attended a four-year university but their responses were limited to their community college experience. The students, four male and six female, come from a variety of majors and have diverse career goals. All of the students plan to transfer to a four-year university. The seven male and four female faculty members, who will be referred to as professors, were from a variety of disciplines including the humanities and the sciences. Six are currently full-time employees, two are retired but currently teaching part-time, and two are part-time employees. The nine faculty members who are currently working full-time or who are now retired full-time faculty have a mean of 18.5 years of teaching experience. The two part-time faculty members have a mean of 10.5 years in the classroom. Of the 11 faculty members, all but two have also taught at a university during their career.

One instrument was used for students and another similar, yet slightly different, instrument was used for faculty. The results were used to analyze and interpret the effects of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty. By studying these two
groups at the same college, assertions about the student-faculty relationship could be made, which was the researcher’s ultimate goal. After examining the data, theoretical explanations about the impact of student-faculty relationships in community colleges of a similar size and demographic were possible. Such explanations, or generalizations, can ultimately lead to creation of a theory (Schwandt, 2007), which can be useful to other community colleges.

**Limitations**

Since a limited number of students and faculty from a single community college constituted the sole source of the data, this study was limited in scope and size. Although it may be challenging to draw broad conclusions that could be applied to any community college, the reader may be able to match the research context with another context and thus add to greater understanding. Rich, thick descriptions of the interviews and the subject’s background will contribute to the transferability of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Through the concept of transferability, since qualitative research “implies an emphasis on exploration, discovery, and description” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 8), this study was able to provide rich descriptions of how the student-faculty relationship influences academic dishonesty.

The students’ background and characteristics before they entered college, such as the educational achievement of the of their parents or their socio-economic status, in addition to the institution’s organizational features and environment, as part of Pascarella’s model, were not controlled for in this study. The size of this study and the non-probability nature in which participants were chosen precluded comparison between students with different inputs and experiences.
Delimitations

This study examined the effects of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty in hopes of shedding light on how faculty behavior might shape student behavior. Since the number of participants was limited to 21, the material was studied in-depth to provide a greater understanding of how student-faculty interaction can affect cheating. Most studies on academic dishonesty are quantitative; therefore a qualitative approach was able to provide new perspectives on this topic. However, due to the nature of the study, it may be difficult to draw significant conclusions from the results.

Organization of the Dissertation

The remaining chapters of this dissertation will appear as follows: Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, References, and Appendices. Several topics related specifically to academic dishonesty and also to student-faculty interaction will be explored in the Literature Review. The Methodology chapter will discuss the methods used in the study and the Results chapter will provide the data that was gathered from the study. The Discussion chapter will provide an analysis of the findings, suggest a theoretical model, and offer suggestions for practice and future research, followed by References and Appendices.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Student-faculty interaction has a number of positive effects on college students, from inspiring a student to put forth their best effort to giving them the confidence to go on to graduate school (Hathaway et al., 2002). However, it is a relationship that can also have negative implications in terms of student development, persistence, and behavior. Students who feel their instructor is aloof or not concerned with their educational progress may lose interest in their schoolwork, or it could even provoke them to commit academic dishonesty (Schraw et al., 2007).

Empirical literature of two distinct subjects, academic honesty and student-family interaction, will be examined since this study addresses both topics. To begin the literature review, the term academic dishonesty is defined, followed by an examination of studies that have documented the frequency, reasons, and methods of student cheating. Student characteristics that tend to increase the likelihood of cheating are examined, as well as pedagogical and classroom factors that affect cheating. The connection between academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction will be made by examining literature that pertains to how this relationship affects learning. The portion of the literature review pertaining to student-faculty interaction describes the various types and frequency of non-classroom communication. The review of this area of the literature concludes with a discussion of the impact student-faculty interaction can have on academic dishonesty.

The primary gaps in these two areas of the literature is the lack of research involving community college students and the lack of qualitative research in regard to academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction. The vast majority of studies on the
topics of student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty examined students attending four-year universities, to the exclusion of other sectors of higher education, including community colleges. The student population of community colleges is quite different than what is typically seen on a university campus. Only about one-third of the student population is recent high school graduates, which make up the majority of university undergraduate student populations. The other two-thirds of community college students are returning students who are seeking additional job training, and those who enroll in class for self-development (Chen, 2011). About half of the students are age 26 or older, which is higher than the typical university student. Additionally, the majority of studies about academic dishonesty have relied on quantitative data, while this study will use qualitative data. This study will help close some of the gaps in knowledge by including rich descriptions and explanations from a wider variety of students.

Following the review of empirical literature on academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction, the theoretical framework will be presented. The theoretical framework for this study relies on student development theory; a summary of how this framework applies to the study will be provided.

**Definitions of cheating and academic dishonesty**

Broad definitions of cheating often include a reference to fraud, thus Gehring and Pavela (1994) define academic dishonesty as “an intentional act of fraud.” In academia, this could mean using unattributed text verbatim in an essay, copying test answers from another student on a test, fabricating a lab experiment, or buying a term paper online. Dozens, if not hundreds, of variations of academic dishonesty have been documented through the years, cutting across all academic disciplines (Cizek, 1999; Moran, 2008).
Although the methods can range from simple to sophisticated and old-fashioned to high-tech, they all share one attribute: fraud. Through deception and trickery, a person who commits fraud essentially creates an illusion, making something appear genuine when it is actually a fake.

While a general consensus exists that cheating is unethical (Barnett & Dalton, 1981), a universally accepted definition of what constitutes academic dishonesty is elusive. The ambiguity is related to a difference in perception by faculty and students (Pincus & Schmelkin, 2003). Although students and faculty agree that certain examples of cheating, such as plagiarism and test stealing, are wrong, other types of cheating such as collaborating with another student when the assignment was supposed to have been done individually, is not considered to be unethical by all faculty and students (Fass, 1986).

**Frequency of academic dishonesty in higher education**

Although the problem in academia has been documented since the turn of the 20th century (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Campbell, 1931), rates of academic dishonesty in colleges have slowly risen through the decades. When Drake conducted a study in 1941, he found the cheating rate was 23%, which is considered the lowest level documented in the U.S. (Cizek, 1999). In his study, 126 women were allowed to self-grade a weekly test in an unknown subject for a total of six weeks. One student said she cheated all six weeks, another cheated a total of five weeks, seven cheated four times and 30 students cheated on at least one test. Goldsen, Rosenberg, William, and Suchman (1960) documented that cheating had risen to 38% in 1952, and then to 49% in 1960. Just four years later, Hetherington and Feldman conducted a study in which they devised three
opportunities for 78 students to cheat: on a 90-question multiple-choice test, on an essay exam, and by peeking at materials on a professor’s desk while it was left unattended. The Hetherington and Feldman study (1964) revealed that 59% of the students were observed cheating. A study of 87 men and 113 women by Baird (1980) documented that 76% of the students admitted cheated in college, the same year that Sierles, Hendrickx, and Circle (1980) documented it as high as 88%. In a rare look at academic dishonesty in a two-year college, 265 community college students in Georgia were surveyed and 46% said they have cheated in college and 82% said they have seen other students cheating (Smith & Davis, 2003). Rettinger and Kramer (2009) surveyed 76 female and 78 male undergraduates and found that 73% said they had committed at least one of 17 specific types of cheating. Of those who cheated, about half said it was “serious cheating” such as plagiarism or test cheating, compared to the remainder who said they cheated on homework assignments.

A possible reason for the wide disparity in the number of incidents, which has spanned 40% to 90% (Jendrek, 1992), is that many studies rely on self-reporting by students (O’Connor, 2003). However, some have found that most estimates have remained “well over 50%” for many years (Schmelkin et al, 2008). In these quantitative inquiries, students are often asked if they, or their peers, have engaged in various types of behavior such as copying from another student during a test or making up references for a paper. Because the student’s perception of what constitutes cheating is subjective (Power, 2009), findings have varied since what constitutes cheating to one student is not considered cheating by another. For example, Genereux and McLeod (1995) found that students tend to under-report cheating, however, other studies have found students were
over-reporting their amount of cheating (Brown & Emmit, 2001; Karlins, Michaels, & Podlager, 1988). For the most part, higher education studies about academic dishonesty have involved students at four-year institutions. While both public and private college students have been studied, there is a lack of studies involving community college students.

**Reasons for cheating**

Some students cheat because they feel under pressure to earn good grades or they simply need to pass a class with a minimum grade (Lathrop & Foss, 2000; Anderman & Murdock, 2007). Others might be concerned with their self-image or how they appear to their peers, yet some students may doubt their academic abilities (Anderman & Murdock, 2007). Outside commitments, such as work or athletic obligations, might not leave them enough time to prepare for a test or complete a written assignment (Lathrop & Foss, 2000).

Undergraduate students report they experience pressure to maintain a high grade point average GPA in college so they can be more competitive in the job market or gain admission to graduate school (Cizek, 1999). Thus, motivated to possess a stellar college transcript, some students resort to cheating to maintain high grades (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002; Carroll, 2004). It could be a one-time occurrence in a single course or it could become a pattern that pervades every course being taken by a student.

**Methods of cheating**

Cizek (1999) identified three “domains” of cheating: “cheating by taking, giving, or receiving information from others; cheating through the use of forbidden materials or information; and cheating by circumventing the process of assessment” (p. 39). The first
category can involve a variety of schemes including the use of codes such as foot tapping, displaying colored candies on a test sheet, or placing a hand or eraser in a particular location of a desk to indicate a multiple-choice answer. In all, Cizek identified 15 specific methods for obtaining or communicating test answers. For the second category, Cizek identified 20 methods in which students use forbidden materials. Examples include inserting a small piece of paper containing study notes into the barrel of a pen or a bag of food, writing answers on desks or body parts, and writing the inside of a water bottle label. The last category involves taking advantage of the testing protocol such as orchestrating for a disturbance outside of class that will distract the instructor.

As an example of students receiving forbidden material, test questions generated by a publisher were circulated among at least 200 students in a senior-level business class at the University of Central Florida (Berrett, 2010). The questions appeared on a midterm given by Professor Richard Quinn, who said he felt “physically ill, absolutely disgusted, completely disillusioned” after making the discovery. All 600 students enrolled in the class were required to re-take the test, even if they had not participated in the scheme. Some students who participated justified their actions by saying they were simply relying on available resources and considered the test questions as a study guide because the professor had said on the first class session that he writes his own tests. This defense was rejected by the university administration and testing experts who said the students should have known that such material, distributed by students and not the professor, was unauthorized and thus would constitute cheating.

Beyond tests, students can purchase term papers from a paper mill, a for-profit company that buys and sells student work. This business model began drawing concern
after colleges were inundated with World War II veterans enrolling in college due to the GI Bill (Morgan & Vaughn, 2010). Today, obtaining a pre-written essay or term paper can be accomplished in a few minutes, 24 hours a day, via the Internet. More than a decade ago, Cizek (1999) compiled several websites that sell papers and give tips on how to cheat in class and since then, the problem has only grown (Bauman, 2009). Currently, there are more than 400 websites offering complete papers with names such as “jackpot papers,” “write my paper,” “cheap term papers,” and “ghost papers,” offering term papers, essays, and book reviews on a variety of subjects including some niche topics such as universal health care and the depreciation and sale of assets. So-called paper mills receive requests from students of various majors who procrastinate or simply want to avoid doing the work (Dante, 2010). One ghostwriter, who estimated he would make a $66,000 income in 2010, said he has written a dozen theses for graduate students (Dante, 2010). An emerging trend shows that students are now turning to social-networking and content-sharing sites even more than paper mills (Parry, 2011). The creator of Turnitin, a plagiarism-detection service used by educators throughout the world, examined 40 million papers that were submitted over 10 months by college and high school students. They found that one-third of the “matched content” came from sites such as Wikipedia, Yahoo Answers, Answers.com, and Facebook. Only 15 percent came from paper mills or paper-sharing sites and one quarter of the material came from legitimate education sites. Educators are being advised to refrain from assigning “classic” papers that can be bought and sold online (Phillips & Horton, 2000; Renard, 2000).

The Internet has allowed convenient access to written passages, even complete term papers, in a fraction of the time that it would have taken to locate a book and type
the sought-after material. More sophisticated methods of college cheating are indeed possible due to modern technology (Marcoux, 2002, Lincoln, 2009). For example, students taking a test can search the Internet using their cell phones, send a text message to a classmate across the room, or contact someone outside the classroom. They can even seek out a stranger during the exam by texting a question to various free online services that deliver a quick, brief answer (Moran, 2008).

**Characteristics of students who cheat**

Much research in the area of academic dishonesty has been done on what type of student is likely to cheat. One of the most commonly documented findings is that male students more often admit to cheating than do women (Calabrest & Cochran, 1990; Davis et al., 1992; Newstead, Franklyn-Stokes & Armstead, 1996; Pino & Smith, 2003). However, there are some exceptions such as Haines et al. (1986) that found no differences in cheating rates among men and women. Although more men admit to cheating, higher instances of cheating by women have been reported in more recent years (Graham, Monday, O’Brien, & Steffen, 1994).

Several studies have demonstrated there is a relationship between cheating and a student’s grade point average (GPA). Whitley (1998) suggests that students with a low GPA are more likely to cheat due to weak study skills, numerous absences, and low productivity. In addition, students who procrastinate, are overly involved in extracurricular activities, or get anxious when taking tests can be at higher risk for cheating. In an early study, Drake (1941) examined 126 female college students and found that none of the “A” students cheated, compared to 75 percent of the “D” students and 67 percent of the “F” students. Thus, Drake (1941) believes that the primary reason
students are cheating is due to necessity: “From this it may be inferred that the poorest students tend to cheat the most; that is, they tend to cheat in proportion to their needs” (Drake, 1941, p. 419). Scheers and Dayton (1987) found that 21% of students with a high GPA level self-reported that they had copied answers on a test, compared to 86% of students with a low GPA level. Pino and Smith (2003) found that students with higher class standing and lower GPAs were more likely to admit to cheating. Other studies that used correlations instead of percentages to express the relationship did not demonstrate as strong of findings, yet they still point to a connection between achievement and cheating. Graham et al. (1994) asked Midwestern college students to self-report their instances of cheating and their GPA students, resulting in a weak correlation. A survey of 232 Rutgers University students found a slightly negative relationship (Moffatt, 1990). The varied findings in these quantitative studies illustrate the need for additional qualitative research that will help illuminate the varied reasons for student cheating.

Although it is assumed that less cheating occurs in college than in high school (Baird, 1980), numerous studies have found that the age of the college student can be a factor in whether or not they cheat. Several decades ago, Harp and Taietz (1966) found that juniors and seniors cheat more than freshmen, and Moffatt (1990) found that upperclassmen cheat more than younger students. Graham et al. (1994) found a slight correlation between cheating and traditional-aged college students and Newstead et al. (1996) found that younger students tended to cheat more than older students.

Two factors in particular that can increase cheating are high-stakes exams and professors who do not properly monitor students when they are taking tests (Schraw et al., 2007). Pedagogically, Whitley and Keith-Spiegel (2002) provide strategies that
professors can use to reduce the likelihood of cheating, such as explaining how a course or assignment fits into the curriculum so that students understand the value of their learning, and using assignments and textbooks that are appropriate to the course level. They also suggest using study guides so that students don’t feel overwhelmed before a test and inviting students to ask questions about lectures and textbook material. Assigning more narrow topics that are interesting may also decrease academic dishonesty, as well as the practice of reviewing student work in progress (Harris, 2010). Outside of class, professors can make themselves accessible to students by holding scheduled office hours and promptly responding to student emails (Whitley and Keith-Spiegel, 2002). Despite that tutoring sessions might be conducted by a teaching assistant, professors who attend some of them which could give students a greater feeling that the professor cares about their learning (Rodabaugh, 1996).

Since we know that some students cheat because they are under pressure to get a good grade, Whitley and Keith-Spiegel (2002) suggest several ways of reducing stress, and thus decreasing the motivation for academic dishonesty. Instead of accessing a student’s knowledge by testing only, professors should use a variety of assignments so that one single assignment will not make or break their grade.

**Institutional efforts to address cheating and academic dishonesty**

Higher education has responded to the ongoing problem of academic dishonesty by taking both a proactive and a reactive approach. To prevent academic dishonesty, some colleges in recent years have distributed their institution’s academic dishonesty policy to professors, either with a requirement or a strong recommendation, to include the passage in their course syllabus. For example, the Yale College Writing Center’s website
includes sample language that any Yale professor can insert into their syllabi. The statement reads, in part, “By far the deepest consequence to plagiarizing is the detriment to your intellectual and moral development: you won’t learn anything, and your ethics will be corrupted” (Yale University, 2011). Faculty development workshops on plagiarism and cheating are becoming more common as a means of informing educators about how students cheat, how to prevent it, and what to do if it happens. Some community colleges offer a plagiarism workshop at the beginning of each academic year. A mixed-methods study of 288 chief academic affairs officers or provosts at four-year public and private colleges/universities and community colleges, found that quantitatively, all three types of institutions ranked faculty training at the top of their list of academic dishonesty preventative measures (Boehm, Justice, & Weeks, 2009). Qualitatively, the administrators believed that providing clear definitions and specific examples of academic dishonesty would be most effective. Other initiatives that received high marks included effective classroom management strategies and placing an “XF” on official transcripts of academically dishonest students with replacement of the designation by an “F” after the student completed an educational program.

Taking the offensive, some institutions are designating administrative personnel to review the increasing number of reports that are being filed by faculty members. For example, some community colleges have specifically assigned an administrator to handle academic dishonesty cases, while others have created a committee to handle the issue.

**Student and faculty perceptions on cheating**

Students and faculty have different beliefs in regard to cheating, which in turn, influences their opinions on what particular behaviors constitute academic dishonesty.
Whitley and Keith-Spiegel (2002) identified five norms that guide student opinions and behavior: old tests are fair game as a study tool, even if the professor has not given their approval; “shortcuts” in the form of condensed books, unread references in a term paper, and manufacturing lab results, are acceptable; helping someone with homework or proofreading their paper for grammatical errors is acceptable as long as the person is a friend; selective plagiarism, by omitting quote marks when quoting material and leaving sources off the reference list, is okay; and taking advantage of sympathetic professors by fabricating excuses for missed assignments and tests. In a study of 265 community college students in Georgia, 45% consider cheating to be socially acceptable. Male students, sophomores, and dormitory residents all said they believe cheating is socially acceptable, as compared to their counterparts (Smith & Davis, 2003).

In contrast, some faculty members are more tolerant of certain behaviors because they want to give the student the benefit of the doubt (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). Some do not consider it cheating when a student marks multiple answers on a test or omits sources from a reference list. Other faculty members believe that students might not understand the proper way to cite sources and that proofreading should be done by students themselves, instead of a peer. Still, other faculty members tolerate certain behavior that is similar to tradition, such as reading a condensed version of a book instead of the full version. Because the norms in regard to cheating vary between students and faculty, there is a lack of consensus on what exactly constitutes cheating.

While students and faculty agree that certain behaviors should definitely be categorized as cheating, the egregiousness of some actions clearly varies. Using a variety of studies, Whitely and Keith-Spiegel (2002), assembled a lengthy list of behaviors that
could be deemed academic dishonesty. At least 90 percent of both students and faculty ranked certain behavior as academic dishonesty: having someone take a test or write a term paper for another student, giving an answer to a student or allowing them to copy an answer during a test, purchasing a term paper, and using a cheat sheet during a test. However, faculty members consider some behaviors to be much more objectionable than do students, such as changing lab results to enhance the report and unauthorized collaboration. This lack of consensus on what constitutes cheating can be confusing for students and faculty alike. Faculty might report a student for behavior that the student thought was permissible or the faculty’s reaction might be harsher than a student might expect.

**Student-faculty interaction**

Since the mid-1950s, when research began examining student-faculty interaction, positive educational outcomes have been documented in dozens of studies. Levels of learning can be increased (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004), GPA can be positively effected (Anaya & Cole, 2001), students may want to continue longer in college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), and be encouraged to continue on to graduate school (Hathaway et al., 2002). Kim (2006) found a circuitous relationship between students’ GPA and higher degree attainment, in terms of the effects of student-faculty interaction. Some students who had more frequent interaction with faculty saw a boost in their GPA, which encouraged them to go to grad school, which in turn, furthered more contact with faculty.

Students want to be treated with respect by their instructors and when they perceive that they are not being treated fairly, the likelihood of cheating can increase (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). Indeed, the student-faculty relationship can be a factor
in academic dishonesty. “Creating relationships between students and faculty that foster
trust and respect may be the first step in creating long-term, lasting solutions for
promoting academic integrity” (Tippett et. al, 2009). Johnson (2005) argues that students
are motivated to cheat when the professor fosters an adversarial relationship by placing
undue control and emphasis on grades. But when students and faculty work together as a
team in the learning process, “cheating is all but impossible, and the motivation to do so
is also diminished” (p. 1).

**Type and frequency of non-classroom communication between students and faculty**

Not all communication between students and faculty occurs during the scheduled
class session. This study examines, in part, how the student-faculty relationship is
cultivated through non-classroom interaction. One-on-one communication can be more
personalized, lengthy, and meaningful because it gives the student and faculty an
individualized opportunity to get better acquainted. Moeck (2003) argues that faculty
needs to “become more than merely a remote icon.” (p. 485). They need to be able to
recognize when students are stressed out and need appropriate support services.

While the benefits of student-faculty interaction have been well documented, it
has also been established that various types of non-classroom communication do not
produce equal benefits. Key factors in determining the impact of the interaction include
its *focus* (Kuh & Hu, 2001), in addition to the *purpose* and *quality* (Astin, 1993;
Ishiyama, 2002). For example, a student’s knowledge acquisition and skill development
are more affected by focused, specific interactions rather than more standard interactions.

For the more than half-century that educational outcomes of student-faculty
interaction have been studied, the frequency of interaction has remained relatively low
(Cox & Orehovec, 2007). Cox, McIntosh, Terenzini, Reason, & Quaye (2010) found that freshmen rarely have substantive dealings with their instructors outside of class, a finding the authors called “troubling.” In addition, first-generation students and those with low self-esteem may have difficulty talking to their professors, according to data from The National Survey of Student Engagement (2008).

The research also shows that not all professors interact to the same degree. Those who are friendlier and have stronger social skills were more likely to have non-classroom communication (Wilson, Wood, & Gaff, 1974; Einarson & Clarkberg, 2004). In addition, professors with a more “student-centered philosophy of education” were more likely to have interaction with students outside of the classroom (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Einarson & Clarkberg, 2004; Cotton & Wilson, 2006). The employment status of the professor can also be used to predict student-faculty interaction, with full-time professors being more likely than part-time professors to make a connection with a student outside of the classroom (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Umbach, 2007; Cox et al., 2010). Female professors interact with students less than male professors but this may be a result of student expectation (Cox et al., 2010).

The impact of student-faculty interaction on cheating

While student behavior can be motivated by social norms (Kohlberg, 1979), research has shown (Stern & Havlicek, 1986) that actions also be motivated by positive student-faculty interaction. We have known for several decades that informal interaction with faculty can impact intellectual development, understanding of material, and elevate a student’s sense of independence (Chickering, 1969). In other words, when students feel more comfortable in the courses being taken and with the professors teaching those
courses, their minds are more likely to absorb the content knowledge being taught and thus, they are less likely to have a need to cheat.

Several studies have shown that a positive student-faculty relationship can impact the likelihood of academic dishonesty. For instance, positive or negative attitudes toward a professor can have an influence on whether a student decides to cheat. Student participants in a study by Schraw et al. (2007) said if they respect a teacher and feel as though the teacher cares about them, they are less likely to cheat. In their study, one student, Mary, said students who feel the teacher is not concerned about them would be more likely to “get them back” by cheating. The quality of effort displayed by a student can be impacted, in part, by interaction with faculty, according to a causal model developed by Ernest T. Pascarella (1984). The model provides the theoretical framework for this study.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Contemporary Research in College Impact**

Studies on the impact of college on students have proven that external forces can have a powerful effect on students, both negative and positive. The primary theoretical framework guiding this study was Pascarella’s general model for assessing student change (1984) because it considers students’ interaction with socializing agents on campus. The model contains five variables that shape the quality of student effort, beginning with a student’s background and characteristics before they entered college and the institution’s organizational features. These variables influence the university’s environment which influences the fourth variable—interaction with faculty and peers—which, in turn, shapes the fifth variable, the quality of student effort. Thus, a student’s
efforts are affected by his or her personal traits, the college environment itself, and the
people on campus who interact with the student, the same factors that mediate the
structural features of the institution.

**Pascarella’s General Model for Assessing Student Change**

Other prominent theories on student change also account for variables that
contribute to the shaping and development of students. Astin’s I-E-O model (1962) takes
into consideration the distinctiveness of the college student when they arrived at the
institution and the people and things to which they are exposed in college. Considering
various aspects of the student before they arrived at college and what they experienced
during college, Astin uses his model to determine how they have changed after attending
college. The “I” in the model stands for *input*, which includes the student’s gender, age,
race, career plans, high school grades, and college admission test grades. The “E” is for
the *environment* to which the student is exposed, such as faculty, peers, programs,
politics, and educational experiences. The “O” stands for *outcomes*, meaning the change
or growth that happens to a particular student when exposed to certain environmental
factors. While this is a well-regarded theory, it is not as useful to this particular study
because pre-college data was not planned to be collected.
Tinto’s Theory of Student Departure (1993) takes a different approach to student change and development in examining why students drop out of college. His theory considers the student’s attributes before they came to college, their goals, institutional experiences, integration, and outcomes. As with Astin’s theory, Tinto’s theory is not applicable as a theoretical framework for this study because detailed pre-college data on students was not intended to be considered, nor was it collected.

Kuh (1981) identified several conditions that can impact the quality of the experience of undergraduate students. Those factors include having a sense of community, continuity, and involvement by students and faculty; a generative learning community with supportive people; the quality of student and faculty effort; and having a clear and steady reason for attending college. Although faculty effort is considered as a contributing factor of student change and development, actions by faculty are only a small part of the total picture. This theory, while valuable to understanding the issue of the impact of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty, is too broad to be applied in a useful manner to this study. This is because data were not collected regarding the students’ sense of community, their involvement on campus, or the campus culture at this site.

In comparing various student change and student development theories, Terenzini (1987) wrote, “Student change is seen as a function of students’ background characteristics, interactions with major socializing agents, and the quality of the student’s efforts in learning and developing” (p. 27). Faculty members would definitely qualify as a “major socializing agent” since they are the campus personnel who are the most directly connected to students. In addition to stimulating their intellectual growth, faculty have
the ability to influence students at a psychological level, motivating them to complete a challenging assignment or adequately prepare for an upcoming test. Thus, the environment, in this case the professor, has the ability to affect student behavior and effort. Since it has been shown that faculty interaction can influence student behavior in a number of ways, this model ties closely to the purpose of this study, which is to examine the effects of the faculty-student relationship on academic dishonesty.

**Connections of Framework to Study**

According to Pascarella’s general model for assessing student change (1984), faculty members play a key role in regard to college impact. In applying this model, we can see that faculty members are a major socializing agent in a student’s campus experience. Indeed, their action—or inaction—has the potential to affect student change. By examining student-faculty interaction in this study, we can better understand the impact this relationship has on academic dishonesty.

There are gaps in the literature pertaining to the connection between student-faculty interaction in regard to academic dishonesty. In addition, there is an absence of data on community college students. Studies show that faculty can have a strong influence on students that can impact whether the student decides to cheat or not to cheat in the class. However, the effects of the interaction, shared norms, and the factors of the student-faculty relationship that decrease cheating are areas that require further study. It was the purpose of this study to address these areas by answering these research questions:

1. What are the effects of the student-faculty interaction on student behavior related to academic honesty in community colleges?
2. What factors of the student-faculty relationship facilitate or mitigate the likelihood of student academic dishonesty in community colleges?

3. How does the community college student-faculty relationship cultivate shared norms with respect to academic dishonesty?
Chapter 3
Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of faculty-student interaction on academic dishonesty so that students, faculty, and college administrators will be informed about the potential of this type of relationship to influence student behavior related to academic dishonesty. The following research questions will examine the nature of the interaction between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty:

- What are the effects of faculty-student interaction on student behavior related to academic honesty in community colleges?
- What factors of the faculty-student relationship facilitate or mitigate the likelihood of student academic dishonesty in community colleges?
- How does the community college student-faculty relationship cultivate shared norms with respect to academic dishonesty?

This chapter will describe my rationale for using grounded theory case study design and choosing a specific community college as the research setting. In addition, this chapter will elaborate on the research sample and data sources, instruments and procedures. My plans for data collection and analysis will be given, along with details about my role as a researcher, concluding with a summary.

Research Design

Grounded theory case study design was used for this study. Developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory seeks to identify “relationships between data and the categories into which they are coded” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 218). In grounded theory methodology, the researcher uses coded information to look for similarities and differences in data obtained via interviews, observations, and/or document reviews.
(Glesne, 2011). By analyzing these relationships, theory will start to emerge (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

The process begins by labeling, or coding, words and phrases that appear in the collected data. Initially, the researcher reviews the material and identifies every possible category, which is called “open coding.” The purpose, according to Strauss (1987), is to “open up the inquiry” (p. 29). Terms and phrases, also known as vivid language, that are used by the participants are identified by “invivo coding.” The process is meant to be fluid and tentative, as further analysis will result in some categories being combined or eliminated (Strauss, 1987). Coding a lengthy interview allows the data to more easily be analyzed (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). According to Strauss (1987), coding involves analysis that raises and preliminarily answers questions about how the data are related.

Grounded theory is the most appropriate research tradition for this study because it allows for a rich and detailed comparison of data. This study will allow examination of the effects of student-faculty interaction in community colleges on student behavior related to academic honesty and the development of shared norms by students and faculty. Through coding, it was possible to analyze the interviews of students who have cheated opposed to those who said they have not cheated. Comparisons can also be made with faculty who have detected and reported plagiarism opposed to faculty who have not, in addition to those who have regular student-faculty interaction opposed to those who infrequently interact with their students. The patterns that are identified were then used to test tentative theories and ultimately develop a theory that is tied to the data (Schwandt, 2007). Ultimately, an explanatory model about how student-faculty interaction influences academic dishonesty was developed.
This case study focuses primarily on informal student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty at a community college. Students and faculty were interviewed to gather their impressions about interaction and academic dishonesty. When conducting a case study, it is assumed that the researcher is interested in studying people and programs in education because of their “uniqueness and commonality” (Stake, 1995, p. 1). Due to the small size of this study, it cannot be considered a representative sample. However, by collecting rich data, the study can have transferability and reliability. The value of transferability is explained by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008, p. 78): “Transferability refers to the fit or match between the research context and other contexts as judged by the reader.” Thus, community colleges of similar size and/or similar demographics could benefit from the study by providing a greater understanding of how student-faculty interaction can potentially impact academic dishonesty. Regarding the issue of reliability, it is not a major concern with qualitative research interviews because the same action is not being repeated by each participant (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Each person’s responses will be unique and thus, the data will be dependable because its reliability cannot be measured.

The primary research questions explored the issues involved with academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction. Therefore, a case study design was the appropriate means for conducting a grounded theory research tradition. As Stake (1995, p. 17) explains, “Issues draw us toward observing, even teasing out, the problems of the case, the conflictual outpourings, the complex backgrounds of human concern. Issues help us expand upon the moment, help us see the instance in a more historical light, help us recognize the pervasive problems in human interaction. Issue questions or statements
provide a powerful conceptual structure for organizing the study of a case.”

A case study design is appropriate when the researcher wants to study something he/she has no control over yet wants to delve into the “how and why” of a single case (Schwandt, 2007, p. 28). This study examined which factors of the faculty-student relationship mitigate the likelihood of academic dishonesty and how the faculty-student relationship is affected when a student commits academic dishonesty. Through an exploration of how the faculty-student relationship cultivates shared norms with respect to academic dishonesty, the purpose of this study was to generate a greater understanding and knowledge of the relationship between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty.

**Research Setting and Context**

The research setting for the study was Grant College, a pseudonym for a large, ethnically diverse community college in California. Most students who enroll in the wide range of academic disciplines and technical courses are age 18 to 24. One administrator is assigned to handling academic dishonesty reports filed by faculty members, which have ranged in recent years from about 30 to 100 reports.

Stratified purposeful sampling was used to select Grant College for two primary reasons. The first reason pertains to its size and demographics, which afforded a large pool of potential participants with varying life experiences. Data on 10 students, some who say they have cheated in the past and others who say they never have cheated, was gathered in September and October 2011. It was also important to me that the pool of students reflect gender diversity because most findings show that males cheat more than females. Having a diverse pool of students in terms of gender provided more complete
data that strengthened the findings. With respect to faculty members, using a site with a sizeable faculty made it more likely that there would be participation by professors from a variety of disciplines. Research has shown that cheating strategies by students can vary depending on the discipline and the assignment. In addition, studies have shown there can be differences in the level of student-faculty interaction depending on the professor’s gender, personality, and workload.

The other reason this site was selected pertains to accessibility. While I no longer teach here, I was an adjunct professor at this college and am familiar with the campus. My established connection with the campus increased the likelihood of receiving cooperation from gatekeepers. For this study, potential gatekeepers were part of the college administration, which I needed to grant permission to conduct this study on and about their campus. Because this is a sensitive topic, I anticipated receiving greater cooperation with administration, which was required to approve of my on-campus data collection.

**Research Sample and Data Sources**

In studying the influence of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty, data was collected from two types of primary sources, students and professors, that are most closely related to the research topics. Confidential and private interviews were conducted with 10 students, in addition to 11 faculty members. Of the four male and six female students, all have attended community college for at least two semesters, although one has attended for 10 semesters. Although two have also attended a four-year university, their responses were limited to their community college experience. All of the students hope to transfer to a four-year university. The faculty members were also quite
diverse: seven male and four female professors from a variety of disciplines including the humanities and the sciences. Six of the professors are currently teaching full-time, two are retired but continue to teach part-time, and two professors are part-time employees. Of the nine who are currently teaching full-time or are retired full-time faculty, their mean number of years teaching is 18.5 years. The mean for the two part-time professors is 10.5 years. Nine of the 11 faculty members have also taught at a university.

Overall, a mixed-sampling strategy was used to identify and select participants. First, students and faculty on campus who were willing to participate in the study were identified. Then using a stratified purposeful sampling technique, they were divided into different groups. This sampling strategy allows the researcher to make comparisons among the groups (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). For example, this made possible a comparison of the student-faculty relationship from the aspect of students who have and have not cheated, opposed to students who have cheated. The same comparison can be made between faculty who have detected and reported a student for cheating, opposed to faculty who have not done so. Second, a criterion sampling strategy was used to ensure that the subjects met the specific requirements to be participants in the study. This strategy was chosen because of the similar phenomenon experienced by the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Students were required to currently be enrolled at the community college where the study took place and they must have already completed a minimum of two semesters of community college studies. Professors could be part-time or full-time, but must have been currently employed at this site and have taught for at least two years at a community college.

**Student and Faculty Participants**
The student groups by which the researcher stratified the sample are students who say they have never cheated in school, students who say they have cheated infrequently, and students who say they have cheated several times. Cheating can include, but is not limited to, copying test answers from a classmate, smuggling notes to be used during a test, plagiarizing all or part of a term paper, fabricating citations for a paper, purchasing a paper from a “term paper mill,” or paying someone to write a paper. By comparing these groups, the researcher wanted to be able to study the differences in their relationship with their professor, before and after any incidence of cheating. Of those who admitted to cheating, none said have even been reported for academic dishonesty, thus is was not possible to study the differences in their relationship with their professor after the incidence was detected.

The faculty groups by which the researcher stratified the sample are professors who have detected academic dishonesty but have not reported it, and those who have detected cheated and filed a report against a specific student or students. The study revealed there were noticeable differences in their interaction with students both pre- and post-incident. By examining these groups separately, the differences in effects to the student-faculty relationship became more apparent. The creation of subgroups using stratified purposeful sampling allows the researcher to compare and contrast the groups (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Using the constant case comparison method, I was able to identify major categories that allowed me to develop theory to explain the similarities and differences.
Sampling Strategy and Process

To begin the sampling process, a gatekeeper at the research site was contacted to determine whether the college has a protocol for conducting research on human subjects. It was ascertained that a designated administrator had the ability to give approval for such a study and permission was granted. Student and faculty participants were primarily secured through bulletin board fliers, a craigslist posting, and word of mouth. As the study got underway, I made an announcement at an Academic Senate meeting and a faculty member made an announcement at a student government meeting that I was unable to attend. Those who wanted to participate were initially screened to ensure that they had attended community college for at least two previous semesters. This was done using the criterion sampling strategy to ensure that all participants met certain requirements. For the students, the criteria was they had to be a current student at this particular community college and they had to have completed two semesters of community college. Approximately five students were disqualified because they were only in their first or second semester of college. For the professors, the criteria was they had to be someone I did not already know as a colleague or an acquaintance and they had to currently be teaching at this community college. Two professors were disqualified because they were former colleagues who contacted me about participating after having seen the flier in their mailbox. (Fliers were placed in all faculty mailboxes by a mailroom employee who was unable to avoid giving the flier to journalism faculty who I knew from having been an adjunct at this campus.) Participants were then given an invitation to be part of the study and arrangements were made for an interview at a location on campus that would provide the necessary privacy.
Ethical Issues

Ethical issues connected to this study included protecting the identity of students and faculty, having no previous connections to the participants, and my position as an educator who has been a community college instructor and has reported students for academic dishonesty. Precautions were taken to ensure the confidentiality of the subjects. Each student was met in a neutral location on campus and the interviews were conducted in various outdoor locations away from other people. All but one faculty interview took place in the faculty member’s office, in complete privacy. One interview of an adjunct professor took place outdoors because the faculty member lacks an office. The identity of students and faculty was also protected by removing any identifiable characteristics that might typically appear in a study like this, such as their age and academic major/discipline. In accordance with federal regulations, a human subjects research application was submitted to the Standing Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at California State University, Northridge, for their review and subsequent approval. As a means of maintaining objectivity, I did not ask any of my former students to be part of the study. The only subjects who were interviewed were students and faculty who I did not already know from previous classes and/or connections on campus.

The final ethical issue connected to this study pertains to my position in relation to the research project. Having been both a student and faculty member at the community college level, I now have faculty status at a university. I entered into this project having personally experienced feelings of disappointment and betrayal after several discoveries of students cheating in my class over the period of a few years. My
background as a professional journalist, prior to becoming an educator, helped me to tell the participants’ stories in a fair and ethical manner, despite my previous encounters with academically dishonest students. Researchers need to be aware of their subjective selves and how their life experiences influence their work (Glesne, 2011). Through reflexivity, the researcher considers the ways in which his or her past and present shapes their research. Recognizing that I brought some subjectivity to this study, I acknowledged beforehand that this study was not focused on myself. I truly wanted the participants to “own their story” because this is their chance to provide a detailed explanation for their actions, good or bad, so that other students and faculty can be enlightened.

**Instruments and Procedures**

Using stratified purposeful sampling and criterion sampling, students and faculty members were interviewed separately. Therefore, a separate set of instruments was developed for each subgroup. The instruments included a research announcement, research invitation, verbal informed consent form, and an interview protocol for student participants and an interview protocol for faculty participants.

**Research Announcement and Research Invitation**

The research announcement was posted on bulletin boards at the community college. In addition, an advertisement was placed in one issue of the student-run campus newspaper and also posted online on craigslist. The research invitation, providing a brief explanation of the study and its purpose, was emailed to all participants once they are screened by phone. If an interview date had been established, the invitation included that information; otherwise it stated that an interview time would be set by the participant and
the researcher. Copies of the research announcement and invitation can be found in Appendix A.

**Informed Consent Form**

Students and faculty members received identical versions of the verbal informed consent form except for the reference to “faculty form” or “student form.” Both versions state that participation is voluntary, explain the purpose of the study, the potential risks and discomforts to subjects, potential benefits, honorarium for students, non-payment to faculty, procedures to maintain participants’ confidentiality, participation and withdrawal, and the rights of research subjects. Copies of the research invitation and informed consent form for students and faculty can be found in Appendix B.

**Interview Protocol**

The interview protocol includes a brief description of the study and a statement of confidentiality, before listing the questions that were asked by the researcher. For the student version, it is stated that their standing at the college and in any class will not impacted due to their responses. For the faculty member version, it is stated that their responses will not impact their standing at the college.

Data for this study was collected through formal, semi-structured interviews with students and faculty members using a multi-question interview protocol. Ten students and 11 faculty members were interviewed in separate sessions, in an effort to gather the most candid answers possible. All students and professors answered their group of questions, although there will be opportunity for follow-up questions from the researcher. The survey instruments used in the study can be found in Appendix C.
The interview protocol used to collect data from students consisted of approximately four demographic questions, followed by two questions about their personal philosophy on academic dishonesty, 11 questions pertaining to their experience with academic dishonesty as a student, and eight questions about the construction and dynamics of student-faculty relationships. The interview protocol for faculty contains the same number of questions per category, except there are two fewer questions about the construct and dynamics of student-faculty relationships.

**Development of interview**

The interview protocols that I developed were the result of reviewing the literature on academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction and thus are connected to my research questions. The questions are written to try to gain insight about their perceptions of academic dishonesty in regard to the student-faculty relationship. Informal student-faculty interaction can have a powerful effect on the student, changing the way he or she feels about a class, as Thompson (2001) found in his study of community college students. Students started to place a higher value on their courses and academic efforts after they experienced more frequent informal interaction with their instructor. A student’s self-worth and confidence can also increase as a result of information interaction with faculty (Kuh, 1995).

Some of the questions on the student instrument are identical to those on the faculty survey instrument (“How do you define “academic dishonesty?” and “What significance do you place on the student-teacher relationship?”) while others deviate slightly (“What do you think students can do to enhance or strengthen the student-faculty relationship?” and “What do you think faculty can do to enhance or strengthen the
student-faculty relationship?”)

The purpose of asking standardized open-ended questions, in the same order, to both subgroups was to enable a comparison of the responses provided by students and professors (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Less structured interviews would not have facilitated comparison as easily.

Although the written questions generated knowledge, there was a need to ask follow-up questions. Asking a subject to elaborate on their response demonstrates that the researcher is interested in the person and their responses (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Follow-up questions often lead to increased understanding, greater accuracy, and often created a conversational dynamic that may help put the subject at ease.

Data Collection

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted using a formal-semi-structured format. In preparation for entering the field, I seriously considered the study’s research framework so that its purpose and rationale could be explained to study participants. Participants can be influenced by their perception of the researcher, thus it is important to be clear about the strategy and purpose (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Because the topic is one of a sensitive nature, I made it clear to the participants that my intention is to shed light on this subject, not to penalize anyone for their behaviors.

Research Announcement

As mentioned previously, to recruit participants, six methods were used to announce the study at a specific community college: bulletin board notices aimed at students, a flier placed in the mailbox of all full-time and part-time faculty, an advertisement in the student newspaper, a posting on craigslist, and oral announcements
at an Academic Senate meeting and a student government meeting. A brief description of the study, inviting students and faculty members to participate, was provided along with a promise of confidentiality and the researcher’s contact information. The postings and announcements occurred in late August to mid-September 2011. Permission was sought and granted to post the bulletin board notices, which were replaced on an as-needed basis. The bulletin board postings were the most successful means of finding student participants and the mailbox fliers were the way most faculty participants were located. The bulletin boards were in high traffic areas, which increased their visibility among students. Professors are frequently checking their mailboxes. Therefore this was an effective way to put the information literally in their hands so they could make a private decision about whether they wanted to participate.

**Research Invitation and Interview**

Potential participants who responded to the postings were screened by phone to ensure that they did indeed attend this college and they were serious about participating. Once participants were identified, each was sent a research invitation via email and a time and location to meet on campus to conduct individual interviews was arranged. Since these were confidential interviews, I did not want to reserve a meeting room on campus because that could compromise participants’ confidentiality if a non-participant who was aware of the study recognized a participant going in or out of the room. Therefore, various safe meeting locations on campus were used to help put the participant at ease. My attire was more casual when interviewing students and more traditional when interviewing faculty members.
Separate interview protocol for students and faculty were written and each individual interview took between 45 and 90 minutes, with most interviews lasting 60 minutes. Participants were asked about their experiences with and their impressions of academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction. The interviews were conducted one-on-one to give participants the greatest opportunity to be frank and candid about their experiences with academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction.

My background as an educator helped to shape the research because of my experiences with students cheating in some of the classes I have taught and the interaction I have had with hundreds of students. These memberships guided the research questions and the questions that were asked of the students and faculty.

At the beginning of the interview, my research purpose, my employment as a university faculty member, and my status as a doctoral student were explained. After they read verbally agreed to the consent form, guided interviews were used to allow me to explore primary subjects, yet allowing the ability to pose follow-up questions. As expected, the participant talked more than me, which allowed me to observe and document their interview. It was noted when they became hesitant to answer certain questions or if they talked faster or slower during certain parts of the interview.

Exiting the Field

As each interview concluded, participants were thanked for their time and reminded that they would be contacted to review their comments and possibly seek clarification during the data analysis stage. Since I believe my scholarship will be useful to community college educators, I plan to approach several community colleges in the area and offer to present the data and findings at a faculty workshop on their campus. I
also plan to write a scholarly article and submit it to an educational publication and try to present a paper at an educational conference.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing process in qualitative research that allows a researcher to make sense of the information they have collected (Glesne, 2011). For this study, constant case comparison was used, in which the stratified groups were compared as the researcher looked for obvious and subtle variances. By making comparisons and recognizing similarities and differences, researchers can draw conclusions from the findings and ultimately develop new theories to interpret the data. The analytic process begins with a plan that lays out how the researcher will manage the large volume of data that will be collected (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

After individual interviews were conducted with students and professors, thematic analysis was used to identify themes and patterns. This was done by coding, or labeling, the interviews with key words and phrases so that connections between one interview and another can be made. By analyzing the codes, patterns and themes can be established (Glesne, 2011). Thematic analysis is typically used with grounded theory research, which is the research tradition that was chosen for this study.

Preliminary Data Analysis

Even before data collection commences, the researcher begins to consider preliminary codes based on concepts that appear in, or emerge from, the review of literature (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). For this study, some of the preliminary codes that were identified prior to conducting interviews included test cheating, plagiarism, motivation for academic dishonesty, student reaction to cheating, faculty reaction to
cheating, discipline (by institution), student-faculty interaction prior to incident, and impact on student-faculty relationship.

**Early Data Analysis**

As interviews are conducted, Glesne (2011) suggests that the researcher writes memos or keeps a reflective field log to record their analytic thoughts that are generated. Documenting these thoughts as they occur, rather than at the end of the data collection phase, will make the work more “rich, thorough, and complex” (Glesne, p. 189). It is also suggested that researchers create analytic files to help them organize the material they are collecting. The files will begin as broad categories such as subjects interviewed and will become more specific as additional data is collected. Data collection began in early September and ended in late October, which was ideal timing since the fall semester had just commenced.

**Thematic Data Analysis**

As the interviews were conducted, the digital files were transcribed by a professional transcriber. Glesne (2011) suggests that the researcher make a codebook shortly after data collection begins “so that it will reflect the emerging, evolving structure of your manuscript” (p. 197). The interviews were coded and analyzed using the ATLAS.ti computer program, software for analyzing data that assists the researcher in organizing and analyzing coded material. Using the constant-comparative method, the categories were compared against each other for similarities and differences.

**Interpretation of Results**

According to Wolcott (1994), a researcher can make meaning of the data through description, analysis, and interpretation. Using interviews and notes taken during the
extensive interviews, the researcher describes the data that was collected, then analyzes the data using coding that helps identify connections between one data set and another. The final stage of data transformation is interpretation, in which the researcher starts to make sense of the data. Glesne (2011) suggests sharing working drafts with research participants to ensure that their opinions are accurately portrayed, to alert the researcher to any problematic material, and to further enlighten the researcher with their interpretations.

**Roles of the Researcher**

As a college educator who has reported several students for academic dishonesty, I naturally brought to this study a certain degree of subjectivity. However, I viewed my subjectivity in a positive light because it has motivated me to explore the reasons why students cheat and determine ways that cheating can be prevented. Although it has been six years since filing my first academic dishonesty report to the college dean, I can still recall the feelings of betrayal, disappointment, and irritation upon discovering the student’s blatant and multiple instances of plagiarism in a news writing course. Since that occurrence, I have reported several of my journalism students for academic dishonesty, mainly for copying and pasting material from the Internet and using it in their newspaper stories without any attempt to rewrite the material or give credit to the source. In response to these incidents, which occurred over the span of several semesters, I began providing students with a more detailed explanation of what constitutes plagiarism, the consequences for professional journalists, and how students can avoid becoming a plagiarizing journalist. The actions of my former students, coupled with my reaction as an instructor, has prompted me to want to explore this topic in more detail so that I can
better understand why and how students from various disciplines cheat in college and what methods can be taken to curb this problem.

Data collection took place during the Fall 2011 semester on the same college campus where I once worked as an adjunct professor. In an effort to minimize researcher effects, the student interviews did not involve any of my former students and the professors I will interviewed did not include any of my past colleagues or acquaintances. To minimize participant reactivity, my experience of having reported students for academic dishonesty was not shared with the subjects.

Subject effects can be minimized through triangulation (Denzin, 1978) by interviewing students and teachers from a variety of disciplines, in addition to conducting member checks. All researchers bring some amount of bias to their studies, but through critical reflection, many of these biases and effects can be mitigated (Glesne, 2011). I was conscientious to maintain a reflexive practice throughout the study.

Summary

In summary, this chapter covered various topics and issues related to the study’s research methodology. Grounded theory case study design was used to understand how interaction between students and faculty interaction can affect academic dishonesty. In-depth interviews of 10 students and 11 professors, using purposeful stratified sampling and criterion sampling, were conducted individually and privately. Research questions guiding the study, as well as specific questions for the participants, were developed following a review of the literature. During the data analysis phase, subgroups were created to enhance comparison, transferability, and ultimately, theory development. I hope that faculty, administrators, and students can benefit from this study.
Chapter 4
Results

To understand how interaction between students and faculty affects academic dishonesty, a grounded theory case study design was used for this qualitative study. Data collected at a California community college revealed several themes that are relevant to the connection of student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty. During personal interviews with 11 faculty members and 10 students, participants spoke of their experiences in and out of the classroom in regard to these two topics. The interviews include the recounting of acts of cheating, types and frequency of student-faculty interaction, the effects of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty, and the effects that academic dishonesty can have on student-faculty interaction, especially after an incident has occurred. Five themes emerged during data analysis: academic dishonesty elicits a range of emotions for both professors and students; cheating has a negative effect on interaction between professors and students; a lack of connection by professors between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty; students underestimate the value of student-faculty interaction; and professors spend energy trying to prevent students from cheating, with varying degrees of success.

This chapter contains the results of data collection, organized by theme and subtheme. Data collected from professors and students are grouped separately, but within proximity of each other, so that comparisons can be made. A summary of the results appears at the end of the chapter.

Academic dishonesty elicits a range of emotions for professors and students

One of the clearest themes to emerge from data analysis was that faculty members and students are emotionally affected by academic dishonesty. While the emotions vary
from professor to professor, many of them said that they feel anger upon discovering that a student of theirs has cheated. Some professors see it as an affront to the learning process and to themselves personally. Others see it as a burdensome issue that they must deal with both in terms of the prevention and the repercussions of cheating. For students, the subject of cheating is one that they constantly face, whether being tempted themselves to cheat, being asked to help a friend cheat, or witnessing cheating during a test. While their emotional level did not appear to be as high as the faculty, the results showed that they feel resignation, temptation, and ambivalence in regard to academic dishonesty.

Upon discovering that a student had cheated either during a test or on an essay, all of the professors said that they have experienced a range of emotions: frustration, incredulity, disloyalty, annoyance, distrust, and sadness. “I think I’m more frustrated with it over time. I think before (now) I was sort of surprised and then as I became a better teacher, I’m more frustrated with it,” said one longtime professor. Among one of the most common emotional effects was anger. In describing her initial reaction, this faculty member said, “I get angry. I try to maintain my cool, but I want them to know I’m angry. I hate it. I really, really respect learning and I don’t know what they’re doing here if they’re not really trying to learn.” Another professor, who is relatively new to the profession, said, “It’s upsetting because I put out a lot of effort as a teacher, and so I feel like when students cheat, it’s insulting. It’s rude and it’s upsetting and it makes me angry.” After encountering several students who committed plagiarism early in her teaching career, another professor said she did a lot of reading and research, which helped her better understand the problem. But her early responses were mired in anger.
“Initially, I was just pissed off because I felt they thought they were fooling me. I was like a mother (thinking), ‘I know you’re lying. Why are you lying to me?’ ”

Another emotion some professors said that they experienced was disbelief when they realized that a student of theirs had committed academic dishonesty. Like many of his colleagues, one professor said the revelation that one of his students was trying to text someone during a mid-term exam was unbelievable to him. He recalled, “I’m like, ‘What are you doing?’ And my response wasn’t anger. My response was disbelief. (I thought), ‘Why would you even do that? Why would you jeopardize yourself?’ ” Another professor, who once reported 10 students for plagiarism in a single semester, recounted the time when a student copied a passage from a book from her personal collection that she had put on reserve in the college library. She was dumbfounded that someone could be so bold, saying, “How stupid do they think I am? That was my reaction.”

Beyond anger and disbelief, some professors feel violated when one of their students commits academic dishonesty. A longtime professor put it this way: “I do take it kind of personally like they’re trying to put something over on me, or trying to take advantage of me. So, I guess there’s a violation of trust when you find out somebody has cheated.” Another longtime faculty member said he experiences “tremendous sorrow, a tremendous sense of betrayal and a sense of ‘Why would they do this to me?’ It’s almost like a personal attack and then I get over that. It’s not me, it’s not personal and I calm down.”

Although most professors said that they try to outwardly appear undisturbed by a student’s actions, one faculty member said the last time he caught someone cheating
during a test he decided to publicly demonstrate his feelings, even if it involved some theatrics on his part. He recounted the incident like this:

I just came up and hulked over him and grabbed the paper and said, “Get out. Get the hell out of here.” I put on this mad façade and said, ‘How dare you do this to me? Get the hell out of here.’ And he packed up and left…He saw it as if I was insulted, which was what I was trying to do.

This instance, recounted by a longtime faculty member, illustrates how academic dishonesty is associated with negative emotional reactions, even when a professor has become more accustomed to students cheating in their class.

**Developing personal strategies to cope with their emotions**

After experiencing several instances of academic dishonesty, some professors have developed personal strategies for dealing with the range of emotions associated with it. Some of them purposely refrain from contacting the student until they know their emotions are under control. One professor said he has established a 24-hour moratorium on interaction with the particular student. Another faculty member said she prefers to notify students via email instead of confronting them at the next class meeting. However, she waits to send the email until she has had an opportunity to re-read it. “I always try to buy myself more time so that I don’t go in guns blaring,” she said.

Several tenured community college professors said their reaction over the years has tempered and, in some instances, have even become slightly benevolent. For those who mentioned an increased temperance toward academic dishonesty, it did not seem to
matter if a professor had been teaching for decades or for only a few years. After a few
initial incidents, the professors indicated that they naturally became less reactive and
personally affected. One professor said because of the number of times he has dealt with
academic dishonesty, his emotional reaction has decreased throughout the years. He said,
“I would say that because of habituation and just getting used to it, it doesn’t get me as
worked up as it used to because I expect that it’s going to happen. You know, here’s
another case.” One longtime professor said he does not take it personally. When it
happens, he tries to take into consideration an offending student’s K-12 educational
experience, in which cheating might have been disregarded by their teachers. “Kids are
kids, and especially, students who come up through the local environment where there’s a
lot of winking at it. I’m not shocked, surprised. It’s part of the animal that we’re
working with here.” Although another professor realized that a student had arranged for
someone to take the test in his place, the professor said he wasn’t offended because he
knew the student was having a rough semester. He said after the cheating was
discovered:

I was a little sympathetic to the student. One of his best friends
had committed suicide. Halfway through the semester, he told me
about it. He wasn’t handling it really well. I was appropriately
sympathetic (at the time) and told him there were counseling
services. And then he didn’t always attend class. His grades were
very poor.

What this professor said demonstrates how some faculty members are taking into
consideration how external factors could influence a student’s behavior. It appears that
the increased temperance by some faculty members is not due solely to having had dishonest students in the past, but also because they are aware of difficulties facing some of their students.

**Professors respond to cheating by “religiously” reporting it to college officials**

When cheating is discovered, the majority of the professors said they do not hesitate to report the incident to the college official who handles academic dishonesty. “And I do that religiously if there’s academic cheating. That’s one thing I’m really strict about,” said one professor. If the example is unclear, in some instances they will allow the student to rewrite the assignment or they will give the student an F or a zero grade without reporting them. Another professor put it this way: “If you’re caught cheating, I will not discuss it. I have zero tolerance. There are no excuses. It will not even be discussed, so don’t even bother.” Another professor said she does not hesitate to do an online Google search if she is suspicious that something in an essay or term paper might be plagiarized. “I’m kind of militant about it,” she said.

To help him cope with the three instances of academic dishonesty that he typically sees each year, he now confronts the student using an authoritative parenting style, mixed with inductive discipline. His intention has been to elicit guilt, in an effort to change the student’s behavior. For example, he said he might say something like this:

Look, this is what you did. I clearly have caught you here. This is inappropriate and I’m going to have to report you for this. You cannot cheat on tests. I don't think I need to explain this to you. And I don’t even like having to report you because now I have to
fill out more paperwork. I have more work now because of what you’ve done.

He explained that studies show that yelling at someone will cause them to focus on your behavior instead of forcing them to consider their wrongdoing. “And I think if you can get a little bit of guilt going it really decreases the likelihood they’re going to (cheat again).”

When academic dishonesty is detected, professors at this community college are asked to report the incident to a specific college official, who then contacts the students and tries to address the issue one-on-one in order to make it a learning experience. The professor is limited to giving the student a “zero” or no credit for the assignment or test, according to the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (Lieu, M. W., 2010). Although students can be expelled from the college for multiple offenses, students cannot be dropped from the particular class by the professor nor can they receive an automatic F in the course due to their academic dishonesty. In reality, many students end up dropping the course or ultimately receiving a failing grade in the course because of the zero grade on that assignment or test, the professors reported. However, some said they would rather have the option of failing the student for the entire course, as is the practice at many universities.

One professor said that he feels that a zero grade on a single assignment is not a significant enough punishment for some acts of academic dishonesty that are clearly egregious. Knowing that he cannot fail a student for copying a term paper or cheating on a test, he approaches academic dishonesty proactively, trying to prevent it from occurring in the first place. “My attitude is that I have no tolerance for it at all. I have to use my
own peer pressure to kind of keep people honest because a slap on the wrist isn’t going to stop someone from cheating,” he said.

**Students display more reserved emotions concerning academic dishonesty**

Compared to the professors’ reactions to cheating, the 10 community college students interviewed for this study did not demonstrate such marked emotions, although they certainly have feelings and opinions on the topic. One student listened in disbelief when a younger student in her class revealed that instead of writing a report about the beginning of the 20th century, he was going to turn in something that he wrote in high school. “I overheard him say, ‘Oh, well. I’ll just use mine from last year.’ I’m like, ‘You can’t do that.’” Another student said she was surprised when she heard about an art student’s plagiarized painting that was copied from a video game. The painting that was on display with other student work had received accolades from the professor and students alike but as her friend showed her, it had been copied straight from an image used in a video game. The student explained, “She told me that other people found out that it was from some video game. Nobody ever told the teacher. I was so upset. This guy is so talented, he doesn’t need to copy an image.”

Many of them displayed a sense of resignation toward the subject of academic dishonesty and commented that cheating is the individual student’s problem and not really their concern. When they witness it or hear about it taking place, they said that they are not surprised because they have seen it many times in their pre-college and college classrooms.

Occasionally they will be affected by the cheating, such as when classmates who are strangers will ask them to participate in the scheme. During math class, one student
encountered this situation: “They’re actually exchanging phone numbers before the exam so they could help each other. At first I was like, ‘Why are you exchanging phone numbers?’ and they were like, ‘So we can cheat. Do you want to?’ And I’m like, ‘No, I’m fine.’” Other times, they can become distracted by students who talk during a test.

Another student recalled, “I couldn’t concentrate on my test and I said, ‘Well, you need to be quiet.’ I said it loud and she just stopped and didn’t say a word. They were texting and stuff.”

Only one student displayed strong negative feelings toward students who cheat, while a few others said that they were irritated at the thought of someone stealing answers off their test. Still others seemed resigned to the fact that there will be cheating in some of their classes and were not concerned about it as long as they were not directly affected. This attitude reflected a self-centeredness that was evident among most students when they spoke about academic dishonesty. In essence, if they were not directly affected by cheating, they seemed indifferent about it.

The strongest emotional reaction came from a female student in her mid-20s, who has attended community college for five semesters. She described her feelings about cheaters like this:

It’s pretty frustrating considering I’ll be up until 4 in the morning. My eyes feel like they’re going to bleed on the laptop, and I’m continuously doing this thing, printing it out, reading it, and then going back on the computer. And these people would just log on to SparkNotes, cut, copy, paste, print, and then turn it in. It seems so simple. It’s like, “Why didn’t I do that?”
Several students said that they figuratively, and sometimes literally, look the other way when they notice what appears to be cheating during a test. They view it as the problem of the individual dishonest student, not theirs. “It is what it is. I don’t engage in it. If I see it, then I shouldn’t have been looking. It doesn’t make me feel like they are taking anything away from my education,” said one student. Two other female students displayed a similar attitude: “It’s whatever they want to do, as long as they’re not cheating off me” and “If somebody does whatever as long as it doesn’t distract me, I don’t really care.” For most students, one of the only times they said that they become concerned about academic dishonesty is when someone might be trying to copy answers off of their test. At this community college, professors are encouraged to report not only the student who illicitly received the answers but also the student who gave them. One student described her response when she suspects someone of cheating during a test: “If they cheat off me, then I feel kind of assaulted. Sometimes when I’m taking a test, I kind of get this feeling, like, ‘Are they looking at my paper?’ And then I’ll hide it. It’s so stupid, but for some reason, it really irks me.”

While not condoning cheating, one student said she refrains from labeling all cheaters in a negative way. “Maybe they’ve got something going on and they couldn’t study. Maybe their whole life is riding on this test and if they don’t pass it, they’ll fail the class and they’re not going to get financial aid,” she said. However, it begins to matter when she could be accused of giving someone a test answer. “I could get suspended if somebody’s looking at my test. That’s when it becomes important. But aside from that, no, I don’t really care,” she said.
Yet despite whatever negative feelings students might have toward those who cheat, none of the students interviewed said that they would be willing to report a classmate with several saying, in the private interviews: “It’s not my business.” One student, who admitted to cheating a few times every semester in community college, said because she does not know whether the student deserves the punishment, she chooses to stay quiet. She explained, “Sometimes they get into trouble and it’s a huge deal for some people, even though they don’t notice at that time that they’re doing something real stupid. But sometimes they don’t deserve to get a bad punishment. I don’t know the case, so that’s why I don’t really want to get involved.” In the words of another student, “Nobody wants to be the rat.”

**Students express ambivalence on whether cheating can be justified**

Although the students who were interviewed realize that academic dishonesty is against college policy, they were divided as to whether they feel cheating is ever justifiable. In one student’s opinion, “I don’t think it’s justifiable. Either you do it or you don’t, but there’s no real reason (to cheat) if you come prepared to class, you’re ready for it.” Another student, who said she could never condone cheating, believes being successful on tests and assignments is a matter of time management and seeking help through tutoring or study groups. “You have time, or you have to give yourself time and manage your time, to actually study and try to understand. So you can’t justify that, even if you didn’t get caught or didn’t understand the material,” she said. This student equated cheating to stealing and ultimately to cheating oneself out of an education. She said, “It’s not really worth it. The way I feel about cheating is like somebody stealing something from a store. So (if you do not cheat) pretty much you’re earning what you get for it
instead of just taking it.” While acknowledging that some people could have a rationale for cheating, another student said she still cannot defend the act of cheating. She feels that, “It’s not appropriate. You’ve just got to work hard for what you want and even though there are reasons why people could possibly cheat, I still don’t think it’s appropriate.” Some people, like this student, have difficulty taking tests, which might tempt them to cheat. She explained it like this: “As soon as they get the test in front of them, they choke but they know the information, because I’m sometimes that way….It’s still not justifiable.”

However, some students believe there are some circumstances in which academic dishonesty could be justified. For example, external pressures for grades, such as parents, financial aid, and/or insurance policy requirements, might compel a student to cheat in order to get a certain grade for the benefit of their GPA or to pass a class. According to one student, “You don’t know the situation that’s forcing them or making them feel forced to cheat. So I’m sure there was one case out there where it’s justifiable. I don’t want to say that it’s never justifiable.”

While not exactly justifiable, cheating is understandable and expected when the professor leaves the classroom for an extended period of time during an exam. A student recalled the time his professor stepped outside and would look through the window at the students. “He wasn’t looking at us 24/7….There was definitely an opportunity to cheat if you wanted to because he wasn’t paying attention and he wasn’t in the class, so he wasn’t able to hear people,” one student recalled. In another instance, the professor left students alone in the classroom for 30 minutes while they were taking a test, with no other proctor in the room and no explanation afterward. The student described the scene like this: “The
entire class, with the exception of me and my friend, were basically shouting out answers to each other. By the time he came back in, he didn’t even notice. But they were just telling answers to each other.”

In the opinion of another student, people can often find a justification for cheating, such as having a substandard K-12 educational experience or a college instructor who did not prepare students for an exam. In these rare instances, there could be a justifiable reason, such as negligence on the part of the professor. “But that’s where the stars just have to align. More often, it’s just that you were lazy and you didn’t want to learn,” he said.

**Cheating has a negative effect on interaction between professors and students**

When cheating occurs, professors typically lose respect for the student but try to outwardly treat them the same as before the incident however students often act differently afterward, according to many of the professors who were interviewed. So, while the faculty members try to maintain their professionalism, it seems to have a negative effect on their interaction. When asked whether his relationship with a student who cheated had changed after the incident, one professor responded, “Yeah, I don't respect them.” He described academic dishonesty aftermath like this:

Sometimes they don’t drop the class because they figure maybe they can eke out a passing grade despite getting a zero on the assignment, either the mid-term or a paper. And so they’ll stick in there. I still try to be friendly and matter of fact. Because I do believe that people make mistakes and they can correct their
behavior….I don’t excuse the incident, but I try to still have the same relationship with them.

Another professor also said she loses respect for students who cheat but that while she is well-mannered toward the student, she would no longer cut them any slack should the occasion arise. She said, “I no longer respect them. I remain polite to them, but I’m certainly not going to lean over backwards for them. And if there’s a judgment call, I will not be lenient and tolerant.” That sentiment was echoed by this professor who said, “I lose a great deal of respect for them and I certainly don’t bend over backward for them, ever.” Another professor said that afterward it might outwardly seem like nothing has changed, but internally, he is more suspicious of the student. He said, “You’re still a student in the classroom, and I’m going to give you the same respect as everyone else. But in my mind, I’m aware of what you did and I will look for things more thoroughly with you than other students.”

Others said the student’s behavior changed afterward. “There were still two or three classes and he just came in and he wouldn’t look at me. He just sat in the back,” said a professor. Another professor said that even though a student who texted during a mid-term was “super apologetic,” their relationship had “definitely changed.” The professor described the student’s behavior in the last few weeks of class: “He was definitely quiet in class and didn't participate. He was just trying to get through the class.”

One professor’s analysis of post-cheating student behavior lends insight about the quality of the student-faculty interaction, or the lack thereof. He said:
Oftentimes the people who cheat are people who don’t typically seek me out for a lot of interaction anyway. So I don’t really notice much of a difference in terms of the interaction, except that I always make sure to check their stuff more thoroughly. I mean, there’s a red flag now.

This quote is illustrative of the impact that student-faculty interaction can have on academic dishonesty, both before and after an incident. According to this professor, many of his students who cheat are distant and unconnected to the professor in a meaningful way. Several students said they would be tempted to cheat when they did not feel connected to a professor or if they felt like the professor did not care about them. Thus, richer student-faculty interaction appears to be a possible deterrence to academic dishonesty.

**Professors lack connection between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty**

A common perception by the professors is that students commit academic dishonesty because either they do not understand the material, do not want to perform the work, are in a hurry, or are feeling overwhelmed by various obligations. While these may all be valid explanations for why students cheat, one professor offered a different perspective. She believes that when a student cheats, she also has failed in terms of being able to reach the student and empower them to believe they have the capability to perform academically. “I do believe that in the end I think they plagiarize because
they’re fearful of not being able to do it well. I don’t necessarily think it’s laziness on their part,” she said.

In separate interviews, she and another professor spoke about the direct connection between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty. She believes a key part of her job as a community college professor is to empower students so they feel capable of achieving in the class. When she asks her students why they think people plagiarize and they give a long list of reasons. Then she gives them her take: “You’re fearful that you’re not good enough to write this paper to be in this class. Then it’s my job to make sure you recognize that you are good enough and that you are capable.” She elaborated on the “huge role” student-faculty interaction plays in regard to cheating:

Once there’s a relationship, you’re less likely to cheat because there is an investment and in that investment comes a different approach. So if you are a name rather than a face in the crowd, if you’re known, I think that they’re less likely to cheat. I think it plays an enormous part in that relationship.

The same professor recalled the time when a student who was set to transfer to a university turned in a paper that was written by a friend. She considers it a failure on her part that she could not connect with the student, which may have prevented him from cheating. She explained her reasoning like this:

My job is to make sure I reach as many students as possible and I have to adapt the way I have to deal with my stereotypes, my own prejudices. I have to constantly be open to trying different ways to connect with students. And this was a student that on the first day
I could see he was going to be a problem. He wasn’t engaged, he wasn’t interested, he sat over on the edge, and he missed a lot of classes. And I just couldn’t connect with him. I tried. I just couldn’t connect. And after while, I cared as little about him as he cared about the class. So it was a problem. So it’s a failure. To me, that’s a failure because my job is to try and reach him.

Another professor said she feels that professors need to take their classes seriously and treat students as they would want to be treated. “If you respect your students, ideally they’ll do the same thing. The students will take the class seriously and respect the teacher and do their best and not cheat….I think the more you get to know the students, the less likely they’re going to cheat but not necessarily so,” she said.

“If you really like the teacher, you wouldn’t do that to them:”

Students say they are less likely to cheat when they value the professor

The data collected from students strongly suggest that professors can influence the likelihood of cheating in their classrooms by the way they teach and their attitude toward students. Exhibiting passion for their discipline, coupled with a genuine interest in student learning and development, could result in students being less likely to cheat, according to several of the students interviewed. One student put it this way:

Cheating itself is really disrespectful, dishonest and, I mean, if you really like the teacher, you wouldn’t do that to them, I think.

You’re disrespecting them because you’re ignoring all the effort they’ve put in front of you to help you learn. I don’t know, it’s just— it’s really wrong.
One student, who said she cheats a few times every semester but has never been caught, said she would “definitely” be more likely to cheat if she felt like the professor didn’t care about his or her students. “I would do anything that I wanted, like if (the class) wasn’t something huge for me, but I just had to pass it. If I liked the subject but the professor is not good, I just pass it. I don’t know why, but the teacher sometimes influences you to read it and enjoy it,” she said. Conversely, she feels that a professor who is able to connect with their students and empower them decreases her likelihood to cheat. One particular professor at another community college she attended relayed advice in class that she still remembers a couple of years later. She explained why she didn’t cheat in a particular class but has done so in others:

Like my [name of discipline] class, the one that I love, I never cheated in that class. Never. Even when there was a time where I really needed only one part (of an answer), I never did. I don’t know why but I guess it was so wrong at that moment. I couldn’t do it. I see myself as something better because of the way he was treating us. But there were classes where I hated the teacher and I actually didn’t care whatsoever. Everyone would do it. I was actually helping them. I didn’t really care.

Another student said she is motivated to try harder in a class taught by a professor who she enjoys and would be more likely to cheat when she did not like their teaching style. “If I like a teacher’s teaching style, more often than not I like the teacher and the best way I can put it is like, I don’t want to disappoint the teacher….I want them to think that I know my stuff,” she said.
One student echoed the opinion of several peers who feel that the professor plays a role in whether a student is tempted to cheat. For example, a strict, indifferent professor who allows no deadline extensions and considers no excuse to be valid could actually motivate a student to cheat. According to this student:

I guess it would depend on the teacher. If you could talk to the teacher and explain to them, “Hey, I’m sick” or “Hey, I work full-time and I have four kids” or something like that, then sometimes the teachers can be more lenient and give you a little bit more time to complete the assignment. Versus saying, ‘Well, I don’t care that you have four kids and you work full time, this assignment was due yesterday, so you get zero points.’ So it might teach a student, OK then, I have no choice but to cheat to get the grade….I would imagine that I would be more inclined to do whatever it takes to get those points down if the teacher is very strict. If the teacher is lenient, then I would probably be more inclined to actually do the work because I have more time.

In the opinion of another student, the professor directly impacts a student’s ability to grasp the material, which is reflected in their grades: “I think there’s definitely a connection to a professor who teaches you the right way and you understand. This is the reason I’m getting the good grade because he’s teaching me and I’m learning because of him.”

This student said the likelihood for him to cheat wouldn’t be based on how caring the professor is, but whether he or she was able to adequately teach the material in a way
that was engaging. “I guess if he didn’t care and didn’t teach us, then obviously, yes (I would be more likely to cheat). But if he didn’t care but still taught us the right way, the way that I would understand, then it wouldn’t make really a difference,” he said. A professor’s teaching style provides motivation for students to attend class and pay attention, said another student. “If you don’t like his teaching style, if you don’t want to be there, you’re not really paying attention. You’re not really understanding the material,” he said.

Even a professor in the study admitted that she cheated in a high school class taught by a teacher who was not well regarded. The students thought the teacher “was being outrageous in the test he was giving” and so they passed answers back and forth. “And maybe if we liked him better we wouldn’t have done it. And maybe if he had been a better teacher we would have liked him better, so there!” she said.

The tone set by the professor in the class does have impact on this student who said, “If you have a professor that sounds cocky and expects you to learn everything, it makes you kind of feel intimidated and uncomfortable. I like professors that regardless of where you came from, they’ll still try to help you out.”

When asked if they would be more likely to cheat in a class taught by a professor who seemed to be unethical in his professional or personal dealings, most students said it would not matter to them because they consider it to be a separate matter. However, one student said, “Yeah, I think I would. I mean if he’s telling you that he did (something unethical) himself, then how could he pass judgment onto me?”

Many of the students, regardless of their inclination to cheat, said when students are actively engaged in the classroom they are more likely to learn and understand the
material and thus will have less reason to need to cheat on a test or a paper simply to boost their grade in the course. One student put it this way: “I imagine that students would be more inclined to cheat in the classes when they didn’t like the teacher’s style of teaching because maybe they didn’t learn as much and they want to get the better grades.”

**Yet, students say that an unsatisfactory professor is not an excuse to cheat**

Despite having a professor who is not engaging or who might not be ethical himself, some students said they still would not cheat and instead would seek help from a tutor or a study group. One student described her response to having a disengaging professor:

> I’ve been in that situation and it’s stressful. You definitely have to work. I had a study group on the weekdays and a study group before the test. You have to make sure that you know as much information as possible because you don’t know what’s going to be on this test. But no, it doesn’t really encourage me to cheat any more.

Another student had a similar perspective, especially when she didn’t like the professor’s teaching style. “I feel that just work as hard as you can, and if it doesn’t work out for you, then there’s always another chance that you can try and be more successful,” she said.

**Students underestimate the value of student-faculty interaction**

Student-faculty interaction in community colleges—inside the classroom, outside the classroom, in person and via email—tend to primarily focus on course material,
according to both students and professors. This interaction happens mostly on an as-needed basis rather than on a consistent basis, according to the students. Most students said they seek out a professor only when they need help related to the class, but otherwise they do not visit their professors during office hours or otherwise try to engage them before or after class. Occasionally, students will ask for career advice; rarely do they address personal issues even if it could be affecting their schoolwork. This student reflected an attitude shared by most of the students:

If I find that getting an A is not happening without talking to them, then I will definitely talk to them, ask them what I can do to bring up my grade, (such as) how I can better study for a test. If there’s question on the course material, I’ll ask that. I would say, depending on the class, very frequently. Some classes, not at all.

Another student said she only talks to her professors if she’s struggling in the class. “Rarely do I talk to them. Unless I really need help with something, I don’t interact with them.”

Such talks take place about half the time in the classroom and the other half either before or after the class session, with some talks happening in the professor’s office or sometimes on campus when a professor and student run into each other. “I would love to talk to everybody. That would be the ideal….It’s happened as I’m walking through campus and bump into a student. Boom, we just have a conversation right there about what’s stressing them in life or with academics,” said one professor.

Two issues surfaced in the data in regard to talking in the classroom before or after class: privacy and time constraints. Talking to professors in a classroom setting
does not afford the same level of privacy as when students visited professors in their office. Secondly, professors said they sometimes feel rushed to vacate the classroom because another class is scheduled soon afterwards. “The problem is they’re allowed five minutes between classes, so you can’t talk very much beforehand and you can’t talk very much afterwards. You’ve got to clear out….There’s 40 people waiting to come in,” said one professor who sees students mostly during his office hours. Students who have private matters to discuss, whether academic, career, or personal, typically visit a professor’s office during office hours, according to the professors. One professor said he could create a sense of privacy by talking to a student just outside the classroom, but that oftentimes they need to come to his office. “I have had occasion to suggest, ‘You really do need to come see me in my office and we’ll pursue this later, but not now, we’ve got a class to teach,’ or something like that,” he said. But since most part-time instructors do not have a private office and the full-time faculty offices are spread throughout the campus, it is not always conducive for community college students and faculty to meet in a location that provides the privacy that might be necessary for a longer, more meaningful conversation. “Very rarely do the students find their way to this office. So that’s why having office hours is kind of a joke. Towards the end of the semester, when they want to review their test before the final, then they’ll make the trek over here,” one professor said.

In general, most students said they feel uncomfortable talking in person with professors about anything but course material, especially if they have never taken a class before from the professor. Some students said they seem to sense whether professors are open to communicating with students. “Some of them are more outgoing and you get the
feeling they’re constantly outgoing in that way. So it makes you a little more comfortable,” he said. Another student said he feels more comfortable chatting with “right-brained” professors who are more creative and intuitive than “left-brained” professors who are more logical and analytical. “Not to say that the left-brained teachers are like, ‘How dare you ask me a question?’ but I definitely feel the right-brained teachers were more approachable,” he said. Another student, who said she is not shy about approaching professors with questions or concerns, said she has noticed that some professors seem more eager to talk than others. She explained it like this:

There are some teachers that have this vibe of “Please do come to me” and “Please do talk to me.” But why would I get that vibe? They kind of make it known. They’re very open about it. They repeatedly say, ‘Please come to me if you need anything. This is my contact information.’ They’ll put their information on the board multiple times. Those are times when you get the vibe, OK, if I ever need anything, I can talk to them.

Having the same professor for multiple semesters has enabled some students to feel more comfortable to talk in-depth with them. This student said he was able to open up to a particular professor because he was a familiar face. “We already had known each other for a while. It wasn’t just a one-semester teacher that you didn’t see anymore. And it was a [name of discipline] class that I was in so he taught all the subjects and I liked the way he taught so I kept taking his classes,” he said. One student said he once asked some career-related questions of a professor: “I did that once with a guy I took for three semesters. I was more comfortable with him. It was just that one time.” Another student
said some professors seem more receptive than others to answering students’ questions. On occasion, he has opened up to some of them by asking questions in the second-person, as if he’s inquiring about a “friend of a friend” when he’s really asking about himself. “They give me advice then I’ll go and put that in perspective of how I believe the situation should have gone. It’s always better to get information and some kind of feedback from someone who’s already been there,” he said.

However, a few students recalled negative encounters they have had with professors, either in person or via email. One student recounted the time when he tried to talk to a professor: “But it was just like, ‘Oh, yeah, I’ll talk’ but he was kind of looking at his watch and I was like, ‘Whatever.’ ” Another student spoke about the time she asked a department chair a career-oriented question, for which she received no information nor suggestion on how the student might get an answer. “She was like, ‘I don’t know. You’ll have to ask somebody who knows.’ ” And I was like, ‘All right, thanks. I’ll Google it.” Another student spoke of the single time she emailed a professor, which only added to the frustration she was experiencing in the class. She said:

There was only one time when I had to email a professor. I asked her, “I don’t understand, I can’t follow you along in class.” But she really wouldn’t help me. She said, “Oh, just read the chapter and I’ll go over it in class.” But she would jump from section to section, and I wouldn’t understand her. So that was the only time I actually talked to a professor, would be online, email. Not before or after class.
Most professors said the instances in which they seek out students are about equal to the times that students seek them out. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one professor said she carves out time to have a mandatory one-on-one meeting with each of her students. Another professor said a colleague of his also does this and he has experimented with the concept, but instead he typically writes, “Come and see me,” on a student’s paper if he feels they need more guidance. Another professor said he feels students should know that he is accessible outside of the classroom and he expects them to take the initiative to reach out to him. He explained, “I figure they’re in college now and they know certainly well enough if they’ve got an issue they can get me via email or they can call me on the phone….I don’t take them by the hand, except in the classroom I will take them by the hand.” Another professor spoke of the importance of the student-faculty relationship:

I think ultimately, especially the community college, it’s tantamount that we have amazing interaction between faculty and students. Because I’ve seen a lot of prejudice in students’ own minds against themselves. They’re at the community college and they’re like “Oh, I’m at a community college,” whatever.

When students do reach out, it’s typically by email, rather than in person. Their queries are usually routine questions about test dates, assignment deadlines, and clarification about lecture material. Based on comments from students and professors, the response time is usually within 24 hours, although sometimes it can be immediate. One professor said he will quickly deal with problems, but otherwise he purposely delays his response by half a day so he can provide a more thoughtful answer. On rare occasion,
a student’s email to their professor will go unanswered, which several described as a “frustrating” experience because said they only email a professor when they have an important question. Most professors were agreeable to answering emails in the evenings and on weekends, primarily because they want to be receptive to students’ needs and also because they do not want the email to get overlooked should they wait to respond. But students, many of whom are used to receiving an immediate answer when communicating via technology, should not expect a speedy response if they email at odd hours. One professor said, “They’re emailing me in the middle of the night and you see them the next morning and they say, ‘I emailed you at 3 in the morning and I didn’t get an email back from you.’ Well, please! There’s a reason for that.” Another professor said her husband gets annoyed when she responds to emails during non-traditional hours because he feels that students should come to office hours to ask their questions. She explained why she feels differently:

But that’s not what community colleges are about. It’s about helping students as much as possible. And I don’t mind. I have my email on my iPhone so I just respond as quickly as possible. Sometimes if I get an email on a Saturday, I’ll wait until Sunday night and I feel a little bit guilty about it, but I realize there’s nothing to feel bad about.

Most of the professors, like this one, expressed a willingness to respond to emails beyond office hours, however students seem reluctant to reach out to them unless they are have specific questions about an assignment or are in crisis mode. For reasons that were not clearly
explained by the students who were interviewed, they do not understand the benefits of strengthening the student-faculty connection through frequent casual exchanges and office hour visits. Conversely, faculty members might not be doing enough to increase student awareness of student-faculty interaction.

**Students typically do not seek out faculty as mentors**

None of the students in the study currently have a community college professor who is currently serving as their mentor. Some of the students said they had not sought out a mentor because they had not grown close enough to any of their professors to either ask them to be a mentor or for the connection to happen naturally. Others said they were waiting until they transferred to the university, where they would be taking more classes in their major. When asked if he has ever purposely sought out a professor to be his mentor, a male student replied: “No, not really. I just kind of do things by myself. I’m more like that kind of person.” One student, who had a professor-mentor at another community college, recalled an earlier time when he unsuccessfully searched for a mentor. He said, “There was a period when I was desperately looking for a mentor, and all the ones that I talked to didn’t really give me a different picture than the one I saw. And that wasn’t the career path I wanted to take.”

While most professors said they are not currently acting as a mentor to any student, a few professors said they were fulfilling that role on a limited basis. In a typical semester, one professor said he is advising two or three students, a practice he has done for many years. “I like mentoring. I found mentors were useful to me when I was going to school,” he said. Another professor said he believes that mentoring is an important
role for at community college professors to fulfill. “We all think of ourselves as mentors at this level. With our (community college) system’s budget, we can’t rely on the school to have the resources to do that for us. So we kind of have to help them navigate through it.”

**Professors spend energy trying to prevent students from cheating, with varying degrees of success**

As previously stated, student participants revealed that student-faculty interaction beyond the class session is minimal. Many students said they do not feel comfortable seeking out their professors for help beyond general questions about the course, unless they have had them for multiple semesters, and they clearly are not seeking them out as mentors. While a few professors spoke of the importance of mentoring community college students, most of them are not doing it. However, professors are spending time and energy trying to prevent cheating in their classes. Unfortunately, their efforts do not always work. Although many preventative measures have been put in place by these professors, cheating still occurs in their classes. With a mean of 20.9 years of teaching experience for the nine full-time faculty and a mean of 10.5 years for the two part-time faculty members, the 11 community college professors who were interviewed for this study collectively have had students steal a copy of a test, change a grade in the professor’s hand-written grade book, cheat on a test during class, plagiarize a term paper, copy a scientific lab report, and commit a variety of other forms of academic dishonesty.

After hearing about a student who ran out of a colleague’s classroom with a test, one longtime professor said she reported to campus police a similar incident that she experienced. The incident started when one of her students left the classroom during a
test, presumably to blow his nose or sneeze. When he returned, he said his test was gone. The student sitting next to him said she didn’t know what had happened. So the professor gave the student another copy of the test, which he completed. She informed campus police of the occurrence and they immediately made a report. While she was giving the same test during her next class period, a student showed up 20 minutes late. The professor pointed out to the student that she was late and the student replied that it would be fine because she could still complete the test in the allotted time. The professor recalled, “This was a girl that couldn’t do it fast, and she does it fast. And so I reported her to (the campus police) and they kind of knew these kids from some other situation. I don’t know where it all ended up.” Another professor recalled the time that a student stole another student’s notes in class right before a test. “One student in the middle of the exam couldn’t find his labs because the student that was sitting in front of him had actually grabbed them off the desk and was flipping through them while he was working on a problem….He thought he could eke out an answer before anyone noticed.”

Other professors recalled incidents of test cheating, including students looking at notes or books on the floor during the exam, talking to each other while the professor was distracted by students turning in tests, forgetting to erase notes on the back of a multiple-choice answer sheet, and plagiarizing an in-class essay using printed material downloaded from the Internet. In the latter case, his professor quickly caught on to the scheme. “I know their writing so they’re really not hiding anything from me,” she said. Another professor recounted the time that a student innocently discussed the test with a classmate outside the classroom, after believing that the classmate had completed the exam. In reality, the classmate was not finished and had told the professor he needed to
visit the restroom. The classmate struck up a conversation with the student, who had just finished the test and exited the classroom, asking him about questions and answers on the test. Afterward, the classmate returned to the classroom and finished the test. Since this was the second time the scenario had happened, the student told the professor, who responded by emailing the classmate. “I confronted him about it and he admitted to it,” said the professor.

A different professor said she became suspicious after noticing that a boyfriend and girlfriend had the same incorrect answers on a test, despite her belief that they had received different versions of the test. So on the final exam, she made sure they did not get the same version. “All of a sudden in the middle of the test, I see the guy is erasing, erasing, erasing. He had done the same version that his girlfriend had.” One longtime professor said she usually does not confront the student during the test but tries to send them a message that she’s aware of their suspicious behavior.

Copying a distinctive phrase, sentence, paragraph or entire term paper from another source has been, and remains, a common occurrence, according to the professors. Although they consider plagiarism to be fairly easy to detect, some students said they are aware of incidents that were not caught by professors. The offense can be blatantly obvious, especially when students use the British spelling of certain words or the writing is not on par with the student’s abilities. It makes it easy to spot when, according to another professor, “You have students who can barely speak English in class and then you get these beautifully written essays.” A student, who the professor said had fourth-grade writing skills, once turned in a term paper that he described as being “primo.” When he asked her to use various words in a sentence, to prove she knew their meaning,
she could not do it. Another professor said she became suspicious of a student’s work after he turned in a top-notch paper after never giving her a draft of his work in progress.

It was a brilliant paper and it wasn’t plagiarized. It was an original paper. But I could tell it wasn’t his writing. I talked to him about it, sitting down and asking him to define certain words that are used in the paper. When he couldn’t define them, I said, “Look, it seems like someone helped you with this. This is someone else’s writing, not your own.” And he admitted that he had a friend (at a university) who helped him, but it was another student’s paper.

Blatant plagiarism, especially when a student copies a passage out of a book or article, is relatively easy to spot, according to several professors who were interviewed. One professor said, “I think a lot of students are under the impression that maybe some professors don’t actually read the papers. And I tell them, believe me, I do, and if I see it, I’m going catch it. So don’t do it.”

Beyond the humanities courses, in which students typically write many term papers and reports, plagiarism has also been noted in science classes on campus. A science professor said that two of her students repeatedly turned in identical procedural paragraphs as part of their lab reports:

So I just wrote a big question mark on their report and I called them both up to the front of the class, on the side, when lab is going on. I showed them the similarities they’ve made and that’s when I had a hunch that they are both copying off someone else’s report. And then it kept happening in the future. And I just didn’t
give them any credit for that. It was not my fault obviously that
they’re cheating because I told them not to.”

This quote illustrates that even in courses where one might not expect to find
plagiarism, such as the hard sciences, it can still happen.

“Does that stop cheating? No, but it’s an attitude that comes from me.”

Professors say their approach to prevention can deter cheating

All of the professors interviewed for this study said that they try to prevent
academic dishonesty through a variety of measures. One professor, who once had an
imposter take a test for another student, said he now checks student identification cards at
the beginning of the semester to ensure student authenticity. In anticipation of the four
multiple-choice tests that will be given throughout the semester, he requires students to
turn in four blank multiple-choice answer sheets to ensure that nothing is written on them
in advance. He explains, “Does that stop cheating? No, but it’s an attitude that comes
from me. The tests are all numbered and when they hand it in, I check them off. This is
all part of creating an atmosphere.”

After receiving several plagiarized papers, a professor said she started requiring
one-on-one conferences with her students, which she said has proven to be an effective
method of preventing plagiarism. The purpose of the meetings is to help familiarize her
with each student’s writing, while demonstrating to the student that she has “an
investment” in their work, she said. “When I know their writing and when they
understand my only goal is for them to improve their writing some degree over the
semester, then I have less plagiarism because they’re really invested in what they do in
the class.”
One of the most common preventative tools for curbing academic dishonesty is to include information on their course syllabus and discuss it in class at the beginning of the semester. A student explained that one of her professors even requires his students to take a plagiarism quiz online and email the results to the professor. The point of the assignment, she explained, was: “So we understand what it is and what it’s not to plagiarize. And there’s some things that you think is not plagiarizing, but it is. So it’s strict that way.”

**Going beyond penalties, some professors do not approach cheating from an ethical perspective**

Although students are warned that they will be reported to college officials if they cheat, the interviews with the professors and students revealed that the emphasis is more on the penalties than on the bigger picture of why cheating is detrimental to student development. According to one student, “They never really address the ethics of it. It’s just, these are the ways that you could possibly be considered a cheater and this is the penalty. There’s never any, ‘Well, this is for your benefit. You should learn.’ There’s no ethical side to it.” Another student echoed her comment: “A lot of them really don’t (discuss the bigger picture), they just tell you, ‘Just don’t do it.’ ”

When asked if she approaches the discussion of academic dishonesty from a broader view, one professor said she could not recall but realizes that she should be doing so. “I feel like I have, you know, ‘You need to understand what’s going on in this course to excel in your next class.’ But not any of the bigger picture….Maybe if I was a philosophy professor, I would have a better intro blurb on that topic.”
Despite the apparent lack of discussing the ethics of academic dishonesty, some students said they realize that cheating in community college will only hurt them later in their college and/or professional career. One student described her attitude toward academic dishonesty like this:

If I cheat now, then I don’t get the information. It’s going to make it twice as hard when I get to the upper division classes, so it’s like I might as well just learn the basics now. And it’s my choice to come to college. I’m not being forced to come here. I want to come here. I like coming here. I like learning. I want to learn. So cheating just defeats the whole purpose.

Although the majority of the professors interviewed for this study said they do not talk about the bigger picture, one professor said he goes out of his way to explain why students should be honest in their work. By stressing why cheating is an affront to “discovering the truth,” he feels he gets through to his students on a deeper level. He explained it like this:

I say there is one obscenity in college and I put the word plagiarism on the board. Why is that obscene? Well, because it’s undercutting what we’re here about. We are here to discover the truth. If you plagiarize, you may not even know what you think about something. If you just take somebody else’s ideas, then why are you even here? By doing that, I’ve had fewer instances of plagiarism than many colleagues.
The same professor also uses specific examples to demonstrate the consequences of academic dishonesty. He tells his students that plagiarizing now could make it more difficult to write a report when they get a job after college and plagiarizing at the university could get them expelled. “I try to scare the hell out of them or inform them of what it will do to them.”

Although another professor said he does not always talk about the bigger picture, he occasionally discusses the long-term consequences like this:

I say that when you’re cheating, you’re cheating yourself out of your own education. So, in other words, when you’re doing this, some of you put so much effort into cheating that you probably would actually have to exert less effort just to actually study and prepare for the exam. And I say, “If you try to maintain that mentality later in life when you have a job and try to get away with something and you’re caught, you could be fired. There could be legal repercussions.” So I try to get them to understand that it goes beyond just here. This is a mentality that you need to eliminate for other arenas in your life that will come up later on.

Another professor said he believes it is up to the professors in the community college system to make students understand why cheating is bad. Regarding the role of the community college faculty in preventing academic dishonesty, one professor said: “We are the ones that have to prevent it. These kids aren’t coming up with the ideas that it’s wrong in their own head.”
Some professors try to prevent cheating through deception

In addition to plagiarism, the majority of professors stressed the importance of setting expectations for students and establishing boundaries to try to prevent cheating. One professor said he prefers to give a take-home essay because he feels that by removing the in-class deadline pressure it decreases the pressure to cheat. Yet, another professor said she prefers in-class writing because it makes it more difficult to plagiarize because they are in a classroom without computers, therefore they do not have access to the Internet. A few professors said they distribute a study guide before each test so the students will be clear about what material will be covered. Another one said she doesn’t allow programmable calculators during a test because the formulas can be pre-loaded. Still others said they write a different version of the test each time it’s given and they make multiple versions of the same test, to make it more difficult for neighboring students to look at each other’s test. One professor, ironically, said he uses a mode of deception as he tries to guard against test cheating. He explained his method that was adopted from another professor:

It’s pretty hard to cheat on the Scantron (multiple-choice answer sheet) portion of my exam. I separate the students. (I say) there’s two versions of the test and this and that. There really aren’t two versions; I just tell them there is. I print them on different colored paper, and tell them there’s different versions. And I have had very little looking over or anything like that. Yeah, very little of that. That’s just a total façade, but they buy it. Same test, different colors. There’s a number on each one of them, and they have to
put it on their Scantron – I go through this whole thing. It’s all bullshit, but it seems to work.

Most of the professors said they keep an eye on the class when a test was underway, which they considered to be a necessary deterrent. If a student needs to leave in the middle of a test to visit the restroom, one professor said she makes them give her their test for safekeeping while they are gone. Another professor explained that he tries to keep a sharp eye on students when he is proctoring an exam. “They think I’m good at catching them. I’m not. They think I am because I put on that façade. But during the test, I’m always walking around, watching what they’re doing,” he said.

One professor, who now teaches part time after working full time for many years, readily admits she could use more sophisticated methods to prevent cheating during tests, but she prefers the old-fashioned, simple approach of having students move their desks away from others. She also walks around the classroom and looks for notes that students might be using. “If anybody has a book on the floor or something that they could turn over with their foot or something, I don’t scream and holler and get angry at them. I just push it away, and without humiliating anybody but just making it harder for them to cheat. And they finally learn that it’s much easier to just study instead of to cheat.” As far as doing more, she chooses to invest her time in preparing lectures rather than re-writing exams. “I know you can’t prevent it altogether. And I know some things you could do, but I don’t do, which is like rewrite your test every time. I’m not going to do that….I don’t worry about it too much because it’ll catch up with them in the end,” she said.
Two professors suggested the need for more discourse on campus about academic dishonesty. One professor said a workshop for students might provide a deeper understanding. “The majority of my students are first-year students, and there’s a handful that never make it to one of my courses or ones just like it. So I would imagine sooner or later in somebody’s academic career they really need to know what that is,” he said. More dialogue among faculty members might enable them to tackle the problem with a united front, said another professor. “We all need to take one approach to this…because you have some instructors who are going to be a lot more like, ‘Well, you know, it’s really not the way to go about it’ and then other instructors are like, ‘What are you doing! Knock it off!’ We set the tone for our classrooms. We really do,” he said.

**Many students witness cheating, a few admit to doing it themselves**

While professors said they have caught cheating on homework assignments and during exams, nearly every student interviewed said they had witnessed classmates cheating during tests. Much of the cheating went undetected by professors, and unreported by students who are unfazed by it and choose not to get involved. Some students said they have been asked to participate in cheating while others noticed suspicious behavior during an exam. The degree of technology involved is often related to the offending student and the circumstances. In this description, a student confirms that an old-fashioned, low-tech method of cheating is still being used today:

I’ve seen people give little pieces of paper with the answers on it in really tiny scribble. I don’t know how they do. They’re professional cheaters, that’s what they are. They know how to
work the system. They’ll have a sleeve and they’ll just pull it up
or they’ll have it written on their arm or on their wrist.

Another student described a low-tech method of cheating that she has witnessed:
“I’ve seen students beforehand write on the desk, the answers, and put their paper on top
and then look behind it. I’ve seen students looking at other people’s papers and stuff like
that.”

Sometimes cheating leaves no obvious evidence, such as the time another student
overheard a classmate sharing test questions and answers with friends who have the same
class the following day: “So, she got the answers from one of them. She doesn’t tell
anyone but she’s cheating all the time. And there are some other ones that are doing it
with texting.”

A few of the students interviewed admitted to cheating themselves, both
accidentally and intentionally. During a test, a student said he inadvertently saw an
answer on another student’s score sheet. He explained the situation as, “I’m looking
around and I don’t know why and somehow I just glanced over. I shouldn’t have looked
that way, but I did so now it is what it is. So I check off what I saw and I just don’t do it
again….I felt guilty of course but you move on and you try harder the next time. You
make sure you study harder.” Another student said that prior to a test, she wrote math
formulas on the cover of her calculator. “There were so many formulas to remember, and
I’m not very good at math, even though I tried reviewing my notes right before, the day
before, everything. And when the time comes, your mind just goes blank.”

One student, who said she cheated in high school, admitted to opportunistic test
cheating once or twice a semester in community college:
I cheat sometimes, but not the kind of cheating that I plan it before, write on the book. There are some students they will do crazy things. They put in hours doing that. No, I’m not that kind. But in terms of cheating, sometimes….It happens when I read the question and it just eats you. You just want to get this idea. You just want to know the first part, then you can do the rest. That kind of cheating I will do sometimes during the test but not plan it.

Another student, who also said he cheated in high school, said he does not do it as much in community college “because the stakes are high.” However, he said he was surprised that he has not cheated more because it’s so common. “It’s like I’m going to go wash the dishes. I’m going to go cheat on my paper….I really haven’t cheated much and in the instances I did, it’s more like the kind, ‘Hey, can I see your paper?’ ” He elaborated on his reasoning for cheating less in college by saying this:

If you’re being really honest with yourself, 80% of the stuff you learn (in high school) you’re not going to need in the future or you’re not going to apply, versus college you’re going to need all that stuff because you’re going to need to apply it somewhere. So that’s why I don’t cheat because in the end I’m screwing myself over if I’m not learning and it’s a lot more inconvenient. So that last sentence kind of summarizes it. It’s just completely less convenient. It’s more inconvenient than cheating in high school.

He compared cheating to underage drinking, which he believes has become socially acceptable and an almost expected behavior these days.
You never hear a kid going, “I just took a shot. I feel really bad. I think this is a really morally bad thing to do.” They never feel like this is a bad thing. And that’s the same thing with cheating. And of course if you drink too much then that’s a morally bad thing and it’s the same thing with cheating. But on that very casual sociable level, it’s pretty much ingrained into the educational DNA of today’s school system in America.

This student’s comments reflect the opinions expressed by some students and professors that academic cheating is a byproduct of the general decline of morals in today’s society. During their formative years, young people become aware of unethical behavior occurring in business, government, and personal relationships which can create a social norm that cheating is just a part of life.

“Besides trying to make a good relationship with the students, they need to really be there for them.” Students offer their suggestions to prevent cheating

When asked what professors can do to curb cheating, the students suggested many of the same strategies that the professors are employing, such as walking through the classroom during a test, writing fresh and different versions of each test, spreading out the desks when students are taking exams, not letting students sit next to their friends, requiring them to watch the online presentation about plagiarism, and giving a quiz on the material. The importance of monitoring the classroom was stressed by this student, who said:
I feel like it’s very hard to cheat on a test if a teacher is even half paying attention. If there’s a teacher sitting in front of the class and is just kind of reading or just looking through their work, then the kid in the back kind of has carte blanche for cheating. But if you have a teacher that is just kind of walking around and tells you that you can’t have anything on there, not even a water bottle, that doesn’t take that much of an effort and it seems extremely hard to cheat. And if a kid is somehow is able to cheat, they went up above and beyond.

Another suggestion made by several students was that professors should provide a study guide before each test to reduce test anxiety. They said there have been times when they studied particular material prior to a test, only to find that they were unprepared. Such a scenario could tempt some students to cheat due to frustration and desperation. “I think that professors need to be more straightforward when it comes to what’s going to be on the test. That’s always the difficult part,” said a student.

Opinions about the impact of student-faculty interaction on the likelihood to commit, or not commit, academic dishonesty, will be address later in this chapter. However, here is an overall comment by a student on the effect of student-faculty interaction: “Besides trying to make a good relationship with the students, they need to really be there for them.” In the end, professors need to “trust that we’re all decent people” because it’s distracting when they are walking around, lifting up papers.
Summary

In summary, this chapter identified five themes that emerged during data collection. The first theme is that academic dishonesty elicits a range of emotions for professors and students. Although anger is the most common emotion experienced by the faculty, they also feel frustration, incredulity, disloyalty, annoyance, distrust, and sadness. While the students’ reaction to academic dishonesty was less intense than faculty’s, students said they experience resignation, temptation, and ambivalence. The second theme, that cheating has a negative effect on interaction between professors and students, was apparent from many professors who said they lose respect for students who cheat. Although they try to maintain their professionalism when interacting with them during and after class, several professors said they are more suspicious of a student once they have committed academic dishonesty. The third theme is the apparent lack of connection between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty. Many of the professors offered many explanations for why students cheat, which were related to the student’s cognitive level, their work ethic, or outside stressors. However, two professors said they believe the student-faculty relationship can be quite influential in whether a student cheats or not. The fourth theme is that students underestimate the value of student-faculty interaction. Students seem to reach out to professors mainly when they have questions about an assignment or a test, rather than making an effort to cultivate a connection with the professor through informal conversations and office hour visits. The final theme is that despite preventative measures, community college professors detect some cases of academic dishonesty, but from the students’ perspective, some goes undetected. After detecting cheating among their students, many faculty members said
they have adopted many preventative methods and become more vigilant about checking for cheating. However, students recalled many instances of when they have witnessed cheating or even engaged in it themselves, while their professors were unaware. In Chapter 5, findings and recommendations related to these themes will be presented.
Chapter 5
Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

It has been known for several decades that faculty members who interact with students have the ability to impact a student’s intellectual development and comprehension of course content, and increase their sense of independence (Chickering, 1969). According to Astin’s theory of student involvement (1984), there is a direct correlation between what a student puts into their education and what they get out of it. It is also known that cheating in college courses has been on the rise since Drake studied the issue in 1941 and found that 23% of college students were cheating. While studies show that number has since risen to as high as 88% (Sierles et al., 1980), most estimates have remained “well over 50%” for many years (Schmelkin et al., 2008). Examining how these two factors—student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty—influence each other at the community college was the purpose of this study.

Three primary research questions pertaining to student-faculty interaction in relation to academic dishonesty were examined in this study: What are the effects of student-faculty interaction on student behavior related to academic honesty in community colleges? What factors of the student-faculty relationship facilitate or mitigate the likelihood of student academic dishonesty in community colleges? How does the community college student-faculty relationship cultivate shared norms with respect to academic dishonesty?

Using interview transcriptions, comments by the 21 participants were coded and categorized so that results could be interpreted through the conceptual lens of the study. Through an interpretation of the results from data analysis, this chapter seeks to offer a
tentative explanation for the influence of student-faculty interaction on cheating, and offer recommendations for practice and future research.

Five themes emerged during data analysis: academic dishonesty elicits a range of emotions for both professors and students; cheating has a negative effect on interaction between professors and students; a lack of connection by professors between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty; students underestimate the value of student-faculty interaction; and professors spend energy trying to prevent students from cheating, with varying degrees of success.

How student-faculty interaction affects student behavior related to cheating

In answering the first research question, “What are the effects of student-faculty interaction on student behavior related to academic honesty in community colleges?” it is imperative to examine what kind of interaction is taking place between community college students and faculty who participated in this study and the effects that this communication has on student behavior related to cheating. For them, interaction generally occurs by one of four modes: student-faculty discussions during class, one-on-one communication in the classroom setting before and after class, one-on-one communication in the faculty member’s office or elsewhere on campus, and via email. A minimal amount of student-faculty communication occurring beyond the classroom session was reported by study participants at this community college, which concurs with previous research showing a relatively low frequency of interaction over the past 50 years (Cox & Orehovec, 2007).

In the first type of interaction identified by participants—student-faculty discussions during class—students said a professor’s teaching style determines the
amount of interaction that takes place during class. Some professors primarily give lectures, allowing for little or no student discussion, while other professors facilitate classroom discussion of the lecture material. Through these interactions, students said that professors give an impression of whether or not they are approachable outside of class. “There are some teachers that have this vibe of ‘Please do come to me,’ and ‘Please do talk to me,’ ” said one student. Indeed, the likelihood of non-classroom communication increases with professors who are friendlier and have stronger social skills (Wilson et al., 1974; Einarson & Clarkberg, 2004). Another factor that contributes to interaction with students outside of the classroom is whether the professor has a more “student-centered philosophy of education” (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Einarson & Clarkberg, 2004; Cotton & Wilson, 2006). On the contrary, another student said, “If you have a professor that sounds cocky and expects you to learn everything, it makes you kind of feel intimidated and uncomfortable. I like professors that regardless of where you came from, they’ll still try to help you out.”

The second type of student-faculty interaction discussed by participants—one-on-one communication in the classroom setting before and after the class session—takes place on a limited basis, according to the participants. Some professors seek out students for interaction, while others do so only on a limited basis. This could be a matter of the professor’s personality or their orientation toward student-faculty interaction. The interviews revealed that some professors seemed more aware of their role in facilitating student-faculty interaction. One professor spoke of the inferiority complex he has noticed in some of his students because they are attending an open-enrollment community college, which accepts anyone 18 years and older, versus attending a
university, which chooses its students largely based on past academic achievement. “I think ultimately, especially at the community college, it’s tantamount that we have amazing interaction between faculty and students. Because I’ve seen a lot of prejudice in students’ own minds against themselves,” he said.

It was evident from the data that certain students feel more comfortable talking with faculty than others, so they tend to be the ones who seek out their professors. Sometimes they have a question about a lecture or an upcoming assignment other times they simply want to greet the professor with a quick, “Hello. How are you doing?” Why some students are comfortable making small talk with their professors was not clear from the data, however, it was obvious that not all students want to engage in this type of interaction. One reason could be that first-generation students and those with low self-esteem may have difficulty talking to their professors, according to data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (2008). The college background of the students’ parents was not requested in this study, which may have helped explain why certain students did not seek out their professors.

The third type of interaction that students and faculty identified entails visiting a professor during their official office hours. Due to the location of faculty offices on this campus, in addition to the non-existent private offices for most part-time faculty, the amount of interaction taking place in faculty offices is extremely limited, according to the study participants. Several students said they have never visited a professor during their office hours and professors reported that only a few students come to talk to them in their offices. Most students said they only go to their professors when they are struggling in class, not to talk more in-depth about course content, career options, or difficulties they
may be facing in their life. Why students tend to reach out only when in they are in distress was not apparent from the data and could be an area for future research.

Email communication is the preferred form of interaction between students and faculty, according to the participants. Many professors said they send an email to the entire class at least once during the semester, to distribute course materials and/or notify students of changes in the syllabus, assignments, or class schedule. Two professors said they have established a private Facebook group for each of their classes so they can post announcements and students can ask their classmates questions about the course. Email response was also examined in terms of student-faculty interaction. Almost all students said their professors respond to their emails within a day, sometimes within an hour or even a matter of minutes. Only a few students said they sent an email to a professor without getting a response. While most students said they felt “relieved” when they got a response from professors, a few students said they were frustrated when they asked the professor a question about course content and received a curt response. One student recalled a negative experience the one and only time she emailed a professor: “I asked her, ‘I don’t understand, I can’t follow you along in class.’ But she really wouldn’t help me. She said, ‘Oh, just read the chapter and I’ll go over it in class.’ ”

The convenience of email factors into why students said they are more likely to communicate via email with their professors than in person. Many community college students work off campus so their time on campus can be limited to classroom hours only. It may be difficult for them to wait a few hours after class or return to campus on another day in order to meet with their professor during office hours. Email is also a
convenient form of communication for part-time faculty, who grade assignments and plan lessons from home because many do not have a adequate office space on campus.

Such communication fosters a mutual respect between students and faculty, which can affect a student’s behavior related to academic honesty (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). Students said they respect professors who are there to help them learn, who give fair exams and assignments based on course material, and who are available to them when they need clarification or are having difficulty in the class. “I think there’s definitely a connection to a professor who teaches you the right way and you understand. This is the reason I’m getting a good grade because he’s teaching me and I’m learning because of him,” said one student.

This connection motivated some students who were interviewed for the study to try harder in a particular class, which they said would naturally reduce the need to cheat. “If I like the teacher’s teaching style, more often than not I like the teacher and the best way I can put it is like, I don’t want to disappoint the teacher….I want them to think that I know my stuff.” said one student. Conversely, some students said are more likely to cheat when they feel that the professor’s demeanor and actions seem to convey that he or she does not care for their students. According to one student, “I would do anything that I wanted. I had to pass the class….Even though if I liked the subject but the professor is not good, I will just pass it.” However, a few students expressed their opinion that a professor’s level of caring for his or her students would not affect their actions because they believe that cheating is wrong and they would not cheat under any circumstances. “If he didn’t care but still taught us the right way, the way that I would understand, then it wouldn’t really make a difference,” a student said.
Factors of the student-faculty relationship that facilitate or mitigate cheating

Answering the second research question, “What factors of the student-faculty relationship facilitate or mitigate the likelihood of student academic dishonesty in community colleges?” requires an analysis of the shared norms established by this study since they reveal that the relationship can have an effect on whether or not students cheat. In addition, examining individual-level factors such as the personality, values, and motivators of the professors and students are helpful in determining these factors. For example, some professors take an interest in a student’s development and encourage interaction inside and outside of the classroom, perhaps because they have an outgoing personality or they value student-faculty interaction. Such interaction can mitigate the likelihood of cheating, according to several students. Some students said they value professors’ support and guidance and wish that more of them would be empathetic. “Besides trying to make a good relationship with the students, they need to really be there for them,” one student said. When students and professors do not have much interaction, the likelihood for cheating appears to be greater, according to comments from students and faculty. “Oftentimes the people who cheat are people who don’t typically seek me out for a lot of interaction anyway,” said one professor.

Shared norms with respect to academic dishonesty

In answering the third research question, “How does the community college student-faculty relationship cultivate shared norms with respect to academic dishonesty?” it is important to determine what academic dishonesty-related norms were identified at this community college. The term norms is defined as individual behavior that is influenced by the behavior of others in their presence (Fiske, 2010). People acquire
culture knowledge through various social settings, which in turn, helps guide cultural behavior. Through verbal and non-verbal cues, members learn what is right and wrong, desirable or objectionable, and typically adapt their behavior to fit the cultural norm. (Hechter & Opp, 2001). In terms of this study, how does interaction help students and faculty determine what is acceptable behavior in terms of cheating? Three norms became apparent during data analysis: failure by a professor to demonstrate a caring attitude through a variety of means can increase the likelihood of academic dishonesty; the lack of student empowerment by professors can lead to more cheating; and known cheaters should not be reported by their classmates.

Students said they have a level of expectation that tests will be diligently proctored, which may include using multiple versions of a test, spreading out students in the classroom so they are not in proximity to see another’s test, and the professor watching for suspicious behavior. Some students interpreted these faculty behaviors as a measure of how much the professor cares about his/her work and ultimately, the students. When professors fail to provide a certain level of protection for the authenticity of testing, some students said they feel they do not have to uphold their duty to honestly complete the test. This is consistent with Schraw et al. (2007), who found that cheating increases when professors do not properly monitor their classrooms during a test. Perhaps some of their behavior could be opportunistic, in which a professor makes it easier to cheat when he or she leaves the classroom or stays at the front of the classroom grading papers and not observing what is happening during the test. When that happens, some students feel it gives them a chance to cheat. “I would probably feel more inclined to cheat because if the professor didn’t care, just gave the same tests, didn’t walk around,
didn’t explain anything, left the classroom, then of course, the opportunity would be there. So probably it would happen,” said one student. From a professor’s perspective, she believes the student-faculty relationship can greatly influence the likelihood of cheating. She said, “Once there’s a relationship, you’re less likely to cheat because there is an investment and in that investment comes a different approach. So if you are a name rather than a face in the crowd, if you’re known, I think that they’re less likely to cheat.”

Another norm pertains to the faculty members’ ability to empower their students through relevant and meaningful lectures, useful assignments, fair assessments, and a supportive attitude, so they feel confident to perform well in the course. When students have a lower level of academic self-confidence, more cheating can happen because they do not feel connected to their professor, they lose interest in the coursework and get behind, which can increase the need to cheat, according to one professor. “I do believe that, in the end, I think they plagiarize because they’re fearful of not being able to do it well. I don’t necessarily think it’s laziness on their part,” said a professor. This is consistent with a study by Anderman and Murdock (2007) who found that some students cheat because they doubt their academic abilities. Another professor spoke to the difference between community colleges and four-year universities, saying that community colleges are “about helping students as much as possible.” Another professor talked about her efforts to try to connect with each of her students, regardless of how interested they initially my be in the course: “My job is to make sure I reach as many students as possible and I have to adapt the way I have to deal with my stereotypes, my own prejudices. I have to constantly be open to trying different ways to connect with students.”
The third norm shared by students is that they should not report their classmates who cheat, however, whether this norm is related to the student-faculty relationship was not obvious from the data. One could speculate that if students felt a strong connection to their professor then they would feel more comfortable in sharing with them that a classmate had cheated on a test. However, it could be a norm that is carried over from their K-12 schools, where so-called “tattletales” might be ostracized by their peers. Since every student interviewed said they would not report a student for cheating, it appears to be a shared norm at this community college. The reason for this norm was not explored in the interviews and is a topic that could be explored in future research.

**Theoretical Model:**

**Impact of Student-Faculty Interaction on Academic Dishonesty**

Based on the findings of this study, a theoretical model was developed to explain the impact of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty. The study examined the effects of faculty-student interaction on academic dishonesty so that students, faculty, and college administrators can be more cognizant about the potential of this type of relationship to influence student behavior related to academic dishonesty. The following research questions examined the nature of the interaction between student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty: What are the effects of faculty-student interaction on student behavior related to academic honesty in community colleges? What factors of the faculty-student relationship facilitate or mitigate the likelihood of student academic dishonesty in community colleges? How does the community college student-faculty relationship cultivate shared norms with respect to academic dishonesty? Using a grounded theory case study design, student and faculty interviews were coded to identify
similarities and differences in experiences, attitudes, and opinions in respect to academic dishonesty and student-faculty interaction. By analyzing the coded data, relationships became apparent. Analysis of these relationships made it possible to develop a model to explain the impact that student-faculty interaction has on academic dishonesty.

The model that was developed as a result of this study is based on several student change theories, including Pascarella’s general model on student change (1984) because it considers the potential that faculty members have to influence student development. As a key socializing agent in student change, professors have the ability to shape the quality of student effort. An engaging classroom discussion or a one-on-one conversation after class can spark a student’s interest in the course material that could inspire them to study harder for a test or conduct thorough research for a term paper. Thus, faculty members can shape the quality of student effort just by the way they engage the students in and out of the classroom. Pascarella employed an I-P-O model to explain student change with the “I” representing the input, the “P” representing the process, and the “O” representing the outcome. That same structure was used to create this model on the impact of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty. In this model, students and faculty are the input, interaction is the process, and academic dishonesty is the outcome. The model developed from this study seeks to systematically explain the impact of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty.

This study examined how the input and the process affect the outcome. As indicated from previous studies, various factors can influence the input, such as whether students and faculty members are full-time or part-time, the course’s discipline, and whether or not the student has previously cheated or whether the professor has reported
students. This study identified these input characteristics, which were taken into consideration in developing the model and making recommendations for practice. The factors that can affect the process are the purpose, frequency, and quality of student-faculty interaction. Factors of the outcome that could have an impact on whether academic dishonesty is committed include whether students respect their professor, the level of interest they have in the course, and their need to want to increase their grade.

By examining the interviews of students and faculty conducted for this study, and their interaction, it is possible to see how they impact the outcome. Results from this study suggest that those factors include the amount of respect that a student has for their professor, the student’s level of effort in class, their current grade status, and the likelihood they have to cheat, based on their respect for the professor and their desire to raise their grade. Student participants said they would be less likely to cheat when they respected the professor because they feel that cheating is a sign of disrespect. In addition, students said that they generally try harder in class when they admire a professor, which could result in better performance in the class, thus reducing their need to cheat in order to get a higher grade.

Using an I-P-O model to analyze the results of this study, it was possible to develop a model that helps to explain how student-faculty interaction can influence academic dishonesty. The Pascarella model illustrates the crucial role that faculty play in the attitudinal development of students and provides a foundation to understand how student-faculty interaction can impact academic dishonesty. Through their actions and behaviors, this study found that faculty members have the ability to motivate students to put forth the quality and quantity of effort needed for individual student to be successful
in a specific college course. Therefore, it can be concluded that quality student-faculty interaction, which is influenced by its purpose and frequency, can impact a student’s likelihood to consider cheating or actually cheat.

**Recommendations for practice and future research**

Based on interpretation of the results of data analysis, several recommendations for practice and future research are presented here. The recommendations for practice are as follows:

- **Offer mandatory workshops for all faculty members on strategies to mitigate academic dishonesty.** Professors should also be aware of the multitude of ways that students cheat, especially the latest trends involving technology. Such workshops have been offered in the past on this campus but it would be ideal to have them twice a year to increase the number of professors who could attend. As evidenced by some of the cheating instances recounted by students, it is apparent that some professors are unaware of how to prevent and detect academic dishonesty.

- **Train all community college faculty members, full-time and part-time, in fostering positive student-faculty interaction.** Community college professors do not earn a teaching credential, thus, their knowledge about the effects of student-faculty interaction and student development could be limited. Interviews with professors for this study seemed to reveal a varying degree of awareness of the importance of the student-faculty relationship and the impact that faculty can have on cheating. All professors need to be exposed to this literature and be given suggestions on how they can foster positive student-faculty interaction.
· Require students to complete a plagiarism tutorial before they can enroll in any classes. This could be accomplished using an existing online tutorial, with proper permission, or the community college district could produce its own tutorial to tailor the activity to its student population. This would help provide a common foundation for all incoming students, some of whom might not have a deep enough understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and equally important, why it is harmful to their intellectual development. According to the interviews, such training is currently happening on a minimal basis on campus, left up to the choice of the individual professor.

· Establish additional time between classes to provide more opportunities for student-faculty interaction. Both students and faculty mentioned how rushed they can feel at the end of a class if they need to go to their next class or in the case of professors, make room for the next professor to use the classroom. With only a few minutes to talk before and after class, faculty and students might not have enough time and/or privacy to be able to talk about issues that are concerning them. Allowing more time between classes might encourage some students to linger after class so they can talk to their professor, knowing that they will not be late to their next class.

· Encourage all professors to engage in non-traditional forms of interaction with their students. The reality of the school and work schedule for many of today’s community college students is not always conducive for students and faculty to meet in person. Emailing students individually or as an entire class is a convenient way for faculty to communicate with students. While it may not be ideal for highly personal matter or lengthy discussions, email provides a mode for faculty to answer student questions, broadcast a reminder to the entire class, or keep in touch with students once
they have completed the course. Some professors said they email the class as a whole a few times a month, while others said they never do. A few professors have established their own website either on the campus’ computer server or independently, where they can post updates and reminders. Two professors even have private Facebook pages for their current students to engage ideas and ask questions.

Faculty should also be encouraged to conduct office hours via Skype or a similar video conferencing platform via their computer or mobile phone. Such interactions could be scheduled so they are convenient for both student and faculty member. The benefit of such interaction would be that both people could pick up on body language and non-verbal cues that are non-existent in written emails.

- **Encourage professors to integrate specific types of interaction into class time.** Judging by the student descriptions of teaching techniques, it appears that some community college professors are conducting their classes in a traditional lecture style format, which limits opportunities to engage with students during class. Professors should be encouraged to conduct peer learning and engagement activities such as “Think, Pair, Share,” in which students individually contemplate a professor’s question to the entire class before pairing up with a classmate to discuss their thoughts, then sharing their answers with the class. While the students are talking one-on-one, the professor walks around the room and listens in to their conversations, which gives them a preview of what students will be sharing with the class. Then the professor provides feedback, and encouragement when appropriate, when the students publicly share their comments. Such activities provide opportunities to interact with students and foster relationships with students during class.
· **Reinforce the benefits of faculty mentoring.** Judging by the low number of students who said they have had a mentor and the few professors who said they regular mentor students, it appears that more education is needed about mentoring. Faculty and staff at California State University, Northridge, developed a “mentoring on the run” (Omatsu, 2002) approach that promotes mentoring students in a more informal manner than traditional office hours. Perhaps mentoring workshops for community college students and faculty would help each group see the value of mentoring and inspire them to develop strategies that are effective for their student population.

· **Further develop the “P” portion of this I-P-O model:** The findings from this study clearly demonstrate how student-faculty interaction is negatively impacted once students cheat. Deeper exploration of the bidirectional dynamic of student-faculty interaction is needed. Refining how student and faculty attitudes and behaviors work together to create this dynamic, should enable us to better explain the nature of student-faculty interaction and its effect on cheating behavior.

· **Conduct additional studies in the community colleges.** Two types of studies, quantitative and ethnographic, would help provide a greater understanding of the impact of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty. A quantitative study, involving a greater number of students and faculty than this qualitative study, would potentially add more perspectives and insights of why students primarily seek out professors when they have specific questions or are having a crisis, rather than on an ongoing basis. Much quantitative research has already been conducted on the methods and frequency of an academic dishonesty in college, in additional to pedagogical methods for preventing cheating. There is a need for more research at the community college in all of these
areas, in addition to studying how student-faculty interaction influences student behavior in terms of academic dishonesty. An ethnographic study would allow the researcher to observe and analyze student-faculty interaction in and out of the classroom, in addition to office hour visits. Such data could help identify positive and negative behavioral patterns by faculty and students, which could be used to predict which types of behavior would increase student-faculty interaction inside and outside of the classroom, thus potentially reduce the likelihood of cheating.

- Conduct a similar study at a four-year university. Studying the effects of student-faculty interaction in regard to academic dishonesty at a four-year university would provide further insight and allow for comparisons to be made between the two student populations. Results potentially could be useful for both community college and university administrations, faculty, and students.

In conclusion, this study illustrates that the student-faculty relationship can be a powerful antidote to the temptation to cheat. The author believes that establishing this unique relationship is the responsibility of the professor, who by virtue of their position has the ability to reach out to insecure, shy, and unconfident students and try to alleviate some of their anxiety. It begins with learning students’ names, showing interest in their academic development, and engaging them in conversation before, during and after class. Respect from the student often begins with gaining their trust, which can be done by clearly expressing course expectations on the first day, explaining the “bigger picture” of why cheating is wrong, and coming to every class prepared to engage them in material and discussion that will further their understanding. Giving fair assessments and meaningful assignments, while diligently looking for signs of cheating and reporting
violators, are other ways of respecting the class as a whole. Of course, there are some students, who, for a variety of reasons, will still cheat. However, this study demonstrates that professors have the ability to prevent academic dishonesty, at least to some degree, by establishing and nurturing student-faculty interaction.
References


ucf-cheating-incident-sparks-debate.html


39(7), 3-7.


Appendix A—Research Announcement and Invitation

(For posting posting/announcing in a meeting)

For Students:

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study that examines the experiences of interacting with faculty in college and also your experiences related to and opinions about academic dishonesty. To be eligible to participate in the study, you must be a current student at Pierce College.

You will be compensated with a $25 gift card for your participation in a 45-minute interview.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact:

Stephanie A. Bluestein, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
California State University, Northridge
Stephanie.Bluestein@csun.edu

For Faculty:

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study that examines the experiences of interacting with faculty in college and also your experiences related to and opinions about academic dishonesty. To be eligible to participate in the study, you must currently be teaching either full-time or part-time at Pierce College.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact:

Stephanie A. Bluestein, M.A.
Assistant Professor
Department of Journalism
California State University, Northridge
Stephanie.Bluestein@csun.edu
Text of Email Message Sent From Researcher to Students Who Have Expressed Interest in Participating in Study

Re: Invitation to Participate in a Research Study on Student-Faculty and Academic Dishonesty

This message is sent on behalf of Stephanie A. Bluestein, M.A.

Dear Student,

I am contacting you to talk to you about your interest in participating in a research study on student-faculty and academic dishonesty. I understand you are a current student at Pierce College.

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that examines the influence of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty. Participation in the study will consist of a confidential, individual interview session with the researcher. For your participation, you will be paid a $25 gift card. Although I do not expect any risks as a result of your participation, some questions may be sensitive, which you can skip, not answer, or end participation in the study.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please contact me at the email address below. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your standing at Pierce College.

I thank you and invite you to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Stephanie A. Bluestein
Stephanie.Bluestein@csun.edu
Dear Faculty Member,

I am contacting you to talk to you about your interest in participating in a research study on student-faculty and academic dishonesty. I understand you are currently teaching at Pierce College.

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that examines the influence of student-faculty interaction on academic dishonesty. Participation in the study will consist of a confidential, individual interview session with the researcher. Although you will not be paid, I believe your participation will enlighten you about student-faculty interaction and academic dishonesty. Although I do not expect any risks as a result of your participation, some questions may be sensitive, which you can skip, not answer, or end participation in the study.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please contact me at the email address below. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your standing at Pierce College.

I thank you and invite you to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Stephanie A. Bluestein
Stephanie.Bluestein@csun.edu
Appendix B—Informed Consent Form

**Verbal Consent to Participate in Research**

**Community College Programs**

**Faculty Form**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Stephanie A. Bluestein (Principal Investigator), M.A., and Nathan R. Durdella (Faculty Sponsor), Ph.D., from the Education and Leadership Studies Program at California State University, Northridge. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a faculty member and are willing to share your experiences. **Your participation in this research study is voluntary.**

This consent form includes sections that explain (1) the purpose of the study, (2) procedures, (3) potential risks and discomforts for subjects, (4) potential benefits to subjects, (5) payment to subjects for participation, (6) confidentiality, (7) participation and withdrawal, (8) identification of investigator, and (9) rights of research subjects.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study is an evaluation of the effect of student-teacher relationships on academic dishonesty. This research study is part of my dissertation. I am interested in examining the effect that the student-teacher relationship has on a student’s integrity in the classroom and assignments completed outside of the classroom, how to resolve those issues, concerns, and problems through evaluation. The goal of the evaluation is program improvement.

**Procedures**

If you elect to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a 60-minute interview session

** Potential Risks and Discomforts to Subjects**

Because these issues are sensitive, some interview questions may involve issues of a professional and/or personal nature, including experiences with and/or perceptions of colleagues and students in regard to student-teacher relationships and academic dishonesty. You may feel uneasy about answering some of these interview questions. **You may elect not to answer any of the questions with which you feel uneasy and still remain as a participant in the study.**

**Potential Benefits to Subjects**

You may not benefit personally from your participation in this study. However, this evaluation addresses the subject of how student-faculty relationships affect academic
dishonesty among community college students. Thus, findings of this study may contribute to our knowledge on the subject. The information gleaned from the study may lead to greater awareness of how the student-teacher relationship affects academic dishonesty. The findings may also inform members of the larger community and education professionals.

Payment to Subjects for Participation

Interviewees and/or research subjects will not be paid for their participation in this study.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Names will not be used in the reporting of findings. Every effort will be taken to ensure your confidentiality as a participant in this study. If you consent to participate, you will be assigned a random, three-digit number to protect you. No identifying information will be used. Further, your college will not be identified by name. With your permission, the interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. You may decline to be recorded and have the recorder turned off at any time during the interview. Prior to the finalization of the study, you have the option of reviewing and editing your comments as included in the report. Audiotapes will be stored in a locked drawer at the residence of the principal investigator. Audiotapes will be retained for one year, after which they will be erased. Questionnaires and journals will also be transcribed by a hired transcriber. De-identified records in the form of transcriptions will be maintained for a period of one year after they have been transcribed.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are not obligated whatsoever to answer or respond to any question or to discuss anything that you are not inclined to answer or discuss. You can skip any question, or any part of any question, and will not face any penalty for answering, or not answering, any question in any way. You may ask that the audiotape be stopped at any time and/or may leave the interview at any time for any reason without consequences of any kind. You may discontinue completing questionnaires and/or stop maintaining journals at any time for any reasons without consequences of any kind.

Identification of Investigator

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments about this research and your participation in this study, you may contact the following:

1. Stephanie A. Bluestein (Principal Investigator) via email at Stephanie.Bluestein@csun.edu
2. Nathan R. Durdella (Faculty Sponsor) via email at Nathan.Durdella@csun.edu

Rights of Research Subjects

You may withdraw consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You can halt your participation in the study at any time. You are not waiving legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, the details of this study, or any other concerns please contact the CSUN Graduate Studies, Research and International Programs, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge, CA 91330-8222, (818) 677-2901.
Appendix C—Interview Protocol for Students and Faculty

Questions for Students:

What is your gender and age?

For how many semesters have you attended this community college?

Have you attended any other community colleges or universities? If so, for how many semesters?

What is your purpose for attending this community college? (Obtain an A.A. degree, transfer, obtain new job skills, etc.)

What is your major or your career goal?

Now I’d like you to describe your interaction with faculty members.

How frequently do you talk to your professors before or after class?

If you talk before or after class in the classroom how often do you talk and what do you discuss?

Do you visit your professor in their office, during official office hours or at other times? If so, how often?

How often do you email your professors?

What type(s) of matters do you address—strictly academic issues or also career-related?

Do you ever discuss issues related to your work, family, or personal issues? If so, what kind of guidance did you ask for?

What was their response time to your email?

Did their response feel more formal or casual?
Can you describe how you felt when you received their response?

Is there a professor with whom you feel more comfortable with discussing issues beyond basic academic questions? If so, describe your interaction with this professor?

Have you ever had a professor who is more generous with their time than most other professors you’ve had? If so, describe your interaction with this professor.

Have you ever had a professor who goes out of their way to communicate with the class, either as a whole or individually? If so, describe your interaction with this professor.

Of your professors who are more approachable, why do you think you felt more comfortable asking for their advice?

Have you purposely ever sought out a professor to be your mentor?

Do you have a professor now who you consider to be your ongoing mentor in college? If so, describe that person.

What impact do you feel your professors have had on your college experience?

Now we are going to move on to the subject of academic dishonesty.

Do all of your professors explain academic dishonesty—including examples and penalties—at the beginning of the semester? If so, how? In class, in their syllabus?

Have you ever seen students in your classes cheating, either during a test or saying they cheated on a homework assignment?

How does it make you feel when you hear about students cheating?

Why do you think college students cheat?
Keeping in mind that this interview is confidential and that your name will not be disclosed to college officials or faculty, I would like to know if you have ever cheated in a college class? If so, what were the circumstances and why did you do it?

If you answered “yes” to the above question, how many times total have you cheated in college?

Did your relationship with this professor change after they talked to you about your academic dishonesty?

Have you ever considered what role the professor might play in academic dishonesty?

Do you think that professors could do more to prevent cheating in class? If so, what actions could they take?

Would you be more or less likely to cheat in a class in which you didn’t like the professor’s teaching style? Please explain your answer.

Would you be more or less likely to cheat in a class in which you felt like the professor did not care about their students? Please explain your answer.

Would you be more or less likely to cheat in a class in which you felt like that professor wasn’t ethical him/herself? Please explain your answer.

Is cheating in a college class ever justifiable? If you agree, under what circumstances do you justify it?

What role do you think study-faculty interaction plays in regard to academic dishonesty?

Thank you very much for your time.
Questions for faculty:

What is your gender and age?

What is the primary discipline that you teach?

Are you employed full-time or part-time at Pierce College?

How many years have you taught community college? Have you ever taught at a university?

Describe your teaching presence and manner, both during and after class.

Describe your orientation toward student-faculty interaction. How often do you talk one-on-one with students either before or after class?

Do you seek them out or do you seek you out?

Where do your conversations take place—in the classroom or in your office?

How often do you email your class as a whole during the semester?

What is your typical response time to a student who emails you?

Do you respond in the evenings and on weekends or only during school hours?

Describe the types of inquires that you receive from students. What subjects do they address?

Do students ever ask you about personal issues? If so, how do you respond?

Now, we’re going to talk about academic dishonesty. What are your overall thoughts on this topic?

Do you discuss academic dishonesty with the class as a whole? If so, what do you tell them and when do you do it?
Have you ever suspected that one of your students has cheated, either during a test
or on a homework assignment or project? If so, what were the
circumstances and what was your response?

If you have had a student who cheated, describe your immediate reaction?

Did your relationship with this student change afterward? If so, how?

What role do you think study-faculty interaction plays in regard to academic
dishonesty?

Have you ever considered this potential connection before now?

Thank you very much for your time.