

Understanding the Current Climate of Academic Plagiarism

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Abstract

Academic plagiarism is undoubtedly an issue for undergraduate students, staff and faculty members, and tutors at Oklahoma State University. In the field of writing studies, many scholars note that plagiarism is an elusive subject that many have trouble identifying and defining and that there are gaps in what we know on the subject. This project aims to fill those gaps by recognizing what three groups – students, staff/faculty, and tutors – identify as academic plagiarism, where discrepancies between the groups lie, and what can potentially be done at Oklahoma State University to mediate these issues. This project utilizes a survey consisting of likert scale, short response, and identification questions. Likert scale questions included levels of confidence on four citation styles – MLA, APA 7, AP, and Chicago – and likelihood of plagiarism in certain situations, which corresponded to type of relationship with another individual. Short response questions asked about influences and motivations to plagiarize and resources to avoid plagiarism. Finally, identification questions utilized seven situations in which respondents had to determine if plagiarism occurred. Results showed a discrepancy in each group and between the groups on three situations: missing citation, completing edits on another's paper, and so-called "self-plagiarism." Results also show disagreement between what resources students say better demotivate them from plagiarizing and what resources staff say better helps students. The project's results show that a consistent understanding of plagiarism is needed at the university. This could occur through trainings, conversations, or even teachings in classes where writing assignments are a significant portion of the grade. The results also show that a clearer understanding is needed on what is going on in classrooms to determine next steps.

Key words: plagiarism, definition, identification, influences

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Introduction

The presence of academic plagiarism in our university systems is unquestionable. Many times, the root of this problem comes from inconsistent perceptions on what plagiarism is and is not, especially between staff and their students. When teaching, professors may not cover every moral expectation of writing. Professors tell students to avoid committing the most sinful academic crime, and yet plagiarism cases still occur. Students tell their professors they don't mean to plagiarize, as they may not realize the skills that they utilize are included under the umbrella term that is plagiarism. The term itself covers many different situations; many of which come up in academic integrity codes and syllabi review, while others don't. To truly understand *why* students plagiarize, we need to truly understand plagiarism itself.

Literature provides various definitions of the word. Sutherland-Smith cites Hawley (1984) to say that plagiarism occurs in evident "sloppy paraphrasing" and even "verbatim transcription with no crediting of sources" (89). Additionally, Hawley makes the effort to say that plagiarism can come from "simple ignorance, rather than deceit" (1984; qtd. in Sutherland-Smith, 89). Perkins et al. refer to plagiarism as a document that misrepresents the effort carried out by the submitting author due to it belonging partially or completely to another without appropriate credit (2). Ercegovac and Richardson Jr. state that plagiarism, intellectual property, copyright, and authorship are interrelated concepts (305). Evering and Moorman state that the issue of intellectual property, which is an already complex idea, needs more clarification and definition by students and staff (38), but Stearns posits that while plagiarism may seem quintessentially copying, it isn't always violating copyright law (6). Stearns also notes that plagiarism is failure in the creative process, not a flaw in its result (7), and that plagiarism is "not necessarily copyright infringement, nor is copyright infringement necessarily plagiarism" (9). Literature also specifies a writing technique typical of plagiarism: patch writing. Löffström et al.

(288) and Howard (qtd in Ercegovic and Richardson Jr., 2004) define this term as “copying text and deleting words, substituting synonyms, and changing sentence structure.” While this may be intentional, it is something that many students use as they begin to learn how to write in a specific genre (Pecorari, 342).

While authorship and ownership fraud are considered plagiarism, how does self-plagiarism fall under this umbrella? Where does simply missing citations or not knowing how to cite fall? How does one identify the line where deceit begins and ignorance stops? Is this line drawn by university policies or at the discretion of professors? Can this uninformed line create unequal and unfair playing fields in classrooms where some students are being flagged for plagiarism while their peers are not? How do we teach students writing skills when the skills they use are considered bad or unethical? Somewhere, somehow, a consensus must be drawn on what plagiarism is, how we teach it, how we handle it, and how we speak of it. By creating a more consistent perception of the concept, less unintentional plagiarism will occur and those that simply walk the line of misunderstanding and deceit will have the opportunity to learn and grow, rather than be punished.

This study aims to better understand the current climate of academic plagiarism at Oklahoma State University, specifically if one’s role at the University (student, tutor, staff) influences the way they perceive it, and to prepare a better pedagogy for universities and schools to use when teaching techniques to avoid plagiarism. In this paper, I review key points from literature and methods, discuss my results, and conclude with ways we can help student writers prevent academic plagiarism, limitations of the study, and areas for further research.

Literature Review

To further my knowledge on the issues with academic plagiarism, I collected various sources from the Oklahoma State University Library Systems and Google Scholar databases. Sources were read and annotated for pertinent information. Each annotation was given one to three key words from a list of twelve options, which ranged from **identification** of instances of plagiarism to **solutions** to stopping plagiarism from occurring, from **student considerations** to **faculty considerations**, even from **problems** to **influences**.

Problems

There are many issues with the presence of academic plagiarism at universities. Bloch discusses that plagiarism is a socially constructed concept, and that it changes as social and economic factors change (223). Stearns states that while people may not be able to give a definition to the concept, they can easily recognize plagiarism in writing (7). Ford and Hughes describe the findings of an academic plagiarism audit at an Australian university. They found that there were inconsistent responses to plagiarism and an issue with student perceptions on plagiarism (e181). Robillard cites Bowers (29) to say that most plagiarism cases come from ignorance, not intentional theft (405). Student perceptions can pose an issue in American universities, as well. Ashworth et al. state that understanding what students see as cheating and plagiarism can “significantly assist academics in their efforts to communicate appropriate norms” (201). If students don’t know what constitutes plagiarism, or how often it actually occurs, they may not be able to recognize it in their own writing.

Chaudhuri states that the most frequent reason students plagiarize is that they don’t know what behaviors fall into the category (9). Bloch states that the complex relationship between imitation and originality is seen through students’ problem determining what is plagiarism (224). Ashworth et al. also discuss how students lack interaction with academic integrity codes. They

state that plagiarism policies are often left in student handbooks and syllabi, which often are overlooked (188). The researchers find that students encounter passive approaches to receiving the information, such as being handed documents that they are expected to read (200). Ashworth et al. also claim that a significant percentage of students do not closely observe regulations put forth by their universities and schools (200). However, Ercegovic and Richardson Jr. claim that even defining plagiarism and giving citation templates to students is not enough to solve the issue (302). If students aren't taught what plagiarism is, or what it can be, then they may not realize that they are breaking that code.

Evering and Moorman support this idea by showing that there is a lack of professors and teachers who specifically discuss what plagiarism is, and that a major misconception surrounding academic plagiarism is that there is a consensus on *what* it is (35). They also discuss how professors assume a student understands plagiarism and simply leave all relevant information in a syllabus handout, rather than teaching it, yet expect students to abide by policy and penalize harshly when those policies are broken (37). Simmons states that plagiarism became more frequently discussed when research papers became integral to the learning experience, but that it commonly is discussed more narrowly in the sense of documentation conventions (50). Howard claims that the scenario of professors who cannot define plagiarism, yet still punish students for breaking code, suggests a more complex problem than that of an undefined term (473). Brown et al. discuss how many professors outside of the English discipline do not teach writing (27), yet in my experience, they are the professors who care more about grammar and sentence structure than content when grading. Robillard states that in conversations, explaining source use and admonishing plagiarism are inseparable (410). If teaching citation and punishing plagiarism go hand-in-hand, then why do we have professors punishing plagiarism who don't teach their

students how to avoid it. If we have professors who don't teach the writing skills necessary in their field and still punish for less-than-desired outcomes student creations, then a change in the way we consider our positions is necessary. Robillard states that plagiarism is not a purely textual issue, as shown through teacher responses to it (409). She also claims that "[professors] are the rhetors, our students the audience, and our conceptions of them both reflect and shape the ways we talk about plagiarism" (409). Finally, she says, "By not distinguishing between ideas and expression, we're conflating plagiarism, a college and university policy, with the laws of intellectual property based in copyright law" (420-421). What does it say if our professors' perceptions on students and plagiarism affect how they discuss the issue, and then those professors not teach plagiarism at all? It says that there might be an underlying issue to plagiarism in universities, one that can't be cured through student intervention and trainings.

A final noted problem with plagiarism is that we simply don't understand *why* it happens (i.e., the influences), that the line between what *is* and *isn't* plagiarism is blurred (identification), and student and professor considerations of plagiarism. Evering and Moorman state that the real issue to plagiarism is not the frequency or degree of the wrongdoing, but why it happens (37). So why does plagiarism happen? Literature shows that there are plenty of influences behind academic plagiarism, whether it be intentional or not.

Influences

Understanding why a student breaches academic plagiarism policies is the first step to determining what measures should be taken next. Cronan et al. state that relying on preventatives and deterrents is not enough to help stop academic plagiarism: it's acknowledging the influences that "transform a culture of cheating into a culture of learning" (198). Literature has found multiple influences that lead students to plagiarism.

A noted influence on plagiarism is attitude. Student, peer, and teacher considerations are integral in leading a student to plagiarize. Pecorari states that students may not care about where scholarly consensus lies on plagiarism and will care more about how their teachers view plagiarism in their coursework (329). Evering and Moorman discuss how students do not blame peers for plagiarizing, as they view it as self-preservation rather than breaches of academic integrity (38). They also discuss how students' attitudes towards assignments may influence plagiarism (38). Ma et al. supports this by stating that if a student feels assignments are interesting and relevant, they will devote time to the assignment; if they don't feel assignments are interesting or relevant, they will be more likely to plagiarize (202). Simmons states that the recycling of papers may happen when large numbers of students "are required to write on the same topics" semester after semester (42). De Lima et al. posit that students are more likely to breach academic plagiarism policies when they see misconduct as a "not too serious behavior" (16-17).

Peer culture is noted as an influence for plagiarism infractions. De Lima et al. suggest that knowing peers who also plagiarize is an indicator that students are more likely to exhibit the same behavior (16-17). Ma et al. also suggest that peer culture can influence students to plagiarize (200). Ashworth et al. state that peer culture is evident in students' reluctance to condemn other students who plagiarize (198). Simmons posits that plagiarism is something students might engage in per responsibility to peers (47). Finally, Evering and Moorman state that peer behavior and attitudes towards plagiarism can lead students to plagiarize (38). To determine if peer culture affects student perceptions on plagiarism at Oklahoma State University, I utilized questions that asked for students to rate likeliness of plagiarism based on the type of relationship with a person.

Many scholars note that writing ability is a strong influence for plagiarism. Löffström et al. state that plagiarism might be indicative of a students' growing ability in learning to write in the academic genre (288). Pecorari discusses how unintentional plagiarism may be caused by students learning to write in new discourses, causing them to heavily rely on sources (319-320). Another issue interrelated with writing ability is cultural influence; for example, students whose first language is not English may have trouble writing in English.

Cultural Influences

Students from non-Western cultures may view plagiarism differently in a rhetorical context, and their writing abilities may rely heavily on sources as they learn English. Literature focuses heavily on multicultural attitudes towards plagiarism. Howard claims that the specific association between plagiarism and kidnapping has a history in Western culture (279). Pecorari states that students from a "collectivist culture" may see plagiarism as positive collaboration, rather than an infringement on ethical and moral code (319). Pecorari also states that students may unintentionally plagiarize, as they will use sources inappropriately before they learn how to use them appropriately (342). Fish discusses how plagiarism is a learned sin, one that is "learned in more specialized context of practice entered into only by a few" (par. 4-5). Fish also states that plagiarism is not a philosophical issue, rather it is an insider's obsession (par. 4, 8). Because plagiarism is an insider's issue, many students who plagiarize are simply failing to acclimate to the conventions they stumbled upon in academia (par. 9). If someone isn't an insider, how should we expect them to know what we do?

A significant amount of research has shown that students from different cultural backgrounds perceive plagiarism differently. Pecorari cites Matalene (1985, p. 803) to say that Chinese students view the use of another's words as "imitation," rather than plagiarism, and that

it “is sometimes encouraged, especially for a beginner” (318). Perkins et al. discuss how ESL students required additional academic English courses and time management and motivation support to reduce low confidence and improve academic English writing ability (5). They also discuss how students from an Eastern background may see duplication of material as homage, rather than the Western view of stealing; they highlight this as a need to understand student’s considerations to determine if plagiarism is in their writing (6). Sutherland-Smith quotes Sherman (1992), which states that Italian university students see what we view as plagiarism, rote learning, and recounting tracts of text as legitimate, proper, and correct writing strategy, and that Italian students value mimetic practice in written skill (85). She also cites Bloch and Chi (1995, p. 271) to show that cultural traditions shape preferred writing styles, and that “each form of rhetoric reflects the cultural traditions in which it developed” (qtd. in Sutherland-Smith, 85). Bloch posits that the metaphor between originality and ownership, sometimes interpreted as theft when breached, is not as defined in Chinese culture (220). Ford and Hughes found that international students have higher instances of plagiarism than their native peers (e182). Ercegovac and Richardson Jr. cite Buranen’s idea that international students’ lack of vocabulary and citation skills and knowledge of fact may influence them to plagiarize (312), and that culture may cause different views on borrowing and ownership of ideas (313). De Lima et al. cite Glendinning (2014) to say that students from different European countries have different perceptions on what constitutes plagiarism, how serious it is, and how educational institutions should deal with it (2). Finally, Evering and Moorman cite Fishman (1981) to state that there is a lack of understanding that plagiarism is socially constructed and not universally recognized (35). To support this, they give the example that the Amish teach the practice of copying text from sources in schools and do not see it as an ethical problem (35).

Student Perceptions

Literature supports the idea that there is major inconsistency in how students perceive academic plagiarism. Löfström et al. find that nearly half of students in their study (43%) did not see verbatim citation without quotations as a serious type of plagiarism, and 14% of the students didn't see it as plagiarism at all (284). They also note that the varieties of plagiarism that students feel are most serious are breached less than the varieties that students feel are less serious (283-284). Ashworth et al. state that while students acknowledge plagiarism's existence, they are unsure what falls into the category (201). Ford and Hughes find that students' considerations of plagiarism being a problem are inconclusive (e182). They also find that this shows that students are not confident in understanding what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and how to detect it (e183). Cronan et al. state that students do not view plagiarism as wrongful behavior, but rather see it as "means to an end," and that students do not realize certain academic behaviors are instances of utilizing plagiarism (Cronan et al., 2015; qtd. in Cronan et al., 2018, p. 198). Bloch's study supports this claim, as the interviewed students report seeing plagiarism as "an act of survival where the risk of having the wrong idea outweighs the reward of having an original one" (221). Ashworth et al. state that plagiarism is less meaningful to students than it is to academic staff, and it ranks relatively low in student values (201). However, while students may not know what constitutes plagiarism, there is the fear from students that they can be flagged for plagiarism even when actively trying to avoid breaching it (Ashworth et al., 201). Additionally, student perceptions on cheating as parameters "imperfectly mesh[es] with the line of official university regulations (198). Ma et al. report that students do not grasp the concept of plagiarism well (201), which, when combined with various influences, can lead them to plagiarize.

Students and Turnitin

Students also have some concerns about plagiarism identification strategies. Regarding text-matching software, such as Turnitin.com, students worry that the easy access of these reports will cause their professors to rely solely on the plagiarism percentages to grade, rather than their written work (Savage, 2004; qtd. in Löffström et al., 279). Robillard states that cautioning students against plagiarism before they even write and explaining it in terms of theft sends students the message that their professors feel they are selfish and lazy (411). Brown et al. state that they have concerns about Turnitin utilizations at their university, specifically as all authors are writing center tutors and students themselves (8). They also state that the assumption that Turnitin and other plagiarism detection software are “cure alls” moves a professor’s attention from why a student plagiarizes to simply what they plagiarized (24). Ashworth et al. state that plagiarism has become a source of anxiety for students, as text-matching software becomes more prevalent in academic integrity enforcement (187-188).

Students also feel that there may be privacy breaches with the use of text-matching software, and that using it to gain a report on *all* student works, rather than those suspected of plagiarism, signals “a basic distrust of students” (Savage, 2004; qtd. in Löffström et al., 279, 286-287). Chaudhuri states that student copyright can be infringed by some text-matching software saving their papers and academic works (6-7). While Turnitin states that they turn student works into a “digital fingerprint,” student papers cannot be stolen or recreated from the fingerprint (Brown et al., 13-14). However, the student paper is then reconstructed to compare against other works in originality reports, thus creating an ethical dilemma on ownership of student work (Brown et al., 14). Additionally, Turnitin can forward papers to third parties without the knowledge of the author, as long as the professor gives permission (Brown et al., 15). If a student’s paper is written by them and Turnitin has copyright and legal precedence over the work

submitted, then the student should have a say on whether their paper will go through the system (Brown et al., 20).

Another cited problem is that text-matching tools can generate false plagiarism scores based on phrases cited elsewhere (Chaudhuri, 5). Brown et al. state that Turnitin frequently flags phrases of text that do not suggest a student intentionally plagiarized (9), and the software does not distinguish between proper and improper citation (15). Brown et al. also find that as Turnitin doesn't detect intent, appropriate paraphrasing is often flagged, while inappropriate usages are not (23). On a more positive side, students view text-matching software as an opportunity to get feedback and improve writing, citation, and paraphrasing skills (Davis and Carroll, 2009; qtd. in Löffström et al, 279).

Professor Perceptions

With students' perceptions on plagiarism being so divided, it is surprising that professor and faculty members are just as divided on the issue. Sutherland-Smith finds that most staff surveyed (81%) feel that there needs to be a distinction in policy between intentional and unintentional plagiarism (88). She also finds that the same number of staff feel that student plagiarism in their classrooms damages professionalism (92) and five of eleven staff surveyed feel that it can be depicted as negligence on their part (91). Ford and Hughes state that staff responses toward plagiarism being a problem are also inconclusive (e182). Sutherland-Smith also notes that Second Language teachers view plagiarism differently than their peers (85). Roy notes that some faculty raise questions on whether Writing Centers provide students the opportunity to plagiarize (56).

Professors also may feel that the difference between general education and major specific courses creates a new route for plagiarism to occur. Roy states that one respondent felt that in

general education courses, students write more broad papers, while in major courses, students work closely with professors to develop papers (58).

Professors and faculty also have opinions on the use of text-matching software. Löffström et al. report that teachers see these programs as beneficial - as they cause students to be more attentive in writing - but also as time consuming and unreliable (279). In addition, they also show that text-matching software allows teachers to explain rhetorical conventions and academic integrity (285).

Identification

Based on literature, I believe that identification is one of the most important issues concerning plagiarism. Ercegovac and Richardson Jr. cite Angélil-Carter to show that plagiarism is “an elusive concept” that is “treated differently in different contexts” (304). Most scholars agree that identifying intentional violations from unintentional violations is crucial. Sutherland-Smith states that investigating a plagiarist’s intention is a positive step towards decreasing plagiarism itself (89). Löffström et al. state that it is necessary to understand that plagiarism can be intentional, signaling external influences on the students' study skills (289). Thus, identifying intent to deceive is key to preventing further issues.

Pecorari gives two examples of students utilizing textual plagiarism in writing - where words and ideas are taken from a source without attributing them to the proper author - but she states that these lack a feature of the prototypical case of plagiarism: “intentions to deceive” (318). She also posits that identifying such instances is complicated by “a lack of common consensus as to how to judge specific cases” (322). She states that textual plagiarism is commonly assumed to be caused by an intent to deceive, and such assumptions should not be made if we accept the existence of unintentional plagiarism (334, 336). Finally, she quotes

herself (Pecorari, 2001) to claim that even though universities have listed the various ways students can plagiarize, it is “difficult to imagine an excess of quotation, or a missing publications year, being counted among them” (337). Löfstrom et al. find that unintentional plagiarism is the most reported form of infringement, with intentional plagiarism being the least commonly reported form (285). So how do we stop plagiarism if it’s unintentional?

Solutions

The most cited solution to plagiarism is providing ample resources to students. Cronan et al. cite Aasheim et al. (2012) to state that faculty efforts in clarifying expectations for writing result in a change of student attitudes (199). They also claim that it is necessary to give more attention to academic integrity education and prevention earlier in student development to stop plagiarism (213). Evering and Moorman comment on the lack of teaching citation skills affecting students, and that it is time for all teachers at all levels to *teach* these skills (37). Ma et al. state that teachers should define plagiarism and discuss with students “the differences between collaboration and cheating” (201). They also note that teaching proper citation and bibliography skills is useful to combat Internet-based plagiarism (202). Ercegovic and Richardson Jr. recommend that units on plagiarism be included across all disciplines and across all education levels (302). De Lima et al. claim that higher education institutions should promote training to help students overcome limitations and avoid plagiarism (17). A side note to this is that universities should also reevaluate approaches to dealing with plagiarism to help make identification clearer to staff (Sutherland-Smith, 93). Perkins et al. state that interventions need to specify rules and codes of conduct, while not assuming Western viewpoints are universal (5-6). They report that interventions do lower plagiarism rates and achieve its goal by educating students on citation styles and academic standards (10). Bloch states that “the more complex the

rule, the more it needs to be taught so that everyone can play on a level playing field” (228). By ensuring staff across all disciplines have consistent understandings of plagiarism, there will be less holes in the education they provide to students on the subject and allow more students to perform at a high level. By educating students on the topic of plagiarism, institutions can nearly completely remove the presence of unintentional plagiarism from their systems.

Another commonly reported solution is to promote student interaction with and interest in class material. Ford and Hughes note that the reuse of assignments and topics allows students to easily plagiarize, and through the individualization of tasks and inclusion of reflective and drafting portions, professors can catch plagiarism earlier and deter students from using it in the first place (e183-184). Howard states that even though certain projects and essay prompts have been reused, English teachers and college plagiarism policies continue to require student writing to be original (474). Evering and Moorman recommend that students should be offered multimodal assignments to share information with a wider audience (39-40), which can remove the idea that the reader would automatically know what is discussed and add a need for citation. Evering and Moorman also state that one of the most powerful solutions to plagiarism is to make instruction “more relevant, more interesting, and more social” (41). They claim that, while there are educational contexts where traditional essays are required, educators should offer “learner-centered” assignments that reflect the demands of the workforce (41). Ercegovic and Richardson Jr. cite Whiteman and Gordon to say that teachers should be “creative with topics, change their assignments regularly, and ‘assign essays that can’t be bought’” (308). Ashworth et al. state that assessment tasks that don’t engage students can create the gap between student and professor considerations on plagiarism: if a project is too boring, the student might not feel they breached academic integrity (202). Finally, Bloch states, “If we place notions of intertextuality... at the

center of our teaching of writing, we can shift the debate away from moralistic approaches to plagiarism and toward a pedagogical one” (228). By recognizing the variety in student perceptions on plagiarism, the everchanging need to multimodality in classroom content, and oversaturation of student text in a certain field, the issue of plagiarism wouldn’t be an issue at all.

Methods

For this study, I surveyed students, staff/faculty members, and writing center tutors at Oklahoma State University. The OSU Institutional Review Board approved the survey on September 1st, 2021. I began taking data on September 2nd, 2021, and I closed the survey on September 23rd, 2021.

In my survey, I asked basic demographic questions, which could be left unanswered by a respondent. These demographic questions consisted of selecting age range, gender identification, racial identification, ethnic identification, international status, and university role, i.e. if the respondent was a student, staff/faculty member, or writing center tutor. Based on the respondent’s selection of their university role, the survey directed them to their group’s appropriate question set. The different roles included students, staff/faculty, and writing center tutors. While literature focuses heavily on how students and professors regard plagiarism, I felt that it was important to consider how tutors regard it as well. I did so on the basis that tutors are a bridge between students and professors, who usually fill in gaps with writing assistance and many of which are graduate teaching assistants (both students and professors), which would provide a unique perspective.

Each question set began with seven scenario-based questions. I selected these questions based on typical causes of academic plagiarism, as shown in literature. With these questions, respondents were asked to select if they thought the scenario included academic plagiarism.

After the scenario questions, respondents answered a prompt about what they felt was academic plagiarism. With their definition of plagiarism in mind, they then responded to different questions based on their university role. Students and writing center tutors answered questions that discussed the likelihood that they would use academic plagiarism, how often they consider plagiarism, and how highly they would rate someone else if they plagiarized, all in certain situations. Staff/faculty members and writing center tutors were asked how often they saw the use of academic plagiarism in student works, and how often the students didn't see their use of plagiarism as such. All respondents rated their confidence in MLA, APA 7, Chicago, and AP styles. After this, students and writing center tutors explained what their primary motivation was for plagiarizing and what professors could do to help demotivate them from plagiarizing. Staff/faculty members described what resources they provide to students, what resources they feel help students the most, what they feel they can do to help students, what they feel motivates students the most to plagiarize, and what they think other staff members could do to demotivate students. Writing center tutors also answered what they feel motivates students to plagiarize the most.

After closing the survey, I gathered all quantitative data into histograms using meta-chart.com. I manually input the responses from the Google Form into the website. Then, I stored the histograms on a secure, personal hard drive.

Results & Discussion

As I designed this study to determine student, professor, and tutor current perceptions of plagiarism, the results will focus on the discrepancies within and between each category. First, results showing plagiarism considerations will be presented, followed by discussion and application.

Students Perceptions

Students consider many things to be plagiarism, but they primarily consider it to be not giving credit for work or ideas not their own in writing. Students also feel word-for-word copying, not citing sources, and having someone write your paper constitute plagiarism. Students are also quick to determine the line between intentional and unintentional plagiarism, something literature suggests when teaching plagiarism. One student states, “Not everyone intends to plagiarize, such as the situation where they missed a few citations, but I still would say it’s plagiarism. It’s not to the same degree as regular plagiarism because of the factor of intent” (Long, Student Survey). Table 1 shows other student responses to the question, “what is academic plagiarism?”

Number of Responses	Response Summary
58	Not giving credit for work/ideas not their own
24	Word-for-word copying
14	Not citing sources
14	Having someone write their paper
9	Not crediting their own work, used previously in other contexts
2	Writing a large portion/all of someone else’s paper/doing their work
1	Someone copying their paper
1	Not citing a paper previously submitted to Turnitin.com
1	Not naming someone’s name who helped write their paper
3	<i>Knowingly, purposefully, with the intent to deceive, not citing</i>
	Pulled from 108 responses

Table 1. Student Responses Academic Plagiarism Perceptions

Students have many reasons that motivate them to potentially plagiarize, but most cite time constraints; laziness, procrastination, and a lack of motivation; and not knowing what they're writing about as major player in their consideration of plagiarism. One student response was particularly interesting, regarding not knowing what they're writing about. They say,

The primary reason that I am motivated to plagiarize on academic papers is the inability to determine a topic or problem that I've never experienced. It's similar to the reason why people cheat on math homework. From what I've experienced, there are at least 1-2 questions on a math homework that contains problems that must be solved using a method that will be taught in the next lesson. They do this to prepare and allow for previous experience with the upcoming lesson. How is one to solve a problem that they've never encountered much if at all. This is no different with writing about topics or problems that have never pertained or effected a particular individual. How is one to ever complete the process without help from another with more experience. It's laughable how I've learned more about a topic from others' words than if I were to make something up, for obvious reasons, and if I were to use solely written articles, I would be merely compiling and summarizing those articles with little to none of my own words. At least the latter has citations. (Long, Student Survey).

This response is shown in literature as a reason students may plagiarize. Haviland and Mullin state that students who may not see or understand the pedagogical frameworks in which their papers are situated rely on sources which leads them to blatant plagiarism and cheating behaviors (174). If a student isn't appropriately taught content *and* plagiarism, they may be more likely to plagiarize simply because they don't know what or how to

write. I also feel this quote shows a deeper connection between plagiarism behaviors and cheating/fraud. Students equate plagiarizing to cheating on math homework or biology homework. To them, this isn't a totally damning rhetorical device. Table 2 shows other student reasons to plagiarize.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
43	Lack of time/saves time
14	Not knowing what they're writing about
13	Laziness/procrastination/lack of motivation
5	Helping a friend
4	High workload/too many assignments due at the same time
4	Unable to write efficiently/not being able to cite
3	Lack of ideas
3	Vague expectations from professors
3	Gets better grades
2	Lack of confidence in citation and formatting
2	ease
2	Helps build word count
2	Lack of resources
1	Uninteresting assignments
1	Small danger of being caught
	From 77 responses

Table 2. Student Responses on Motivations for Plagiarism

Students had *many* ideas when asked what a professor could do to demotivate them from plagiarizing. Students mostly said that professors could provide in-depth examples of how exactly they want students to cite in papers and in works cited pages. Students also said larger time periods to complete work, longer extensions, the threat of getting a zero or F!, and Turnitin.com would help demotivate them. Additionally, students made it very clear that they are tired of professors *not* teaching them citation and formatting styles. One student said, “They could teach us how to properly cite and when to cite instead of telling us to look at Purdue OWL” (Long, Student Survey). Another student stated, “Students typically plagiarize unknowingly. Some kind of requirement for knowledge of citing things in the required format of each class would be beneficial” (Long, Student Survey). Table 3 shows student responses on what professors could do to demotivate them from plagiarizing.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
22	Provide examples of how exactly [professors] want students to cite in papers and works cited pages
10	Give plagiarized papers a zero/F!
9	Submitting papers to Turnitin.com, and having access to plagiarism reports
8	Give longer extensions
7	Discuss the paper individually with students/have check-ins on progress
6	Give more time to work on the paper
5	Make prompts unique/interesting
4	Have less restrictive deadlines

3	Make the class workload/research easier
3	Allocate time in-class to writing and helping struggling students
3	Pick out sources for students to use
3	Tell students the cons of plagiarism
2	Help students find proper sources and citations
2	Be aggressive about finding and punishing plagiarism
2	Be open to questions
2	Have smaller writing assignments that make up the big assignment (scaffolding, see staff/faculty responses)
1	Get rid of word counts
1	Teach material completely and understandably
1	Follow university guidelines for plagiarism
1	Allow students to format papers in whatever style they prefer
	From 82 responses

Table 3. Student Responses on Professors Demotivating Plagiarism

Regarding identification of plagiarism, students have issues with recognizing self-plagiarism, unknowingly missing citations, and editing another's paper as instances of plagiarism. In the Ash scenario, 111 of 156 students (71%) stated that missing citations *is* plagiarism. In the Parker scenario, 87 of 155 students (56%) stated that recommending and completing edits on a friend's paper *is not plagiarism*, while the remaining 68 students (44%) said that it is. In the Skyler scenario, 77 of 156 students (49%) stated that reusing ideas and content from a previously written paper without citation *is not plagiarism*, while the remaining 79 (51%) said that it is.

These student considerations of situations are especially interesting compared to Oklahoma State University's Academic Integrity policy. The policy states that multiple submissions, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, altering the work of others, or helping another to cheat are considered breaches of academic integrity (Oklahoma State University, "Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures"). It is further explained that copying or paraphrasing "a few sentences" from a source without citation and receiving unauthorized help on an assignment are Level One Sanctions, which are punishable with a zero or F-grade if determined to occur. Additionally, submitting substantial portions of the same assignment to more than one class *without the permission of the instructors* is considered a Level Two Sanction, which is met with an F! in the course if determined to occur.

While university policy strictly says that these scenarios are breaches of academic integrity, students are separated on if they constitute plagiarism. I feel this comes from a lack of teaching of the university policy. Literature states that many professors simply leave students to read policies themselves by putting a shortened version of the policy in their syllabi. If teachers aren't *teaching* what is or is not right in academia, then how can we punish students for something they might not know?

In terms of knowing citation styles, many students are unconfident in writing with styles other than MLA. For MLA format, most students chose confident (74/156 respondents for 47%) or somewhat confident (66/156 respondents for 43%). However, some students still are somewhat unconfident (12/156 respondents for 8%) or unconfident (3/156 respondents for 2%) in the style. For APA 7 format, 60 of 156 students (39%) said that they were unconfident – a choice of one on a scale to four - in the writing style. Thirty-five students (22%) chose somewhat unconfident, a choice of two. Thirty-seven (24%) chose somewhat confident, a choice of three,

and 24 students (15%) chose confident, a choice of four. For AP format, these numbers show even more uncertainty with the style. Ninety-five of 156 students (61%) said that they are unconfident in the style, 32 (20%) said they are somewhat unconfident, 18 (12%) said they are somewhat confident, and 11 (7%) said they are confident in the style. For Chicago, these numbers are even worse. One hundred and twelve of 156 students (71%) said they are unconfident, 28 (18%) said they are somewhat unconfident, 9 (6%) said they are somewhat confident, and 7 (5%) said they are confident.

This shows that students are more confident in MLA style, typical of the arts and humanities. However, many of the student respondent pool were students of the OSU Honors College. It was predicted that the numbers of confident or somewhat confident selections would be higher due to the higher chance of interdisciplinary studies and higher academic integrity expectations within the college, when compared with those not in the Honors College. I feel this is still true, but more data is needed from those outside of the Honors College to support this claim.

Regarding peer culture, the survey results actually showed higher consideration of use of plagiarism and likeliness of plagiarizing if the other person in the situation was a classmate or acquaintance, rather than a close friend. This directly follows Robillard's idea that students may plagiarize because they cannot identify with the victim of plagiarism (428); our students feel they may be more likely to plagiarize for an acquaintance or classmate because there are less relationship attributions available. Additionally, the student respondents gave higher scores for consideration of other people plagiarizing when it was for themselves or for close relationships. I feel this is because we are more inclined to approve of plagiarism when there are close relationships: it seems less like a moral crime and more like relationship need.

Tutor Perceptions

There is a gap in literature on the perceptions of peer tutors about plagiarism. As a peer tutor myself, I predicted that such students would have a higher understanding of the subject, as well as less likelihood/consideration of use of plagiarizing. It should be noted, however, that many of the respondents in this category are graduate students, something I predict will also affect results.

Out of the nine respondents, seven answered the free-response and identified that using someone's words, argument, ideas, or even complete work without credit or citation is plagiarism. They recognized that even the unintentional missing of citations can be plagiarism. However, it was also noted that citation shouldn't be needed when the information is common knowledge. The tutors had no identifications of self-plagiarism as academic integrity breaches.

On motivations for plagiarism, the tutors were more divided. They mostly noted lack of time and interest in the subject as motivators for plagiarism. They also recognized having an easier time when writing as motivation. Table 4 shows tutor responses to the question, "What are the primary reasons you are motivated to plagiarize on academic papers?"

Number of Responses	Response Summary
4	Lack of time
2	Makes writing easier
2	Not having interest in the subject
1	Not knowing how to properly cite
1	Subject is too difficult
1	Low confidence in writing ability
	From 5 responses

Table 4. Tutor Responses on Motivators of Plagiarism

Regarding what professors can do to demotivate the tutors from plagiarizing, no one answer was chosen more than another. I feel that if there been fewer response summaries with more respondents per response, then perhaps tutors recognized that there were certain things professors do that work well. However, because there are much more responses with only one respondent claiming each, this shows that tutors are especially cognizant of what can be done to prevent plagiarism. They each have different interactions with students from different disciplines, so they may be more likely to understand the wide range of needs those different disciplines require. Tutor responses to what professors can do are shown in Table 5.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
1	Offer extensions
1	Have an honest conversation with students at the beginning of the semester
1	Give students more time to write
1	Provide students with more guidance during the writing process
1	Explain to students what plagiarism is/is not
1	Help students feel comfortable with writing and citing sources
1	Give understandable prompts
1	Help students with research
1	Give a high penalty for plagiarism
1	Give students more opportunities to practice writing with citations
1	Let students know what consequences of plagiarism are straight up
	From 8 responses

Table 5. Tutor Responses on Professors Demotivating Plagiarism

Tutors also noted what reasons motivate the writers they assist to plagiarize. They recognize lack of time as the primary reason to plagiarize. However, they also provided some reasons that did not show in student responses. Table 6 shows tutor responses to what motivates their writer clients to plagiarize.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
5	Lack of Time/Hurry to Finish
2	Lack of stress management skills
1	Lack of motivation
1	Pay-for-paper services
1	Discouragement
1	Not knowing how to cite
1	Not understanding what plagiarism is
1	Lack of ideas
1	Lack of writing skills
1	Poor grades
1	Subject/Topic is too difficult
1	Lack of vocabulary to talk on the subject in their own words
	From 9 responses

Table 6. Tutor Responses Client Motivations

Interestingly enough, peer tutors also had inconclusive results when asked if certain scenarios included plagiarism. These situations were the exact same as the ones that students were divided on. In the Ash scenario, five of nine tutors (56%) said that missing citations *is*

plagiarism. In the Parker scenario, three of nine tutors (33%) said that recommending and completing edits on another's paper *is not plagiarism*, while the other six (66%) said that it is. In the Skyler scenario, where reusing ideas and content from an old paper is questioned, the results show the same divide.

As expected, the distribution of confidence in citation styles skewed more right, i.e. more positively, in three of four formats than the distribution of student confidence. While MLA format was still the most understood style – having six respondents select confident and one each select somewhat unconfident or somewhat confident, tutors had a more right distribution in APA 7 (having two selections of somewhat unconfident, five selections of somewhat confident, and two selections of confident) and Chicago formats (having two selections of unconfident, three selections of somewhat unconfident, three selections of somewhat confident, and one selection of confident). Tutors had a more left distribution of answers for AP format (having five selections of unconfident, one selection of somewhat unconfident, and two selections of somewhat confident). I feel this shows that tutors have more experience with helping students on a variety of citation styles, when compared to students experiencing citation styles.

Regarding likeliness of plagiarizing, all tutors reported that they were not at all likely to plagiarize in *any* proposed scenarios. However, for consideration of use, one tutor selected very likely for all situations. Perhaps there is a recognizable difference between likeliness and consideration of plagiarism in the minds of tutors and students, one we haven't considered in literature. When rating someone else's use of plagiarism, tutors felt more positive about someone who plagiarized for their own paper, rather than those that plagiarize for papers of acquaintances. The further distant the relationship became, the more negative the considerations became.

Tutors were also asked how many times a week they encounter plagiarism in the Writing Center, as well as how many times their writer clients realized that their writing was plagiarized. Three tutors said they see plagiarized works once or twice a week, with five saying they never see plagiarism in the works of clientele. However, only one tutor said that their writer clients did not realize their work was plagiarized, stating they see this once or twice a week. All other seven respondents say they never see students not recognize their work as plagiarism.

Staff/Faculty Perceptions

Most literature focuses on professor perceptions of plagiarism. My survey aimed to see exactly how different professor and student perceptions are to determine an appropriate solution for the issue. Staff and faculty at OSU, mostly from the Department of English and the OSU Honors College, provided ample and interesting responses to the survey.

Regarding academic plagiarism, there was a consensus in the faculty pool that claiming ownership of someone's ideas, work, and words without citation *is* plagiarism. However, some staff note the difference between intentional and unintentional plagiarism. One staff member said, "Intention is key to me" (Long, Staff/Faculty Survey). Another said, "I only consider this plagiarism if the student is aware of citation" (Long, Staff/Faculty Survey). Another interesting, and quite forward, response about what is plagiarism came from a staff member. They said, "Read the academic integrity policies. The answer is that. I put it on all of my syllabi and all of my assignments" (Long, Staff/Faculty Survey). I feel this answer is key to understanding what is going on at the University regarding plagiarism. Some professors specifically referred to what the *institution* feels is plagiarism, while others referred to what *they* feel is plagiarism. To what extent do these perceptions align? Do some professor perceptions align with institutional policy at all? Table 7 shows staff/faculty responses on what is academic plagiarism.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
13	Claiming ownership of someone's ideas/work/words without citation
2	Reusing old work without acknowledging the prior context it appeared in
1	Having others write your work
1	Blatant use of another's work
1	Copying without citation or credit
1	Knowingly using words or concepts from another source and purposefully not citing
1	Claiming another's published or unpublished contribution to your work as your own
	From 19 responses

Table 7. Staff/Faculty Responses Academic Plagiarism Perceptions

Students and staff seem to be on the same page regarding what plagiarism is. The responses from these two groups were very similar, with the students including having someone copy their work with citation or writing someone's paper for them. However, staff and tutors seem to have different ideas of what is plagiarism. Considering many of the tutors at OSU's Writing Center are undergraduate students or graduate teaching assistants, one would expect for there to be consistency between these three groups. However, this is not the case. Staff feel reusing one's own work is plagiarism, while tutors did not mention this at all.

Staff were asked what primary motivators for their students are for plagiarism. Many reported poor time management skills, lack of understanding on plagiarism, and overwhelming

assignments. Staff also reported frustration, lack of understanding on where to begin a paper, feeling inadequate with writing skills, and ease as lesser, but still prominent, motivators. Staff responses to motivators of plagiarism for students are shown in Table 8.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
9	Poor time management
5	Lack of understanding on plagiarism
5	Overwhelming assignments
2	Frustration
2	Ease
2	Lack of understanding on where to begin a paper
2	Feeling inadequate with writing skills
1	Lack of understanding of the long-term consequences of plagiarism
1	Dread of citation
1	Apathy and laziness
1	Lack of interest in academic career
1	Lack of comfort with writing
1	Lack of engagement in material
1	Not having support for research
1	Lack of attention
1	Lack of motivation
1	Desperation
1	Cultural Influences

1	Taking too many hours while working
1	Grade anxiety
1	Lack of understanding of citation rules
	From 17 Responses

Table 8. Staff/Faculty Reported Motivators for Student Plagiarism

Staff provided many answers about what resources they provide to demotivate students from plagiarizing. Primarily, staff require drafts of written work and provide access to citation websites or widgets, such as Zotero or EndNote, and Purdue OWL. Table 9 shows what resources staff provide to students to demotivate them from plagiarizing.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
6	Purdue OWL
5	Drafts of work to fix plagiarism
5	Citation websites/widgets (EndNote, z-lib.org, Zotero, ProQuest)
4	Leniency with deadlines
4	Lessons on plagiarism
3	Turnitin.com
3	Lessons on plagiarism
3	Lessons on summary and paraphrasing
2	Original and Unique essay prompts
2	Writing Center
1	State the bad writing is better than plagiarizing
1	Share the University policy
1	Offer extra contact for questions on source use

1	Have serious penalties for caught plagiarism
1	Open-ended writing prompts
1	Have individual conferences with students to provide support
1	Prompts that make it difficult to plagiarize
1	Give an assignment on plagiarism at the beginning of the semester
1	Use very clear language on the consequences of plagiarism
1	Have students talk another student through plagiarized writing (simulate being the professor)
	From 17 responses

Table 9. Staff/Faculty Provided Resources

Faculty were also asked which resources were most helpful in demotivating plagiarism. They also provided many responses for this question, but interestingly, some of the responses that were deemed most helpful were not reported for what professors even provide. Such resources were using student-centric assessment practices or framing assignments as taking place within the greater scholarly conversation (Long, Staff/Faculty Survey). Additionally, while most resources discussed creating a more positive environment for students and providing more resources, one respondent said, “Either A) conference to say, ‘I know this is plagiarized, since this is the first time, fix it and turn it in or take a zero,’ OR B) have consistent 100% discipline proceedings against all plagiarism in all classes at all levels, so reputation precedes instructor” (Long, Staff/Faculty Survey). If a professor’s reputation is more important than teaching students proper writing skills and providing them resources, there may be an issue beyond simply teaching. The issue may lie in professors interpreting plagiarism as attacks on their professional image, rather than interpreting plagiarism as a student’s need for more resources and

information, as suggested by Sutherland-Smith (92). Table 10 shows faculty responses on what resources are most helpful in demotivating students from plagiarizing.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
3	Provide easy reference guides for citations/access to Purdue OWL
3	Lecture or have an honest discussion on plagiarism
3	Citation generators
2	Provide examples of (un)successful citation
1	Have well-constructed assignment sheets
1	Use student-centric assessment practices
1	Frame assignments as taking place within a greater scholarly conversation
1	Give leniency with deadlines
1	Provide University policy on academic integrity
1	Trust students and treat them like adults
1	Have students talk another student through plagiarized writing (simulate being the professor)
1	Rough draft review
1	Provide outcome stories on plagiarism
	From 18 responses

Table 10. Staff/Faculty Most Helpful Resources

When asked what they could do to help students avoid plagiarism, professors also provided many options. They mostly discussed utilizing plagiarism as an educational, rather than condemning, topic; scaffolding writing assignments, where multiple drafts of various portions of

work allow for writing smaller chunks and multiple reviews; making writing prompts unique and interesting; and teaching students how and when to cite. On this note, professors and students agree: utilizing scaffolded assignments, unique and interesting prompts, and *teaching* citation demotivates plagiarism. Tutors also agree that teaching plagiarism demotivates students from plagiarizing. Staff responses to what they could do to demotivate plagiarism in their classrooms is shown in Table 11.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
3	Scaffold assignments
2	Be willing to openly discuss plagiarism as an educational topic, rather than a condemnation topic
2	Inform students that plagiarism is usually from not knowing how to cite, but that intentional plagiarism has serious consequences
2	Use interesting and specific prompts and topics
2	Teach students how and when to cite
1	Help remove the dread of citing
1	Create assignments that draw from class discussions
1	Support students through a paper by conversations
1	Treat plagiarism instances as learning opportunities
1	Google topics/questions before assigning them
1	Limit the number of things students can cite
1	Give students more time, within reason, to complete assignments if they fall behind
1	Design better assignments

1	Understand why students plagiarize then work ahead to avoid the issues
1	Tell stories about being plagiarized and how it feels
	From 17 responses

Table 11. Staff on Demotivating Plagiarism

Finally, staff were asked what *other* professors could do to demotivate a student from plagiarizing. No one answer received more responses than another. Intriguingly, some of these responses are not featured in what staff do themselves. Is this showing a high level of self-prestige, where a professor feels they don't need to do what they recommend for others, or is this showing a lack of ideas and confidence in how to approach and teach plagiarism? I feel many staff are confident in their abilities to discuss and handle plagiarism, so they mostly have recommendations for others that they may have utilized or heard of in the past, rather than use now, as they have grown and adapted to their own classroom environment. Staff responses are seen in Table 12.

Number of Responses	Response Summary
1	Provide consistent definitions
1	Provide consistent explanations
1	Provide consistent penalties
1	Become acquainted with student perceptions on plagiarism through a free-write
1	Change/customize assignments semester-to-semester
1	Cultivate reflective and student-centric assignment sheets and assessment ecologies

1	Have a class discussion on plagiarism and Turnitin.com
1	Change/customize assignments to promote student interest
1	Make sure students know how to cite
1	Have draft check-ins
1	Take time to educate students early and often
1	Give more time, within reason, to complete work
1	Design better assignments
1	Design questions that make plagiarism difficult
1	Give more plagiarism examples
1	Make plagiarism a discussion topic
1	Have extension policies
1	Provide tools to make writing easier
1	Motivate students to write
1	Enforce consistent standards across the program
	From 15 responses

Table 12. Staff/Faculty on what other staff should do to demotivate plagiarism

Regarding citation styles, staff are most confident in MLA, followed by Chicago, APA 7, and AP formats. I think this is interesting as more professors are confident in Chicago than students, yet more courses require APA 7 formatting. Is this a professional decision, one based on the needs of the academic circle and community of practice within certain disciplines? Why do professors utilize citation styles they aren't comfortable with, or even require students to fully understand the styles when they do not themselves?

Much like the students and tutor respondent groups, staff/faculty had inconclusive results on whether the Ash, Parker, and Skyler scenarios involved plagiarism. For the Ash scenario, ten of 19 respondents claimed there was academic plagiarism, while nine said there was not. For the Parker scenario, a majority of 14 respondents said there was not plagiarism, while five said there was. For the Skyler scenario, 11 respondents said there was not plagiarism, while eight said there was. I believe this shows an all-around indecision on whether missing citations, recommending and completing edits on another's paper, and self-"plagiarism" are actually *plagiarism*. Howard simply recommends a change of language to combat this misidentification and blurred lines of plagiarism. She states that utilizing fraud, citation, and repetition would remove the metaphor that all plagiarism is criminal and insidious, allowing for more academic discussion and less punishment for lack of knowledge (489).

Implications

Regarding student responses, I feel the students in the survey had higher expectations of plagiarism instances and of their peers, which can be seen in overall low considerations of use and likeliness of plagiarism. Many students answered N/A in short response questions about when they would plagiarize or what would help them not plagiarize. I also feel the student respondent pool had a higher understanding of plagiarism due to their enrollment in the Honors College. The Honors College gives students the opportunity to experience multi-disciplinary studies and courses, while having higher expectations for student grades and academic integrity. As a student in the Honors College, I recognize that my peers may have had more learning opportunities in their courses than those not in the program, and I predict that students, especially those in first-year composition courses, would not be as familiar with policies regarding plagiarism.

Regarding tutor responses on how often they encounter plagiarism, I think that results show that students are cognizant of their plagiaristic faults, especially if these reported instances in the Writing Center are due to lack of or missing citations. On the other hand, it may show that tutors don't recognize plagiarism in works of writer clients. If this is the case, intervention is needed to teach peer tutors how to recognize plagiarism in the works of students. If students are being sent to the Writing Center by professors to demotivate them from plagiarizing, yet the tutors these students see don't know how to recognize or help students with plagiarized works, then there is a major issue in how plagiarism is being taught at the university and how students receive help.

Comparing staff responses on most effective resources to students' reasons to plagiarize shows a complex pattern. One issue is that students feel being sent to citation style guides does not help them, which is something professors say helps students, and that students prefer for their professors to teach them what the citation expectations are in class, which is something *some* professors say they do. Another issue is that students prefer more workload-based resources, such as help researching, lenient deadlines, and having time in class to write. However, most professors say that students best utilize resources that help *them* write on their own, such as citation generators and citation guides, while only a small percent of the respondent pool feel workload-based issues and resources are important to address. Additionally, within this small percent, many of these respondents feel this resource base should be utilized by *other* faculty, while many don't note it as something they use themselves. I think a solution to these issues is to include citation and plagiarism discussions in courses where writing is integral, such as Composition, Psychology, Biology, or even Business courses. By teaching plagiarism to students, they may be more inclined to look at citation guides, as it would be that: *a guide*, not a

teaching tool. Another solution would be to dedicate more time in-classes to discussing writing prompts, source analysis, and effective writing skills; by giving students the skills in-class, they may be more likely to use those skills outside of class when they don't have to teach themselves. Having these integrated into all courses with writing components also avoids the assumption that all students take Composition and that all students are *already* knowledgeable on and comfortable with writing and citing. It also removes the assumption that students need only the resources to teach themselves how to cite and write, and that one professor is better than any other. This may promote a higher average of attainment within university writing courses and remove any desire to boost prestige or reputation within professors. One professor states, "I think that, in general, instructors sometimes see cases of plagiarism as a personal attack of some kind – that students are attempting to fool or trick them, when more often than not, it's simply poor planning or writing anxiety of some kind" (Long, Staff/Faculty Survey). If professors feel plagiarism is an attack on their professionalism, prestige, or reputation, how do we get them to see unintentional plagiarism? How do we solve plagiarism caused by cultural influences, especially within an institution with a high percentile of international students (approx. 1,400 students out of 25,000 are international)? How do we promote equal opportunities for all students to learn these skills?

Comparing these results to tutor responses, some responses corresponded with one another. Tutors and staff agree that explaining plagiarism and citation are good resources to demotivate students from plagiarizing. However, like the students, tutors did note that helping with research and giving more time to write are also helpful. I believe that because tutors are still students, they also prefer more workload-based resources, while also recognizing other resources provided by staff as appropriate. Staff did note the Writing Center as a resource *they* provide to

students. As the Writing Center can be utilized by anyone in the Stillwater community, staff do not provide this resource to students. It isn't give and take for each course: any student can come at any time for any help on any part of any paper. I feel this shows a strange relationship between the Writing Center and staff. Staff see the Writing Center as a teaching tool, while the Writing Center is supplementary to the learning experience. Much like the claim above, professors should be teaching students plagiarism and citation, rather than relying on student tutors to teach their peers outside of the student writer's paid contact hours with their professors.

A caveat to this is that, currently, there are few relationships between staff and the Writing Center. While many do see the Writing Center as a helpful, supplementary resource to students, others don't even know of its presence at the university. I think that creating more collaborative relationships linking staff and the Writing Center would provide students with more in-depth understandings of plagiarism and writing. An example of this is the integrated tutors in the First Year Composition program. These tutors assist professors with creating scoring rubrics and course expectations. Having a more collaborative relationship lets the Writing Center work with students on their writing, while also working with professors to develop appropriate grading scales. I think this integrated tutoring could be introduced in courses where writing is a significant portion of the grade distribution. Having a tutor as a sort of teaching assistant gives a unique perspective of being there to help, rather to grade, which introduces the idea of learning, rather than punishing. The tutor could help the professor identify areas within writing that students need extra assistance with, while also recognizing plagiarism areas that need to be addressed.

Regarding Howard's recommendation to change the language of plagiarism, I think that this recommendation would work well in the OSU system, specifically because these three

categories (fraud, citation, repetition) identify and recognize the three situations where students, tutors, and staff are divided on plagiarism. By specifying what is intentional and what is unintentional plagiarism, there would be a more consistent application of university guidelines within classrooms and students wouldn't be afraid of writing. The word plagiarism is a big deal: even while writing this thesis, I was so scared that I would miss citations or cite incorrectly, accidentally say something someone else may have said before. Students experience this all the time, and by refocusing plagiarism as a learning situation, rather than a breach of the highest moral code, students would be more likely to *learn* how to avoid creating fraudulent papers, incorrect citation, and excess repetition of another's language or ideas.

Conclusion

So how do we fix the issue that is plagiarism? First, we can create a more thorough and consistent understanding of the issue for students, tutors, and faculty. This can be done through intensive trainings, learning modules, or workshops. After creating a consistent understanding of the concept, we will need a more consistent application of plagiarism teachings and recognition-detection of plagiarism in writing. This can be done by requiring teaching modules, equivalent to one class period, in all courses where writing assignments make up a significant portion of grades. This teaching module can be designed in part by the students and staff it serves, where those whose interests are at stake have a say in what is most important to them on the topic. By having this module equivalent to one day of class, it removes the commonly cited teacher assumption that someone else will teach the concept and ideas of professional superiority regarding plagiarism in classes. Additionally, we can create a training for faculty to discuss how to effectively use Turnitin.com, while also highlighting its faults as a cure-all. If every professor detects plagiarism in the same manner, then only the students who truly plagiarize will be sent to

conduct committees. This reduces the idea that faculty may be biased in who they detect plagiarism from. After teaching students plagiarism and faculty detection methods, then the university can continue with significant punishment standards. By showing students that they will face strong repercussions to plagiarism, they may be less likely to intentionally breach the university integrity codes.

There is plagiarism at our university. While it may not be common in every class, there are students who still face the academic integrity committee to plead their cases. How do we keep students out of the academic hot seat? We teach them.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

Demographic Questions

- What is your age range?
 - 18-21, 22-25, 26-29, 30-35, 36-39, 40-45, 46-49, 50-55, 56-59, 60+, Prefer Not to Say
- What gender do you identify as?
 - Female, Male, Non-Binary, Prefer Not to Say, Other
- What race categories do you identify as?
 - American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White, Prefer Not to Say
- What ethnicity do you identify as?
 - Hispanic or Latinx, Not Hispanic or Latinx, Prefer Not to Say
- Do you identify as an international student/staff/faculty member?
 - Yes, No, Prefer Not to Say
- If yes, what is your country of origin?
- Do you identify as a student, writing center tutor, or staff/faculty member?
 - Student
 - Writing Center Tutor
 - Staff/Faculty Member

Scenario Based Questions (Presented to All Respondent Sections)

- Ash has a research project due soon. They find strong articles supporting their argument on Google Scholar. They paraphrase and only quote when necessary. They add citations, but they miss a few.

- Dawsyn's friend has paper due tonight and a powerpoint project due tomorrow, and that haven't completed either. Dawsyn has completed all of their homework. As both friends agreed to help the other in any way possible, the friends meet to discuss the paper. Dawsyn writes their friend's paper, while Dawsyn's friend completes the powerpoint assignment.
- Logan is very busy with work and has a paper due tomorrow. The paper is over a topic that Logan wrote a paper about for a different class. Logan still has that paper on their computer and decides to turn that paper in for a grade.
- Morgan is taking Comp 1. They don't understand the essay that their class is reading, so they Google the essay's main points. After Googling, Morgan finds a written response similar to what they need to produce and uses that response as their paper.
- Parker's friend texted them and asked what they were doing that night. Parker responded that they weren't doing anything. Parker's friend asked to hang out, so Parker went to their friend's dorm. At the dorm, their friend started talking about a paper due that night at 11:59pm and asked Parker for help. Parker read their friend's paper and recommended some edits, but their friend wanted Parker to complete the edits themselves.
- Reese has a paper due soon. They know that they need source to support their argument, so they find three articles on the university library's website. Reese finds really strong points that support their argument in all three articles, so they add the arguments to their paper, word-for-word. During a peer review, a tutor notified Reese that they had no citations, paraphrasing, or quotations.
- Skyler is working on a paper for a project. The paper is over a topic Skyler loves, and they have already written a paper over that topic for a different class. Skyler decides to

use points that they made in their original paper in the paper they are working on. Skyler doesn't cite the ideas from their previous work.

Student Questions

- Short Response:
 - As a student, what do you consider to be academic plagiarism in regard to writing?
- Scale Questions:
 - On the following scales, rate how likely you are to plagiarize on academic papers if: (scale is 1 not at all likely - 4 highly likely)
 - It is for your own paper.
 - It is for a close friend.
 - It is for a friend.
 - It is for a classmate.
 - It is for an acquaintance.
 - On the following scales, rate how often you consider the use of academic plagiarism in these scenarios: (scale is not at all [0 times per semester], not very often [1-2 times per semester], often [3-4 times per semester], or very often [5+ times per semester])
 - If it is for your own paper.
 - If it is for a close friend.
 - If it is for a friend.
 - If it is for a classmate.
 - If it is for an acquaintance.

- On the following scales, rate how highly you consider someone other than yourself in the following scenarios: (1 not highly- 4 highly)
 - Plagiarized on their own paper.
 - Plagiarized on a close friend's paper.
 - Plagiarized on a friend's paper.
 - Plagiarized on a classmate's paper.
 - Plagiarized on an acquaintance's paper.
- On the following scales, rate how confident you are writing in the following academic formats: (1 unconfident-4 confident)
 - MLA
 - APA 7
 - Chicago
 - AP
- Short Response:
 - What are the primary reasons you are motivated to plagiarize on academic papers?
 - What could a professor do, if anything, to help demotivate you from plagiarizing on academic papers?

Staff/Faculty Questions

- Short Response:
 - As a faculty or staff member, what do you consider to be academic plagiarism in regard to writing?
- Scale Questions:

- Based on your response to the previous short response question, how often do you, as a faculty or staff member, see academic plagiarism in the works of students? (not at all [0 time per week], somewhat often [1-2 times per week], occasionally [3-4 times per week], and extremely often [5+ times per week])
- Based on your response to the previous short response question, how often do you, as a faculty or staff member, encounter a student who does not view their use of academic plagiarism as such? (not at all [0 time per week], somewhat often [1-2 times per week], occasionally [3-4 times per week], and extremely often [5+ times per week])
- On the following scales, rate how confident you are writing in the following academic formats: (1 unconfident-4 confident)
 - MLA
 - APA 7
 - Chicago
 - AP
- Short Response:
 - What sort of resources do you provide to students to help demotivate them from plagiarizing?
 - What resources do you find most helpful in demotivating students against the use of plagiarism?
 - What could you do, if anything, to help demotivate a student to plagiarize on academic papers?

- As a faculty or staff member, what are the primary reasons, if any, that you see motivate a student to plagiarize on academic writing?
- As a faculty or staff member, what do you think other faculty or staff members could do, if anything to demotivate a student to plagiarize on academic writing?

Writing Center Tutor Questions

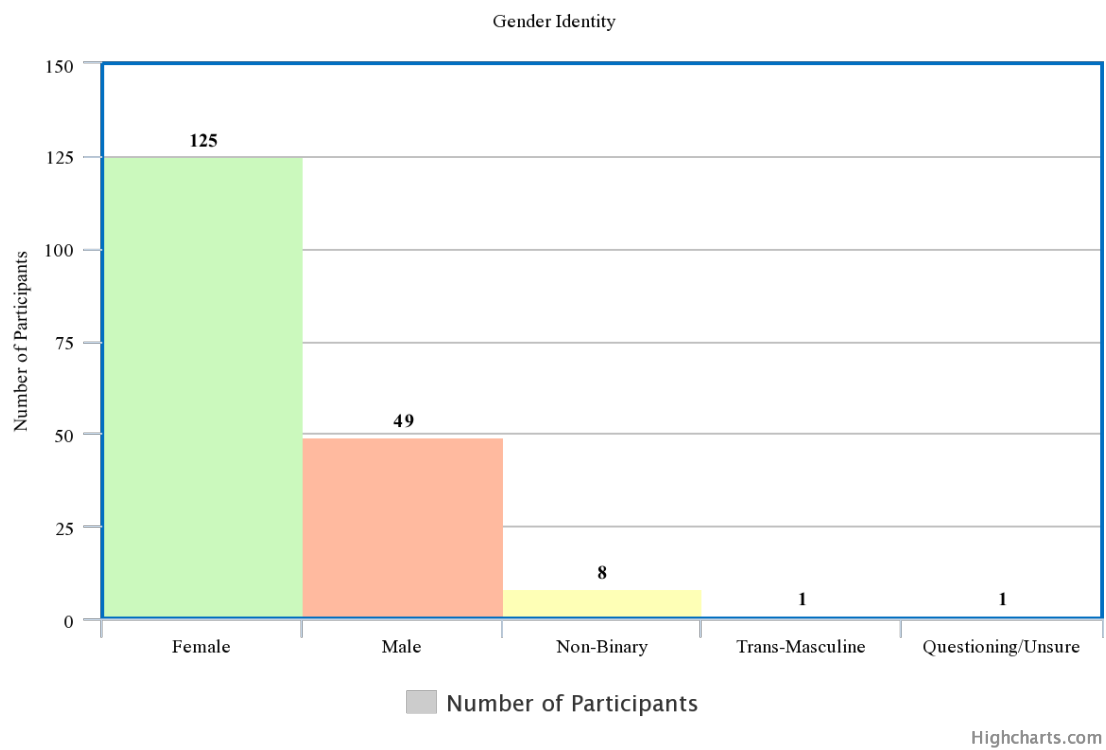
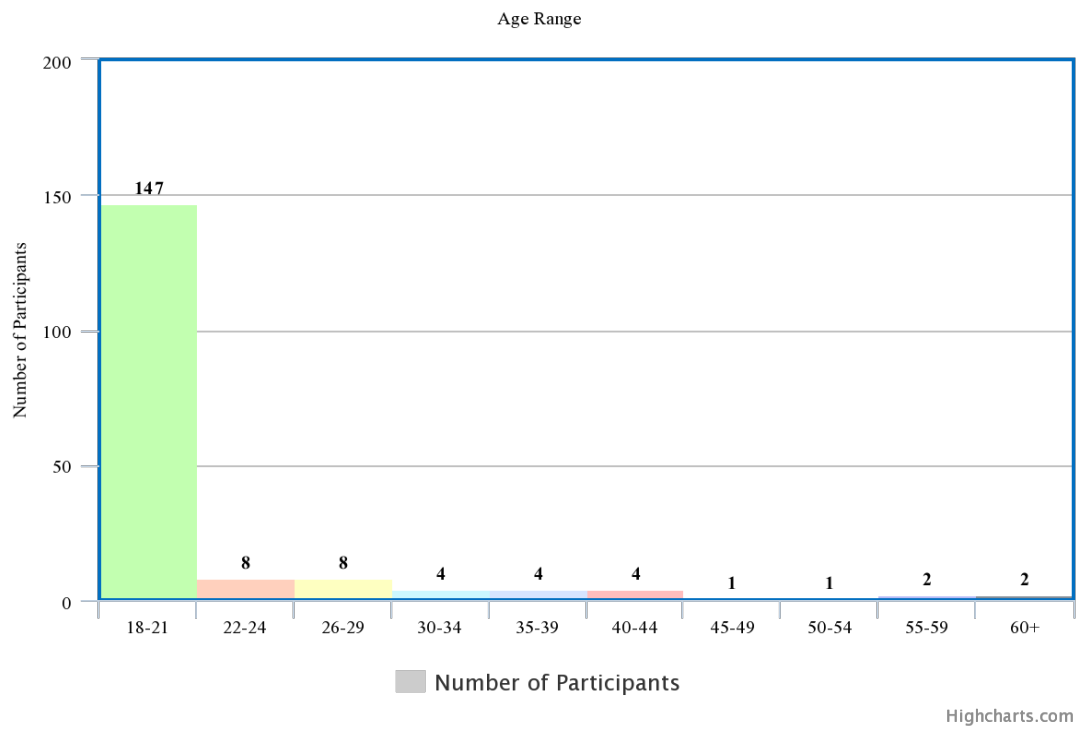
- Short Response:
 - As a writing center tutor, what do you consider to be academic plagiarism in regard to writing?
- Scale Questions:
 - Based on your response to the previous short response question, how often do you, as a writing center tutor, see academic plagiarism in the works of clientele? (not at all [0 time per week], somewhat often [1-2 times per week], occasionally [3-4 times per week], and extremely often [5+ times per week])
 - Based on your response to the previous short response question, how often do you, as a writing center tutor, encounter a client who does not view their use of academic plagiarism as such? (not at all [0 time per week], somewhat often [1-2 times per week], occasionally [3-4 times per week], and extremely often [5+ times per week])
 - On the following scales, rate how likely you, as a writing center tutor, are to plagiarize on academic papers if: (scale is 1 not at all likely - 4 highly likely)
 - It is for your own paper.
 - It is for a close friend.
 - It is for a friend.

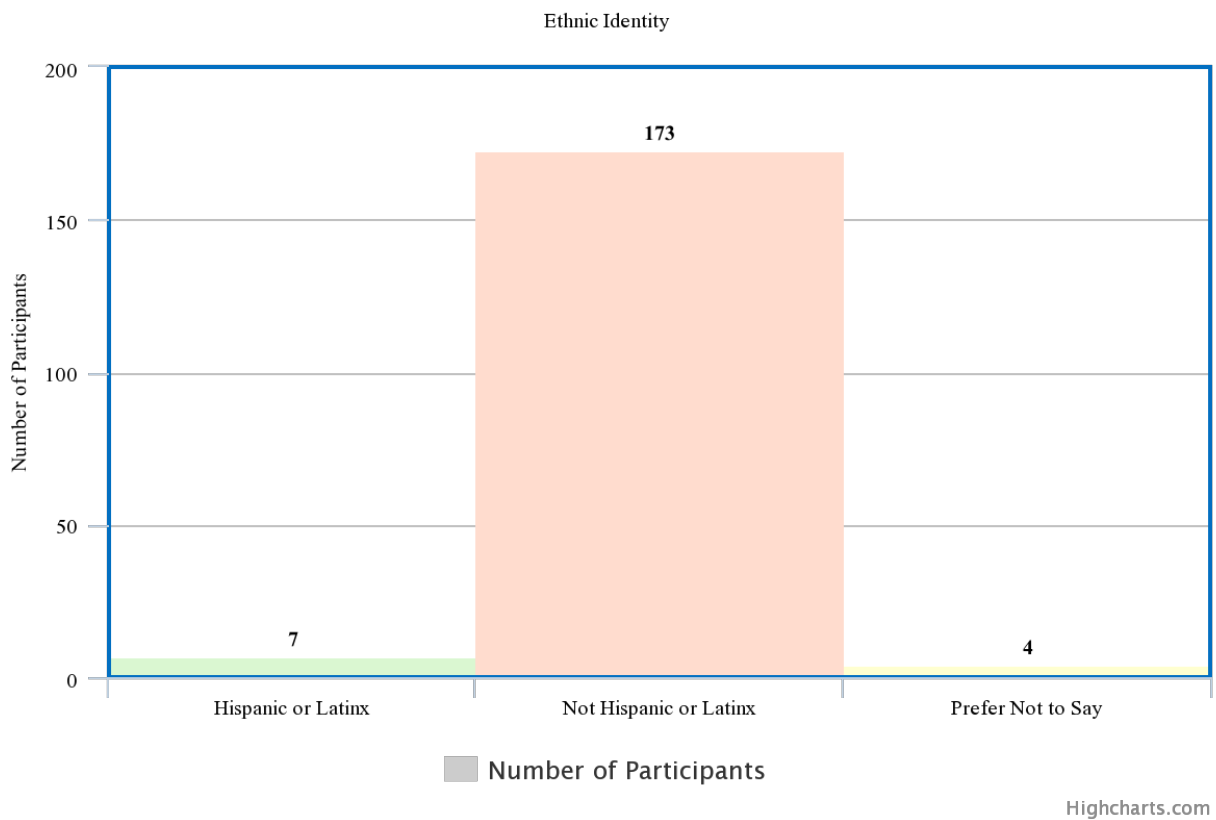
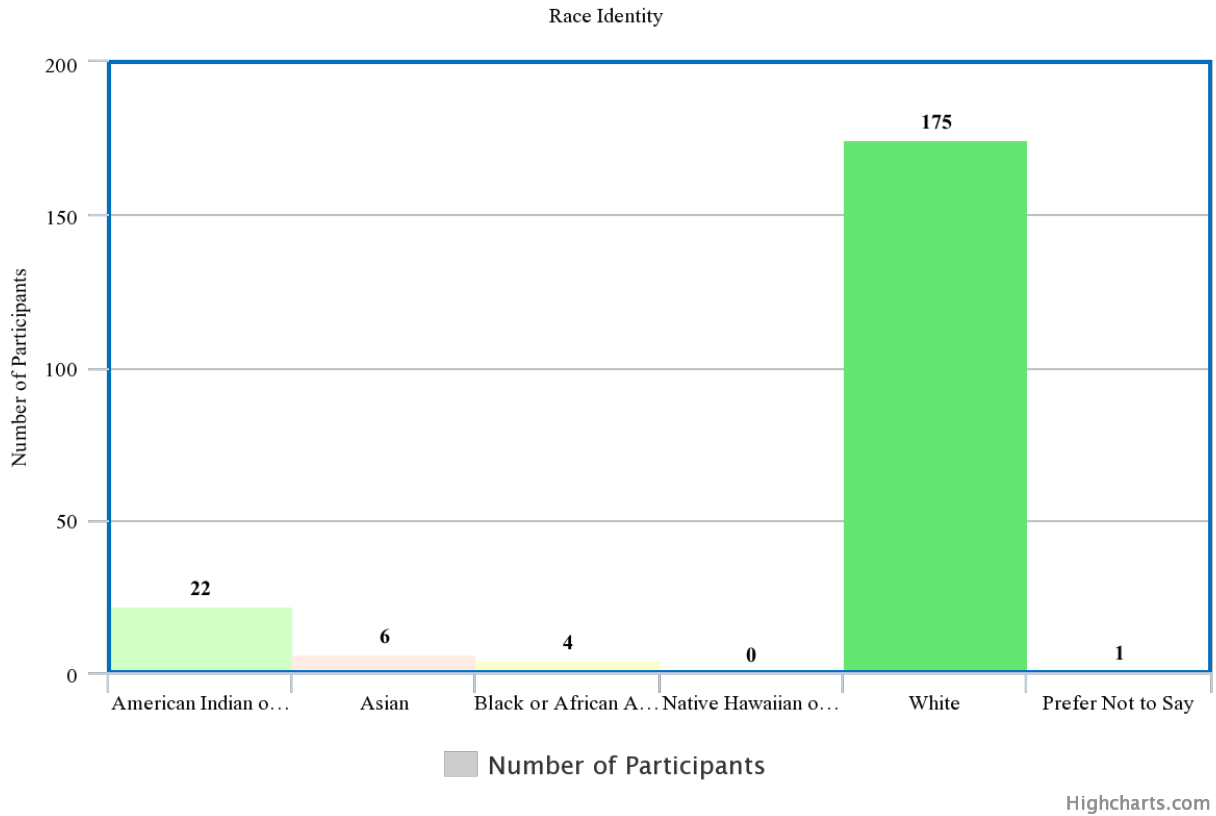
- It is for a classmate.
- It is for an acquaintance.
- On the following scales, rate how often you, as a writing center tutor, consider the use of academic plagiarism in these scenarios: (scale is not at all [0 times per semester], not very often [1-2 times per semester], often [3-4 times per semester], or very often [5+ times per semester])
 - If it is for your own paper.
 - If it is for a close friend.
 - If it is for a friend.
 - If it is for a classmate.
 - If it is for an acquaintance.
- On the following scales, rate how highly you, as a writing center tutor, consider someone other than yourself in the following scenarios: (1 not at all highly - 4 highly)
 - Plagiarized on their own paper.
 - Plagiarized on a close friend's paper.
 - Plagiarized on a friend's paper.
 - Plagiarized on a classmate's paper.
 - Plagiarized on an acquaintance's paper.
- On the following scales, rate how confident you are writing in the following academic formats: (1 unconfident-4 confident)
 - MLA
 - APA 7

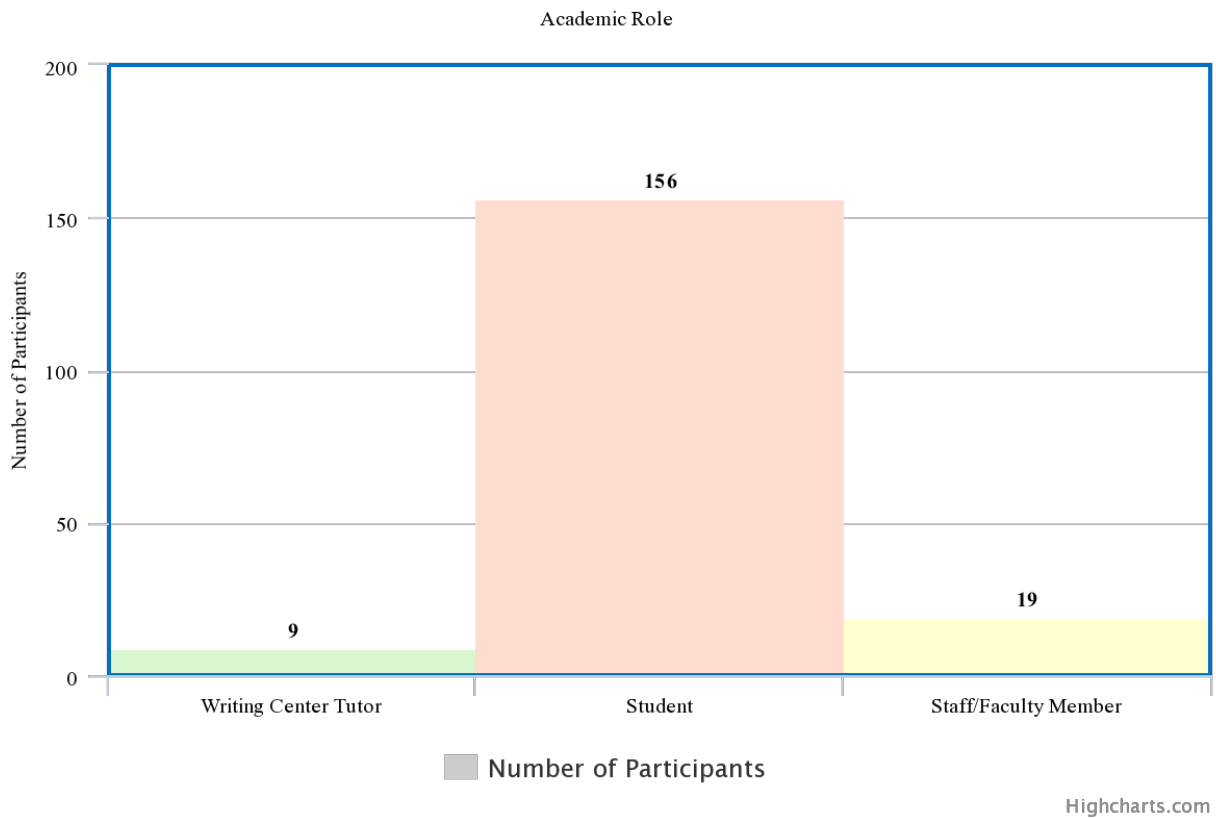
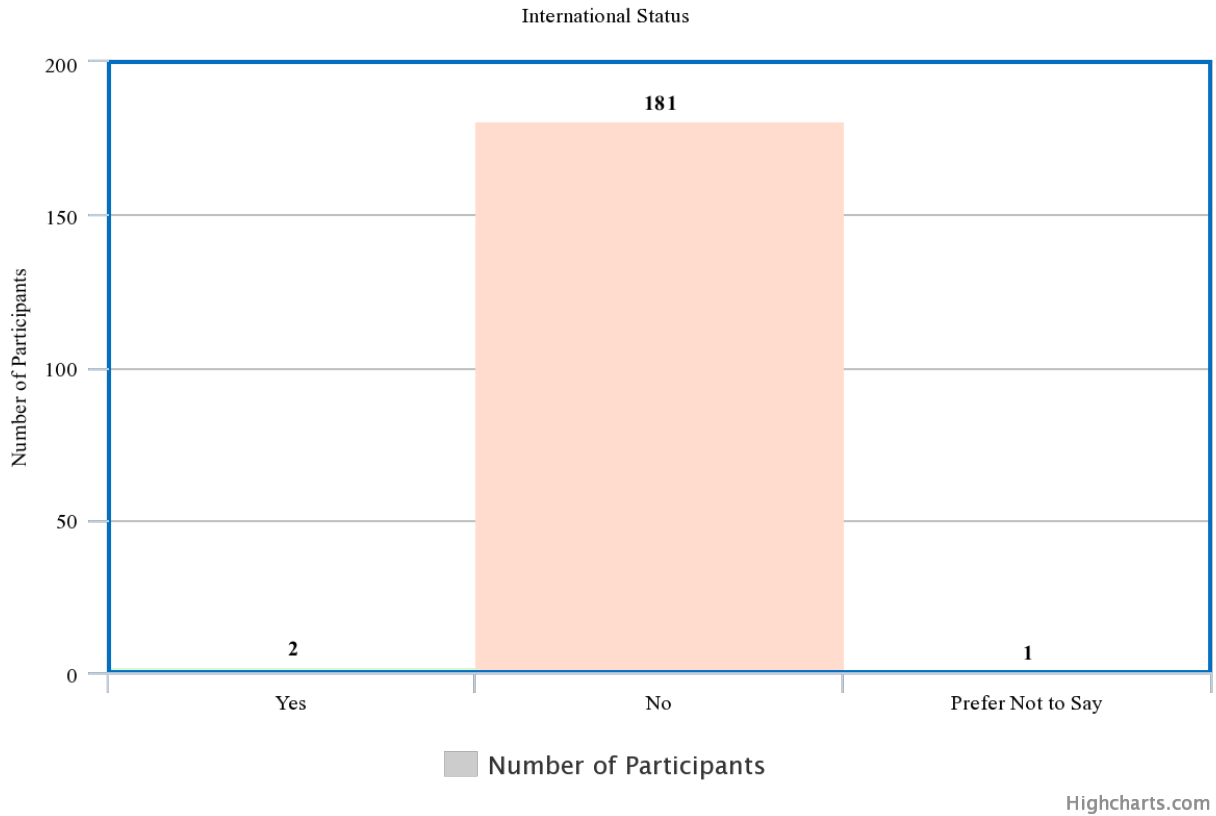
- Chicago
- AP
- Short Response:
 - What are the primary reasons you are motivated to plagiarize on academic papers?
 - What could a professor do, if anything, to help demotivate you to plagiarize on academic papers?
 - As a writing center tutor, what are the primary reasons, if any, that you see motivate a client to plagiarize on academic writing?

Appendix B: Results of Google Survey

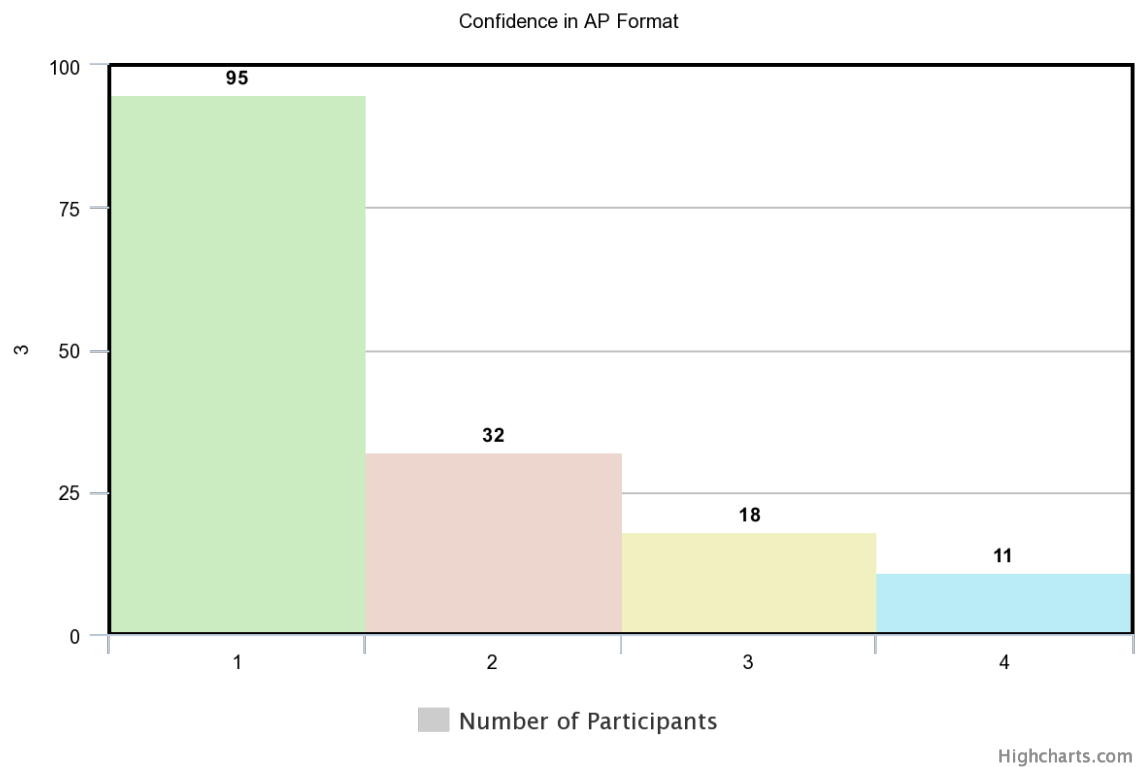
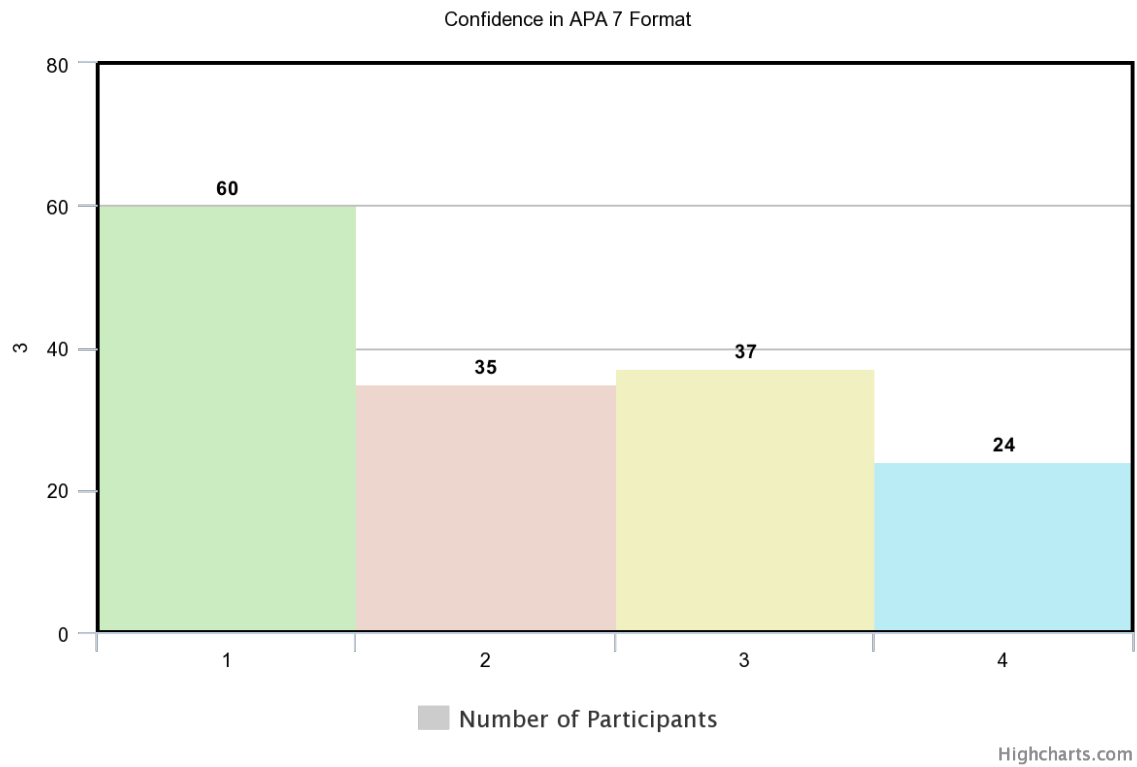
Demographics



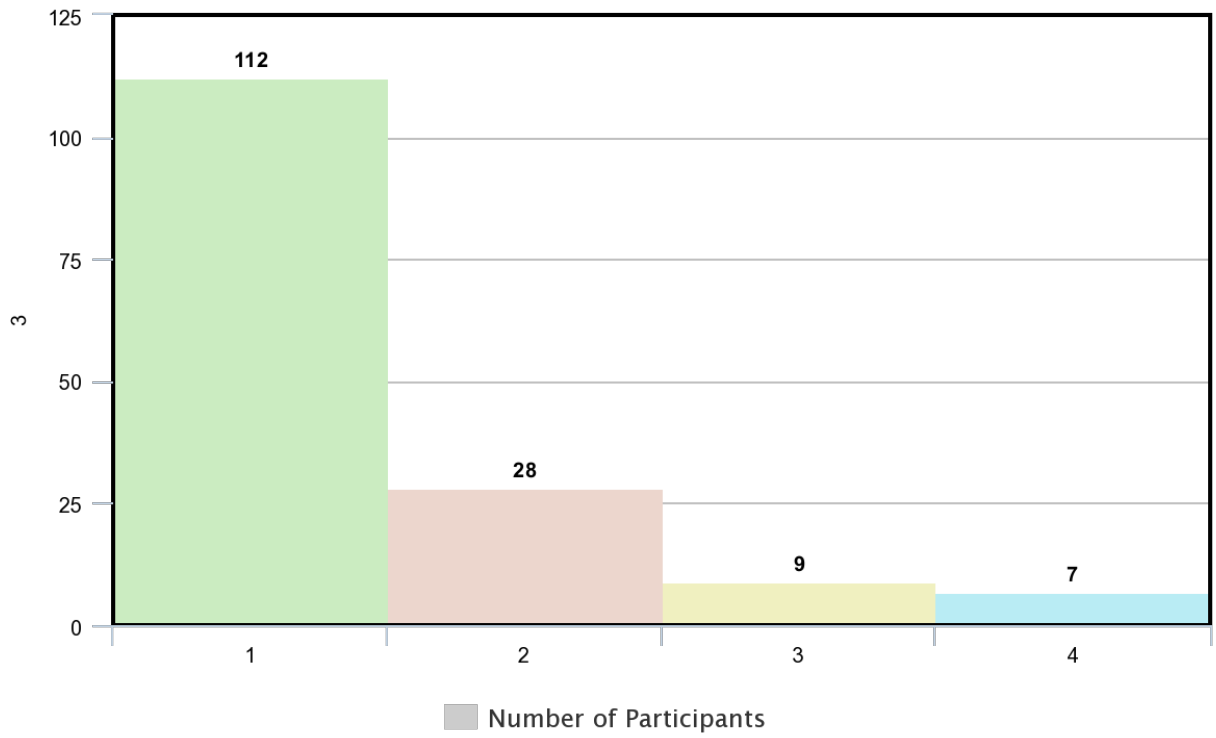




Student Responses

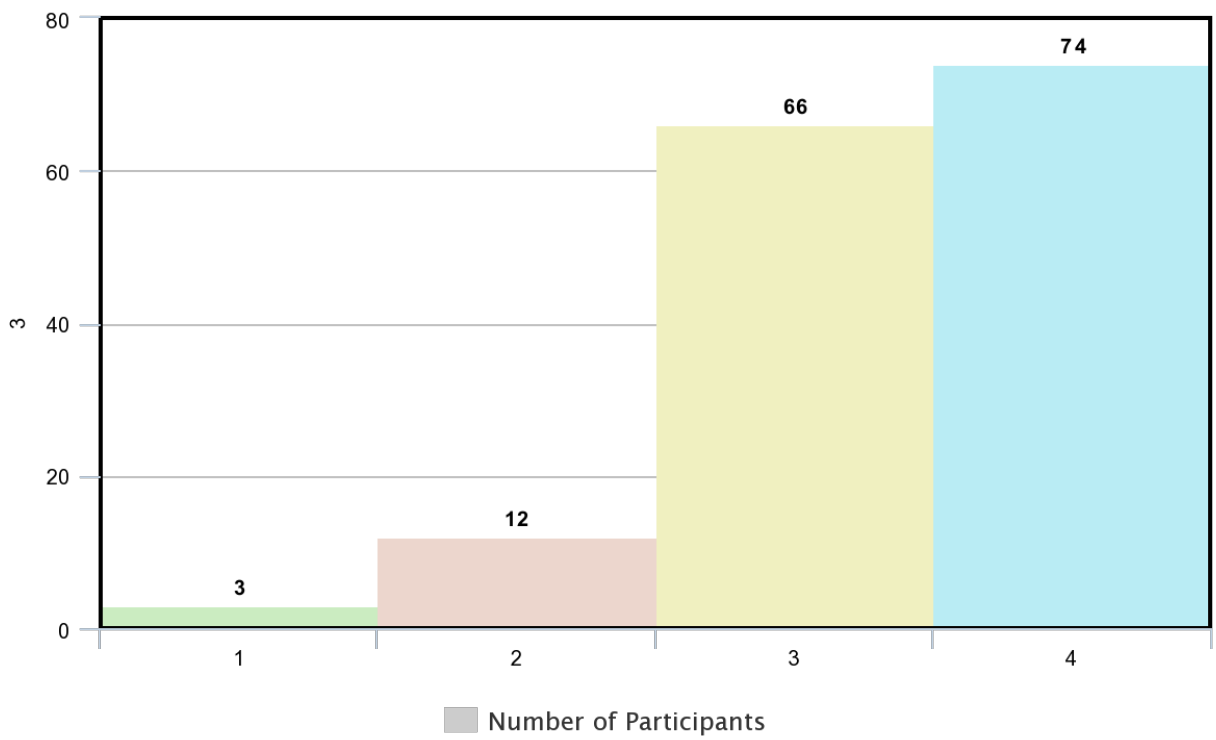


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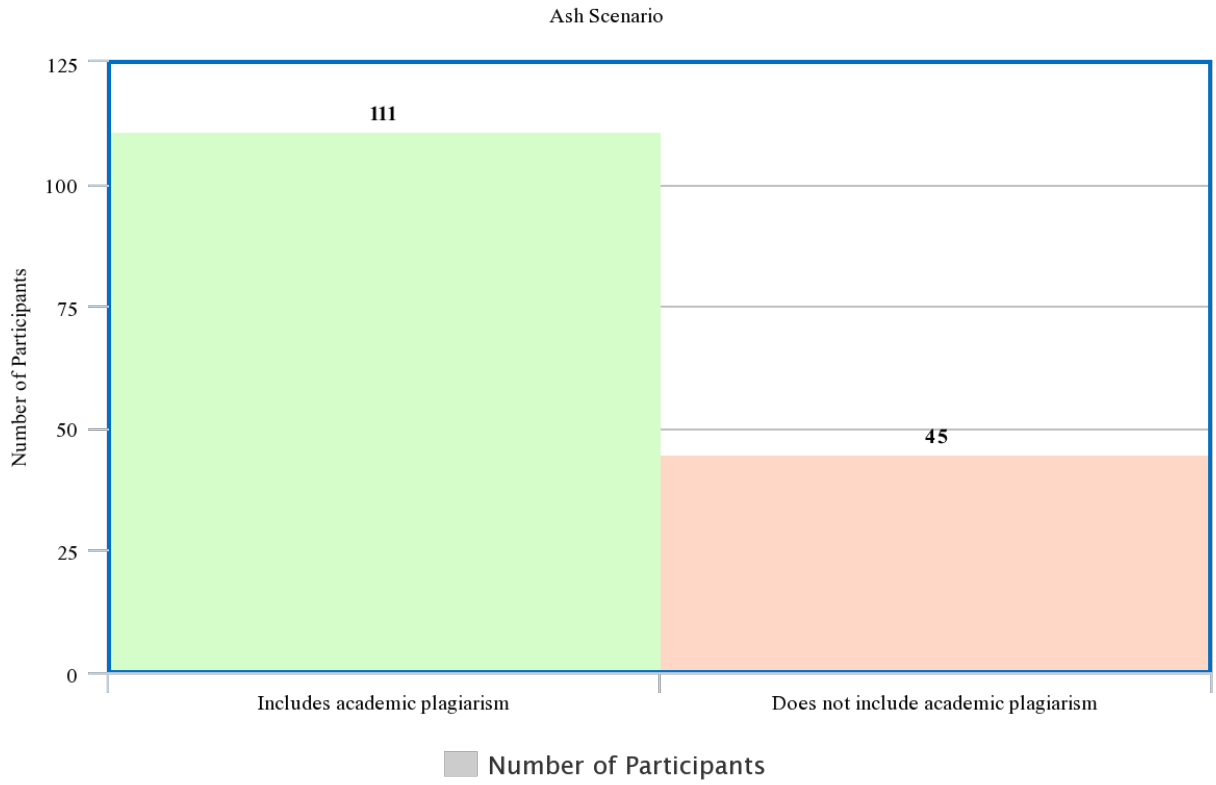


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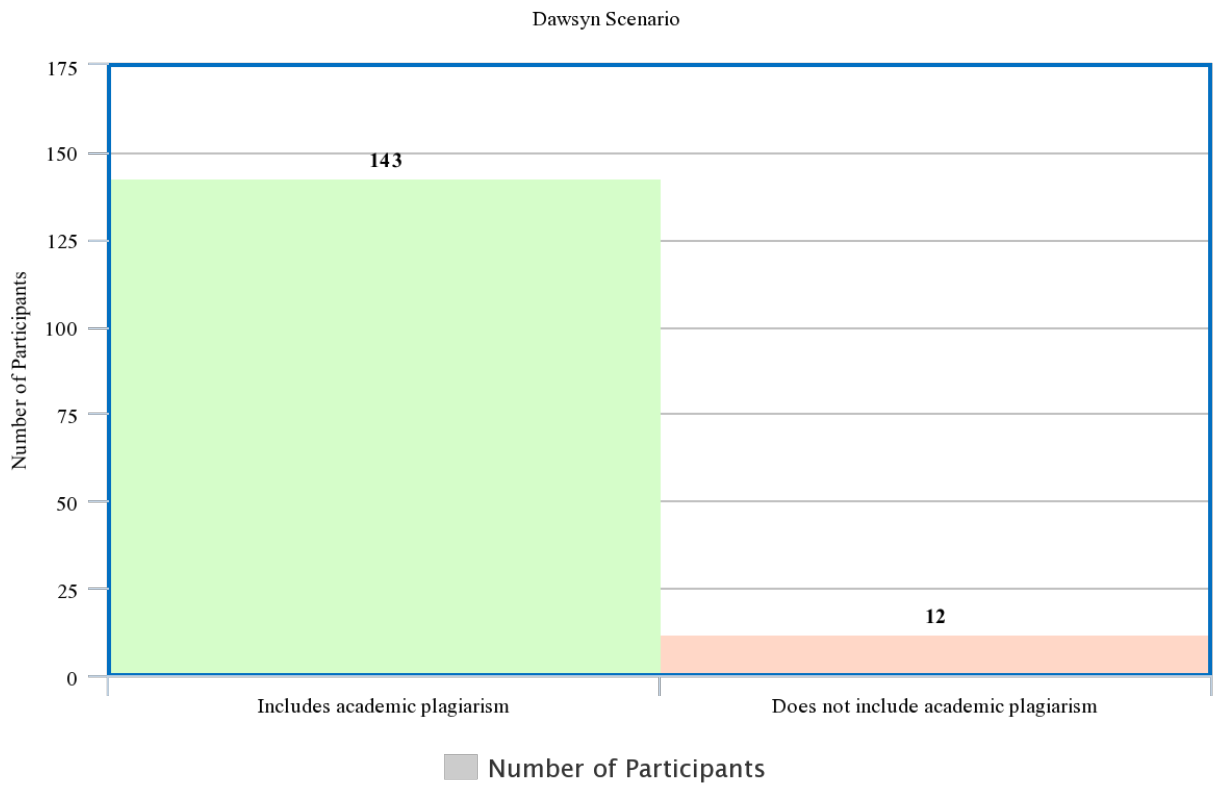
Confidence in MLA Format



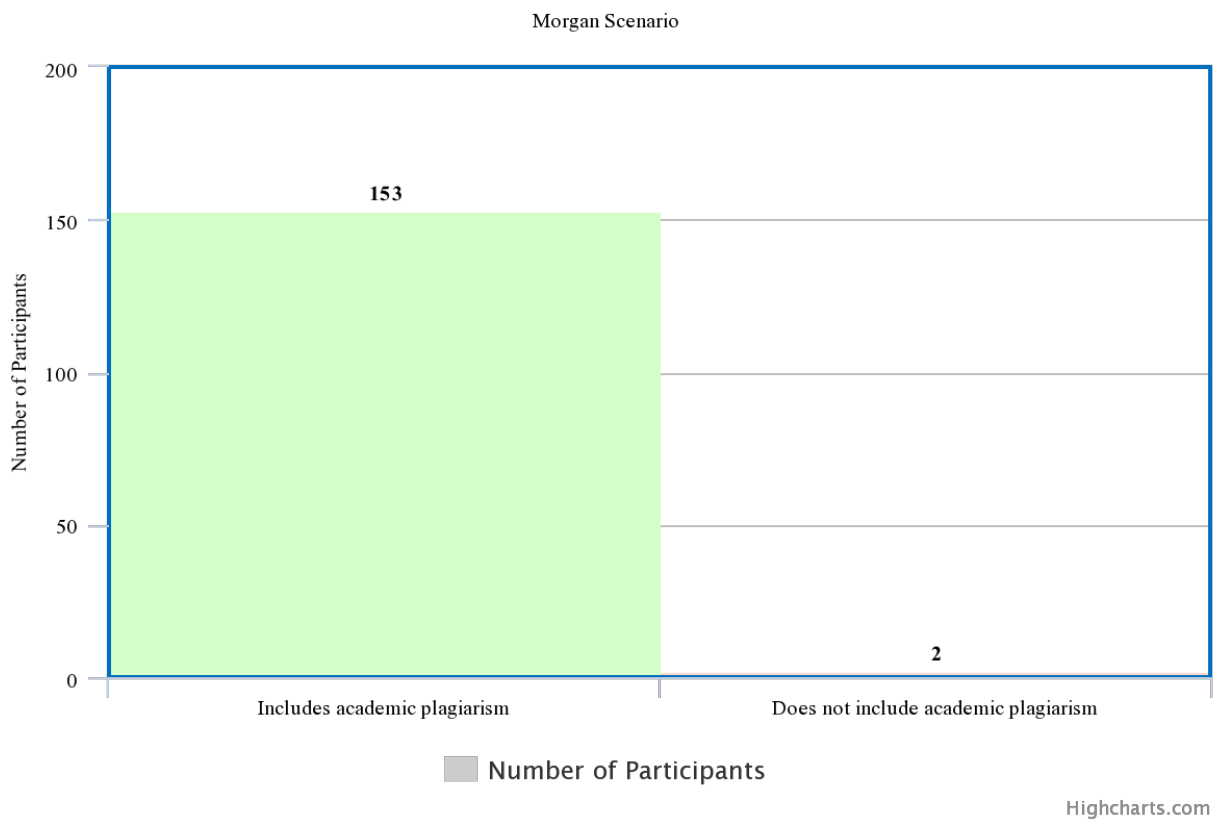
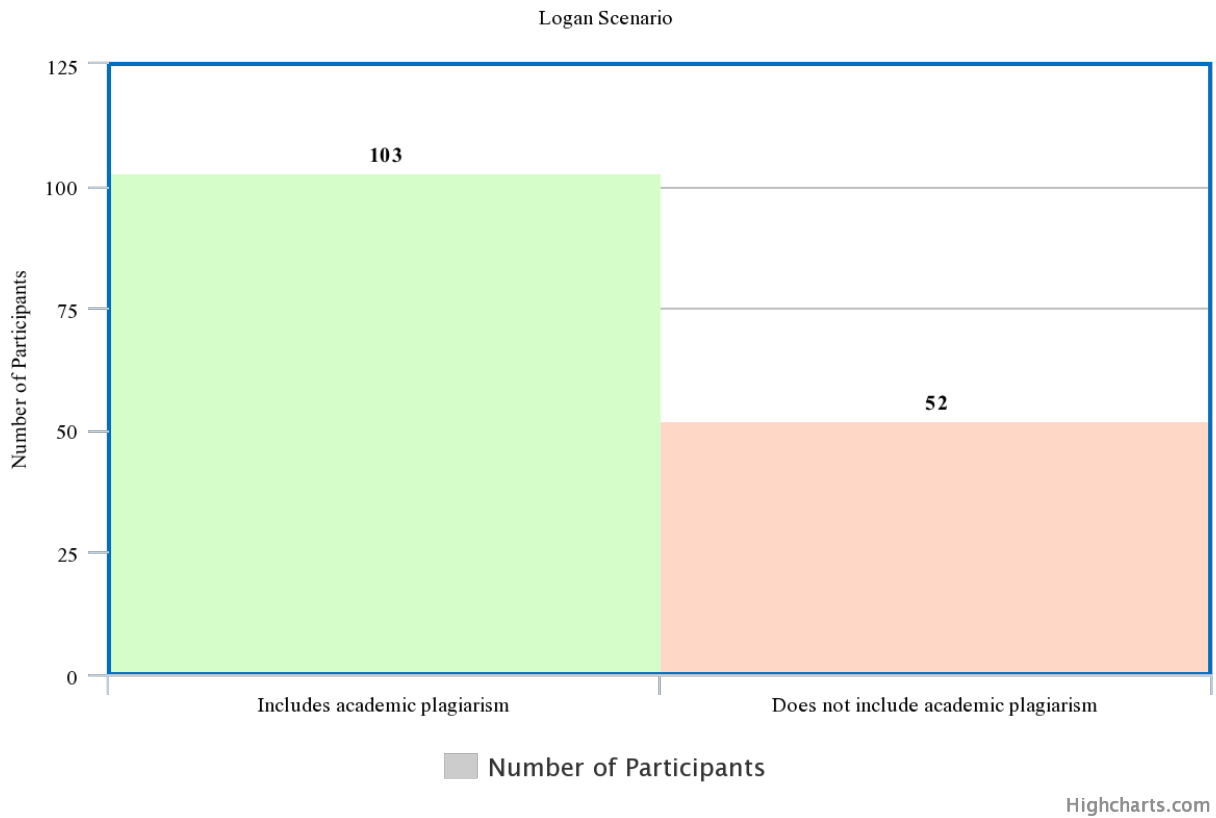
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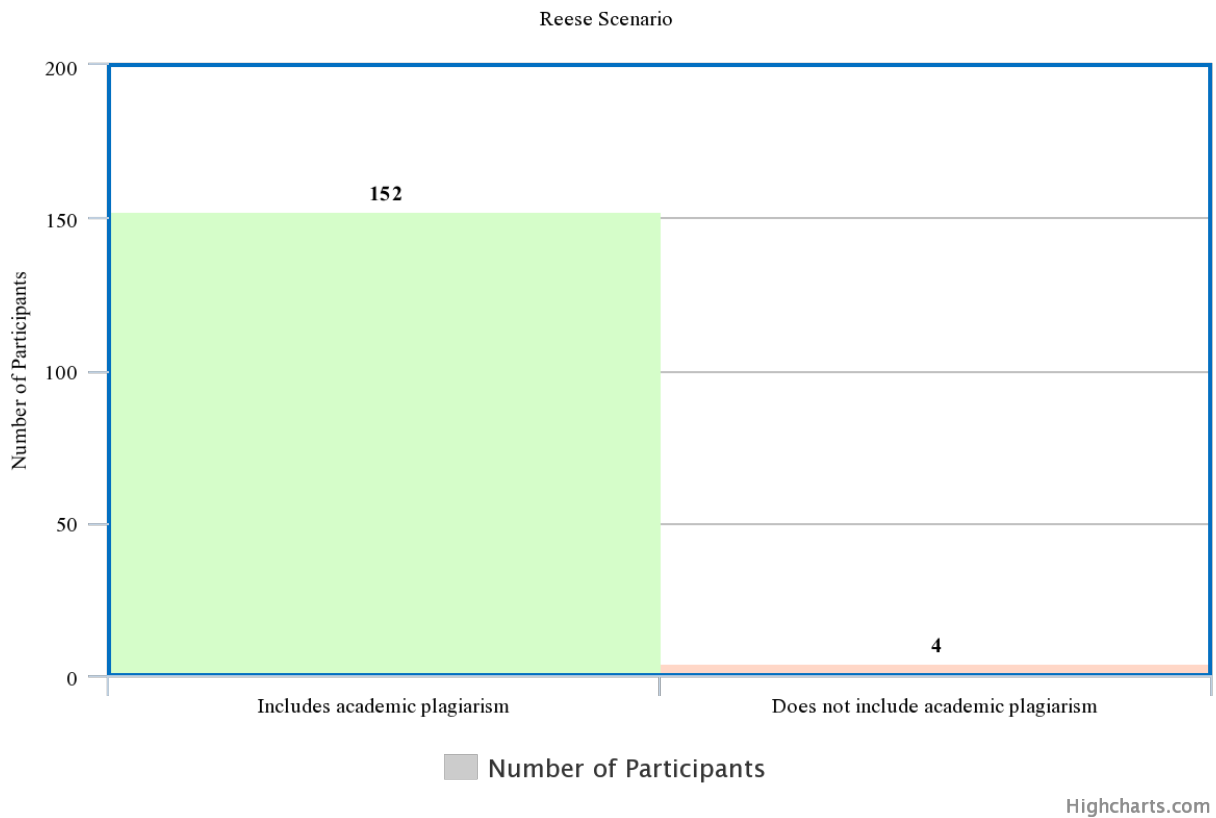
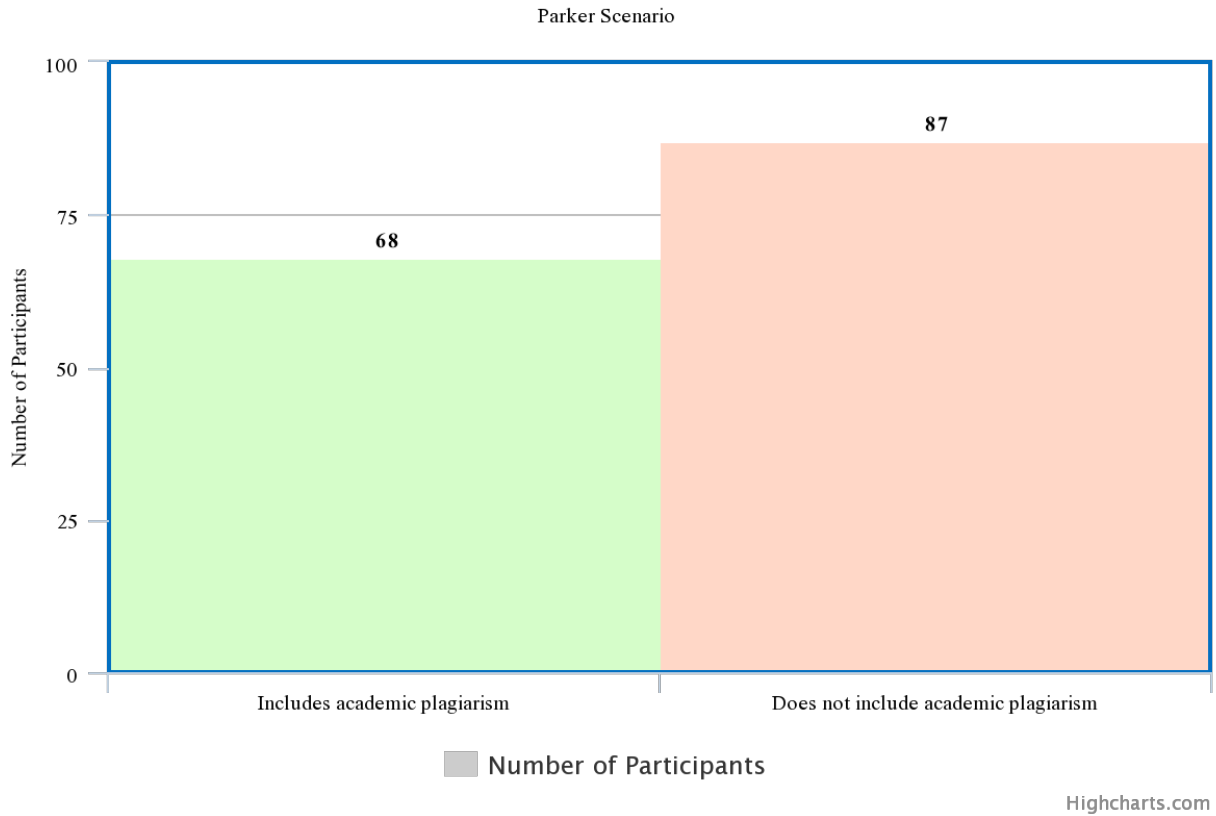


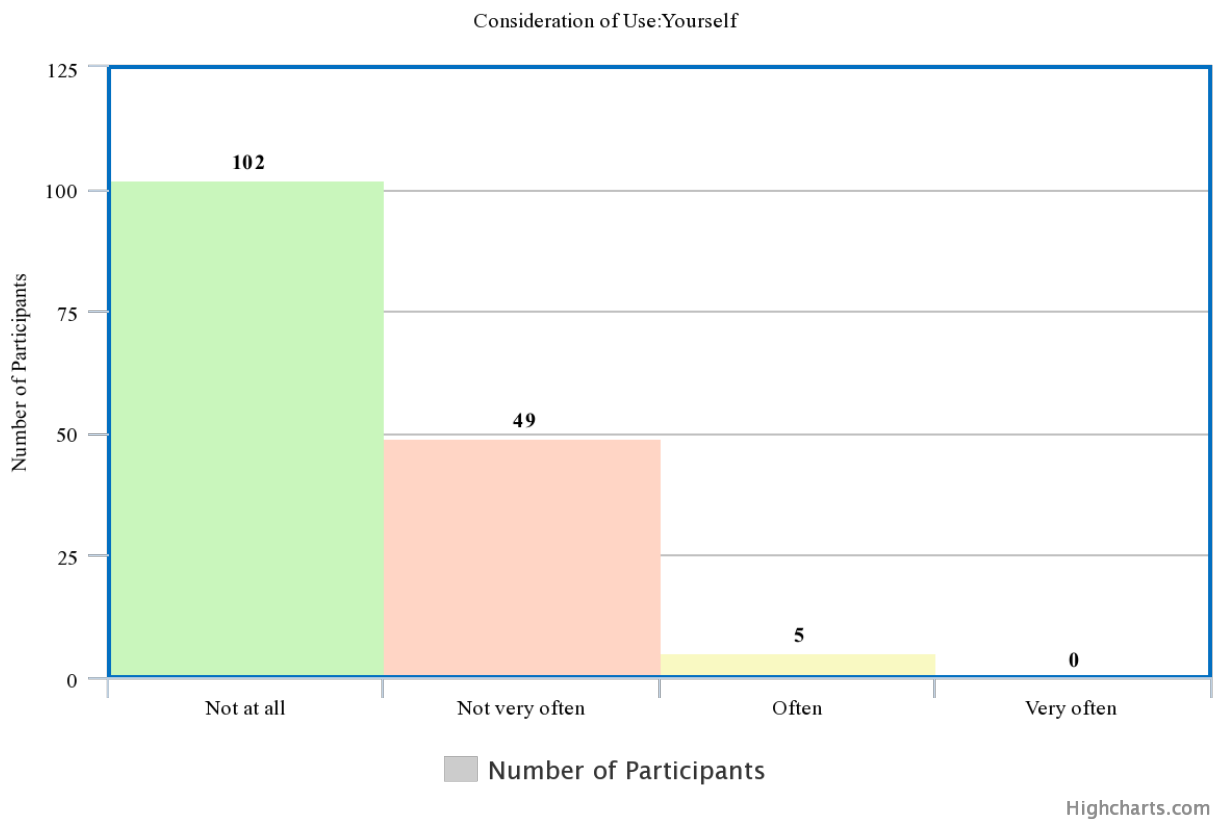
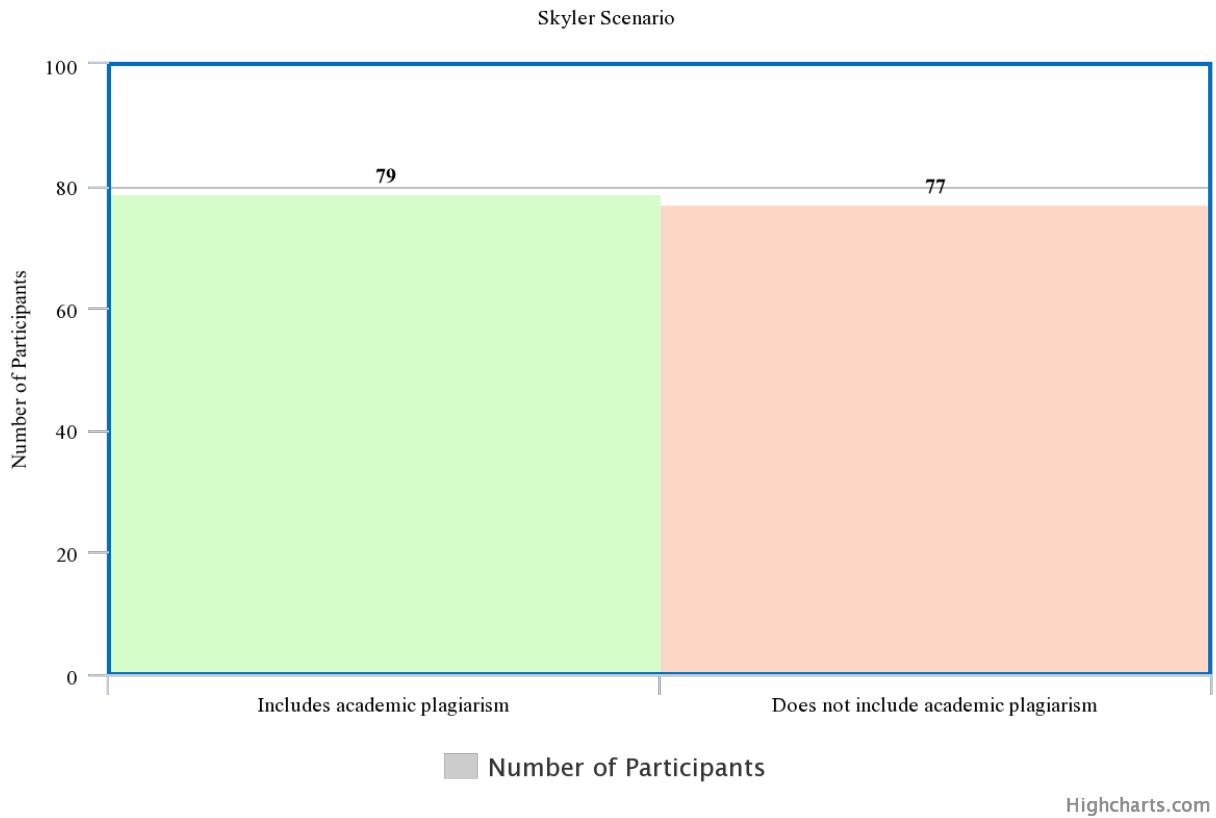
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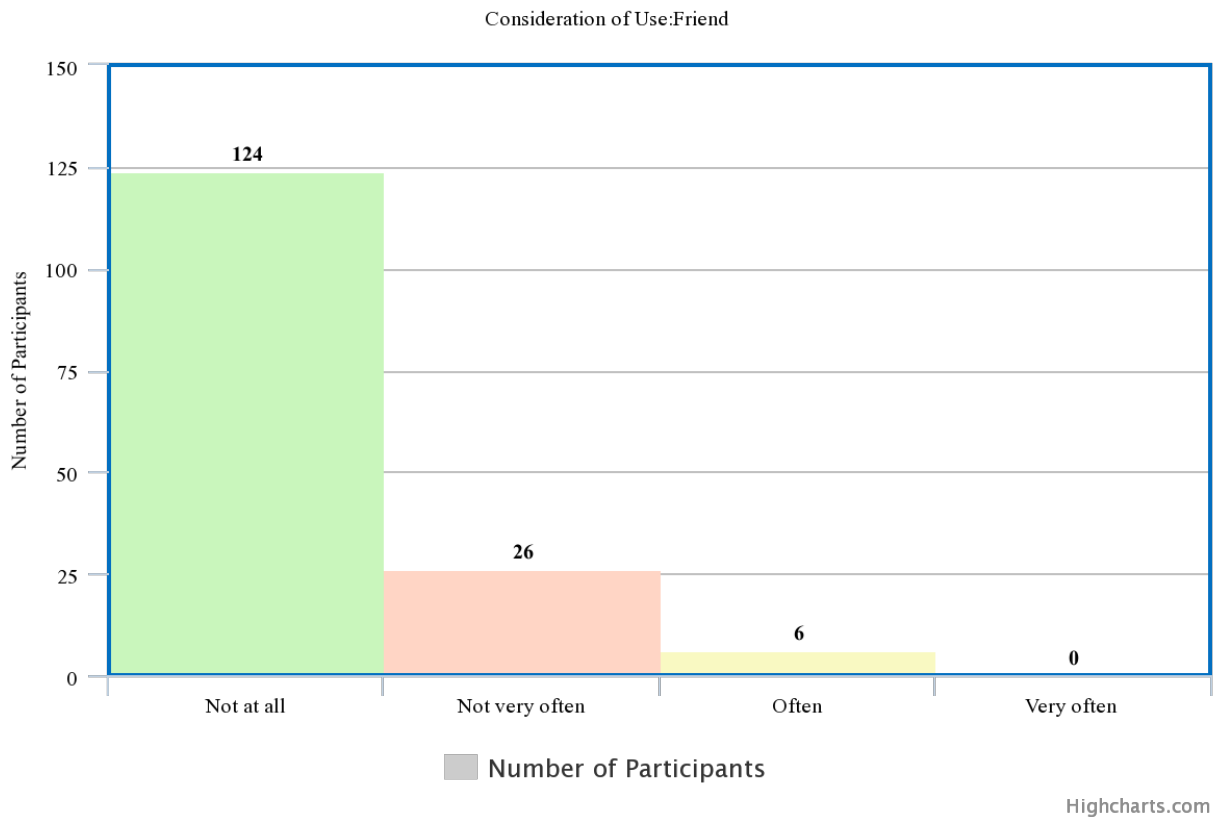
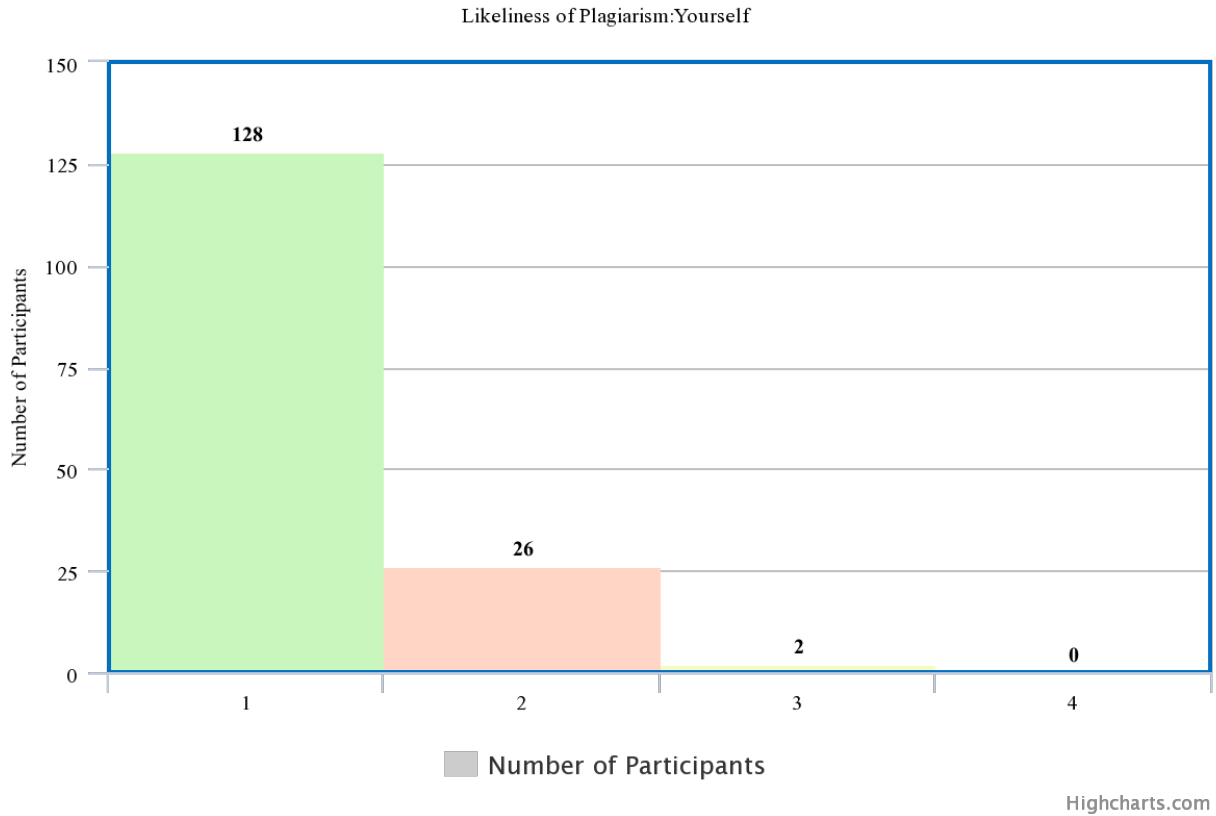


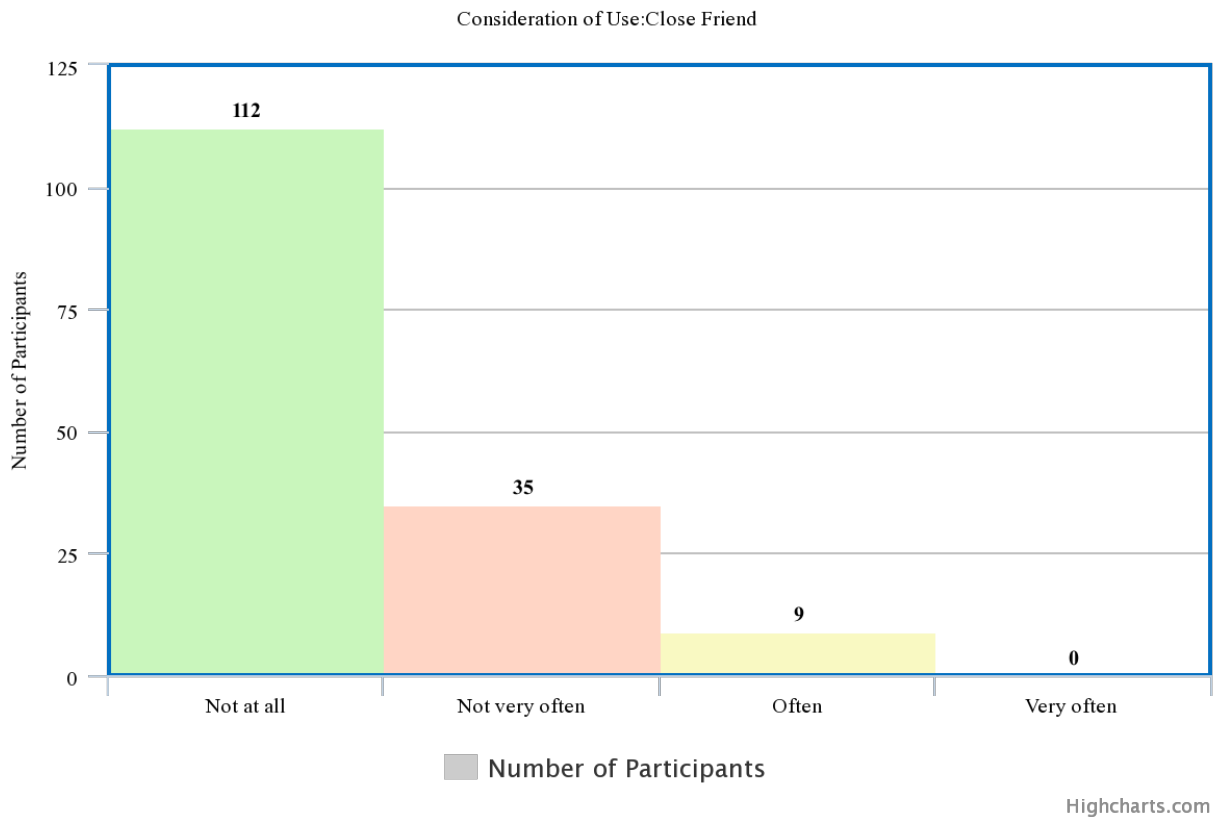
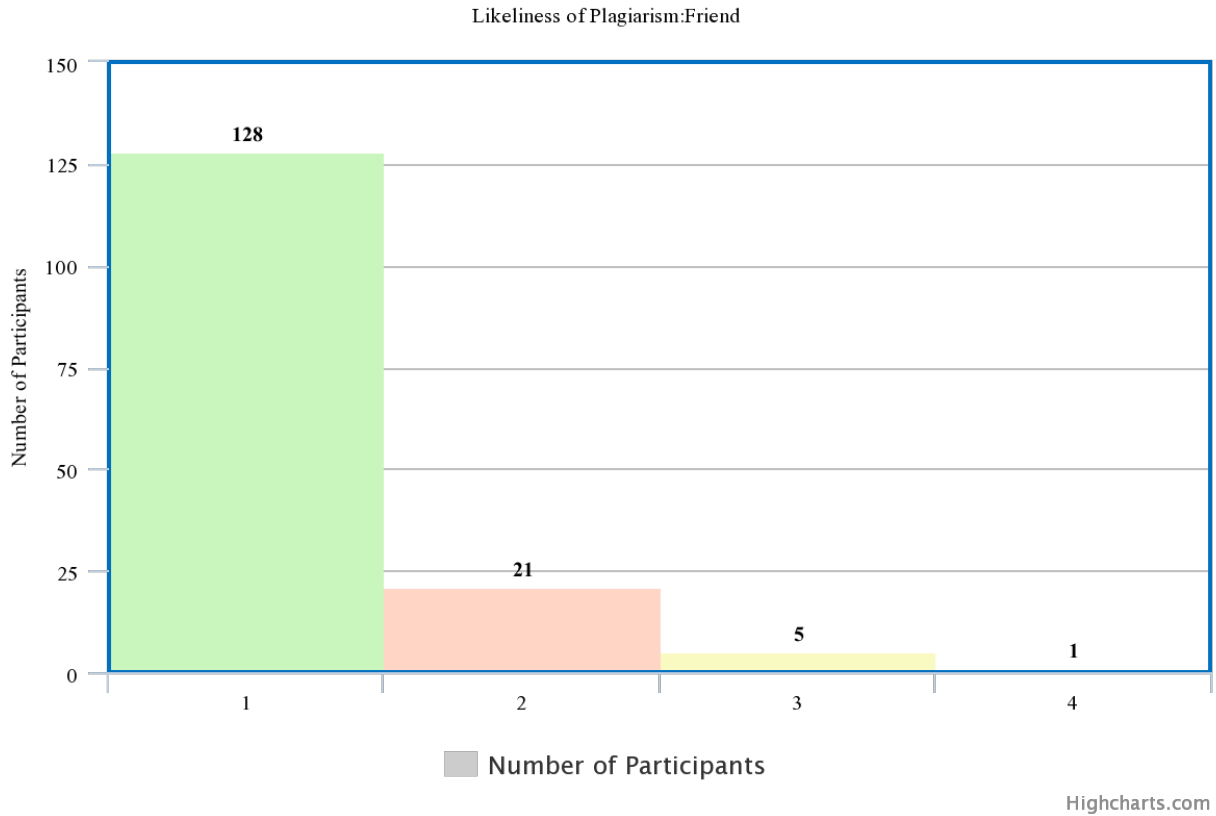
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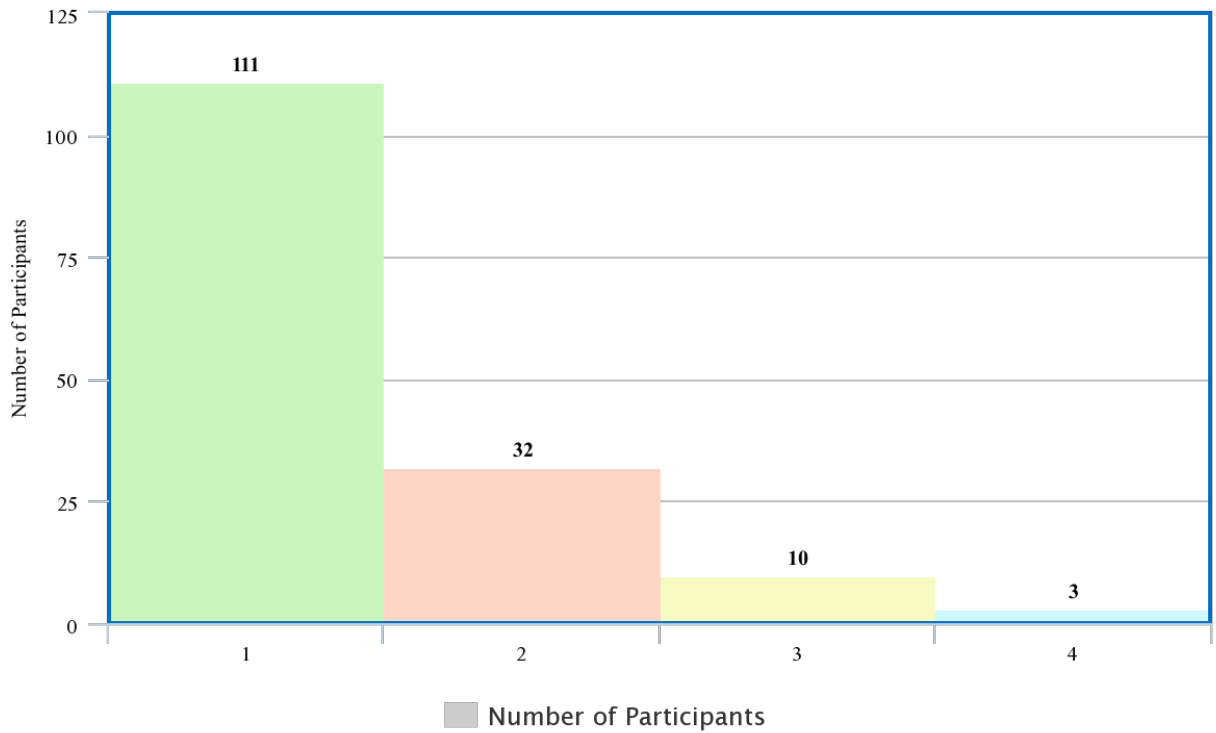






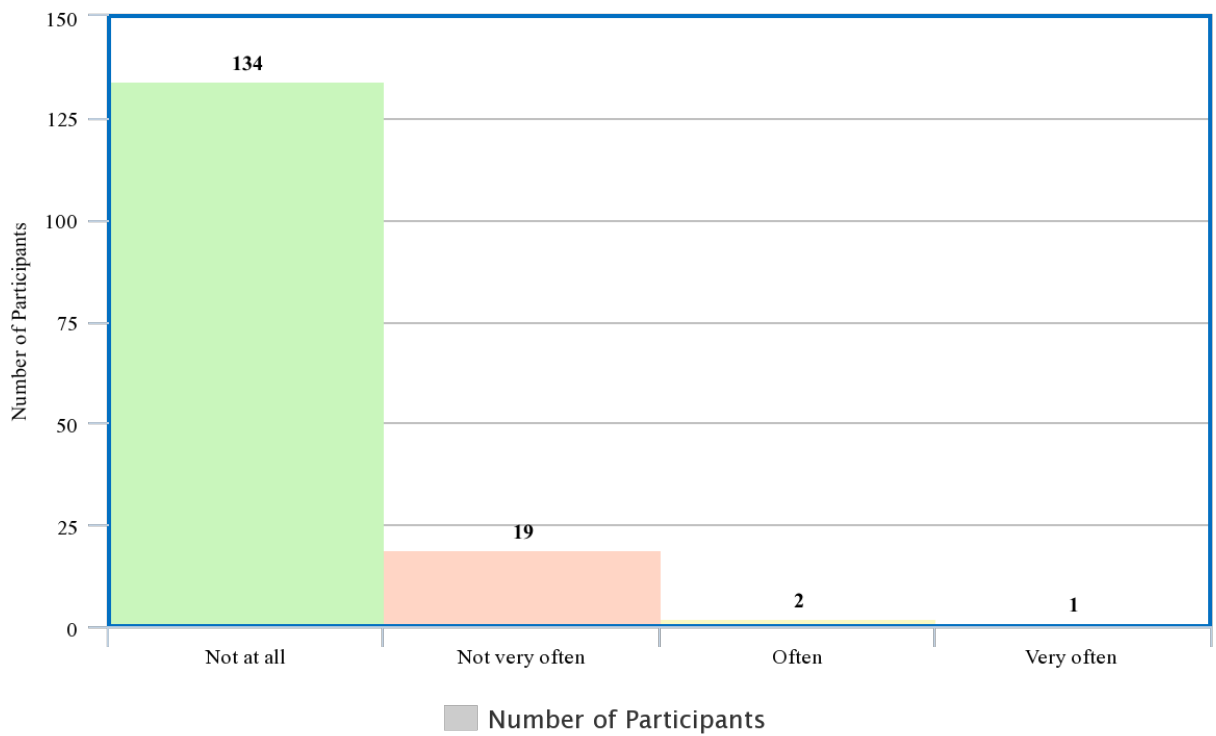


Likelihood of Plagiarism:Close Friend

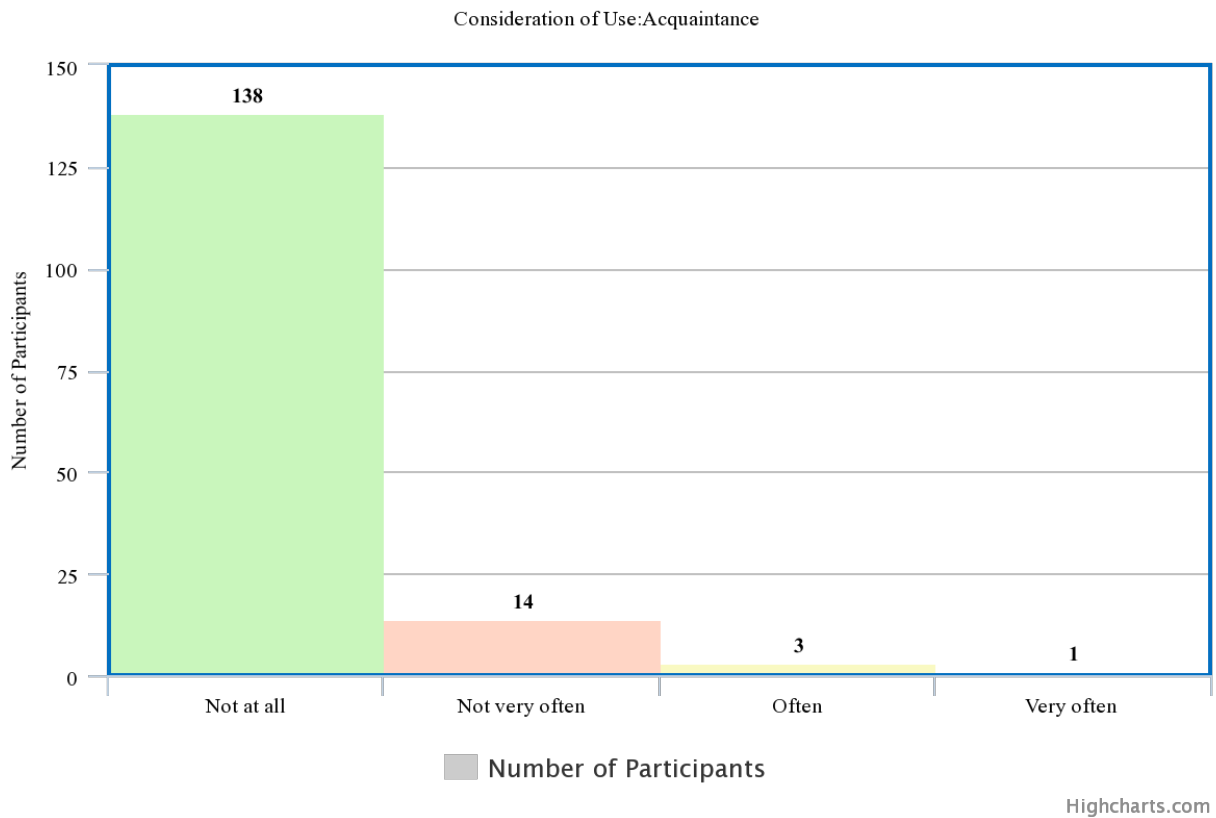
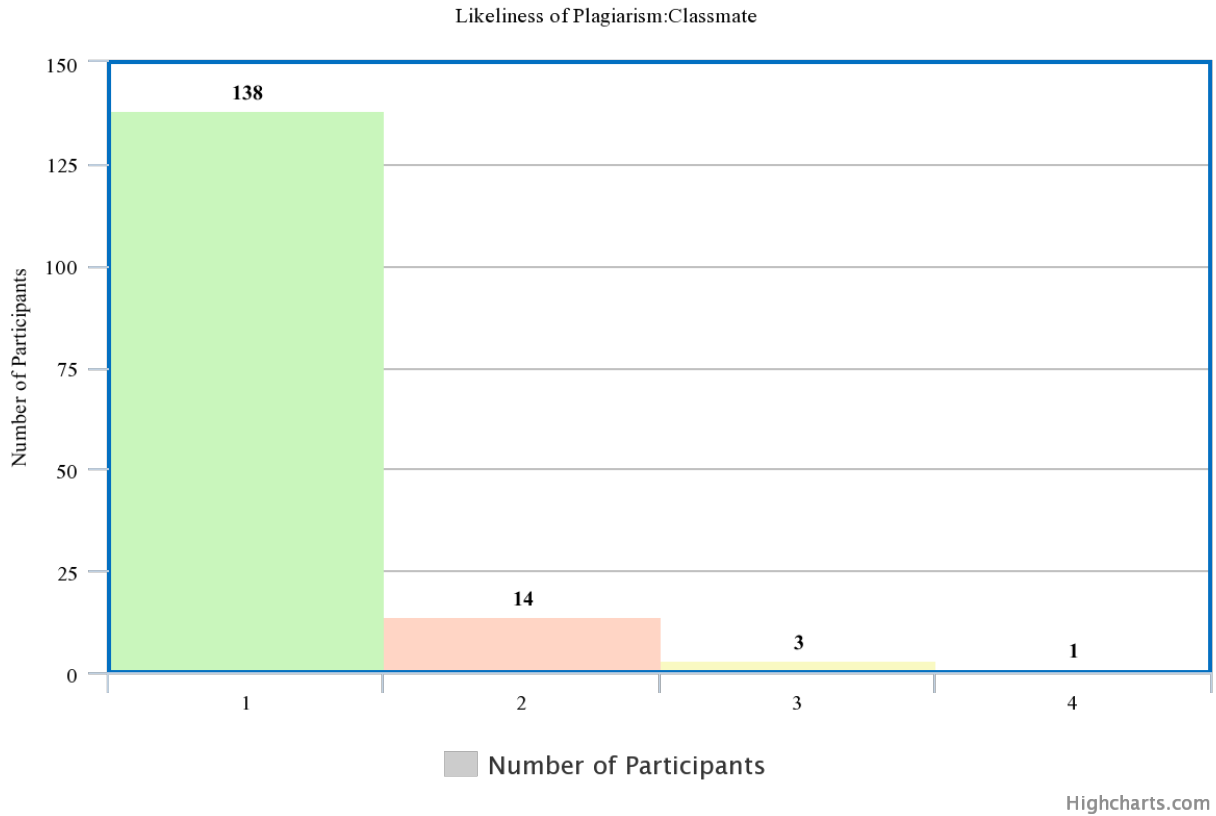


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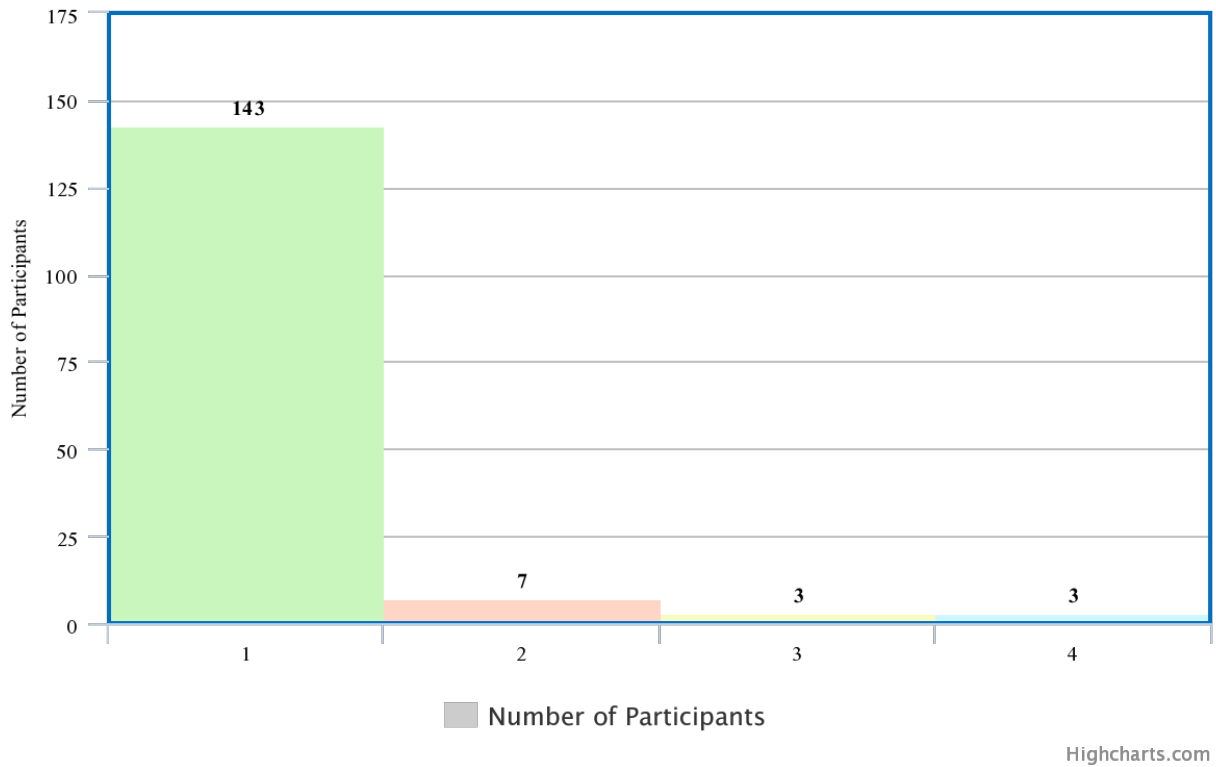
Consideration of Use:Classmate



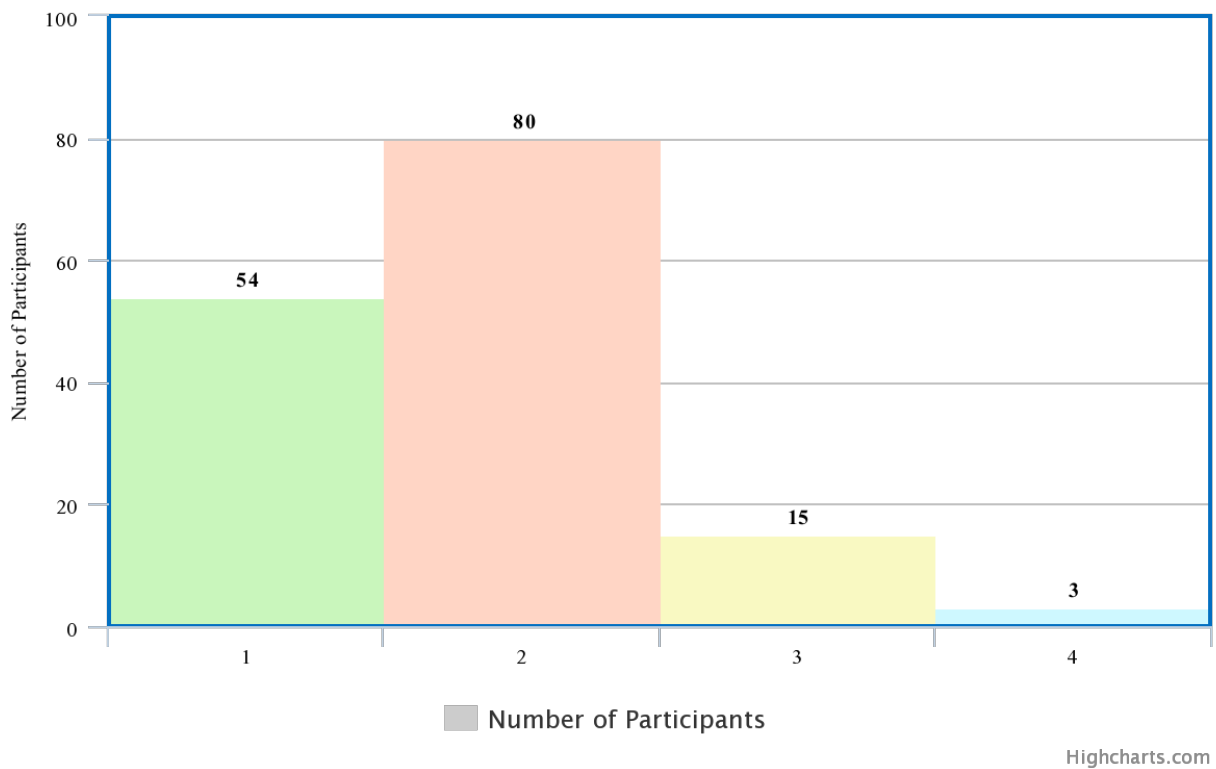
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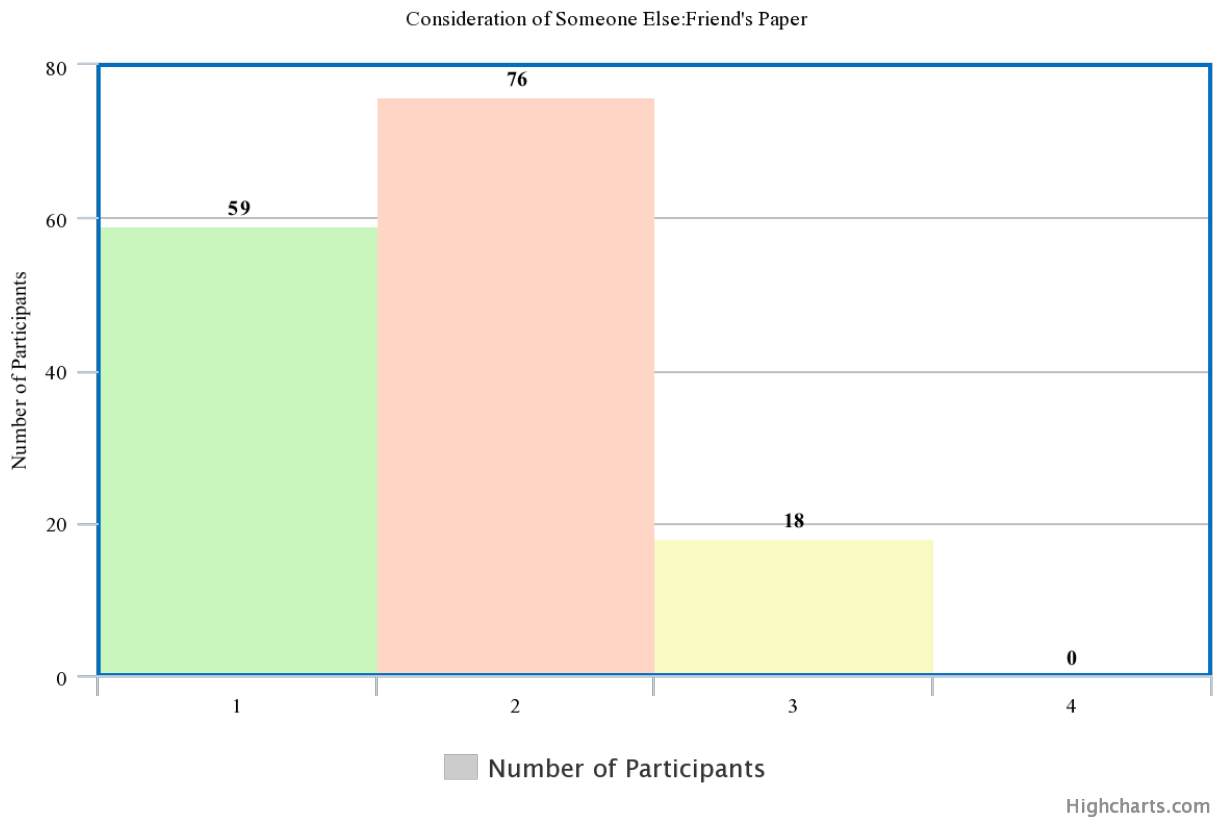
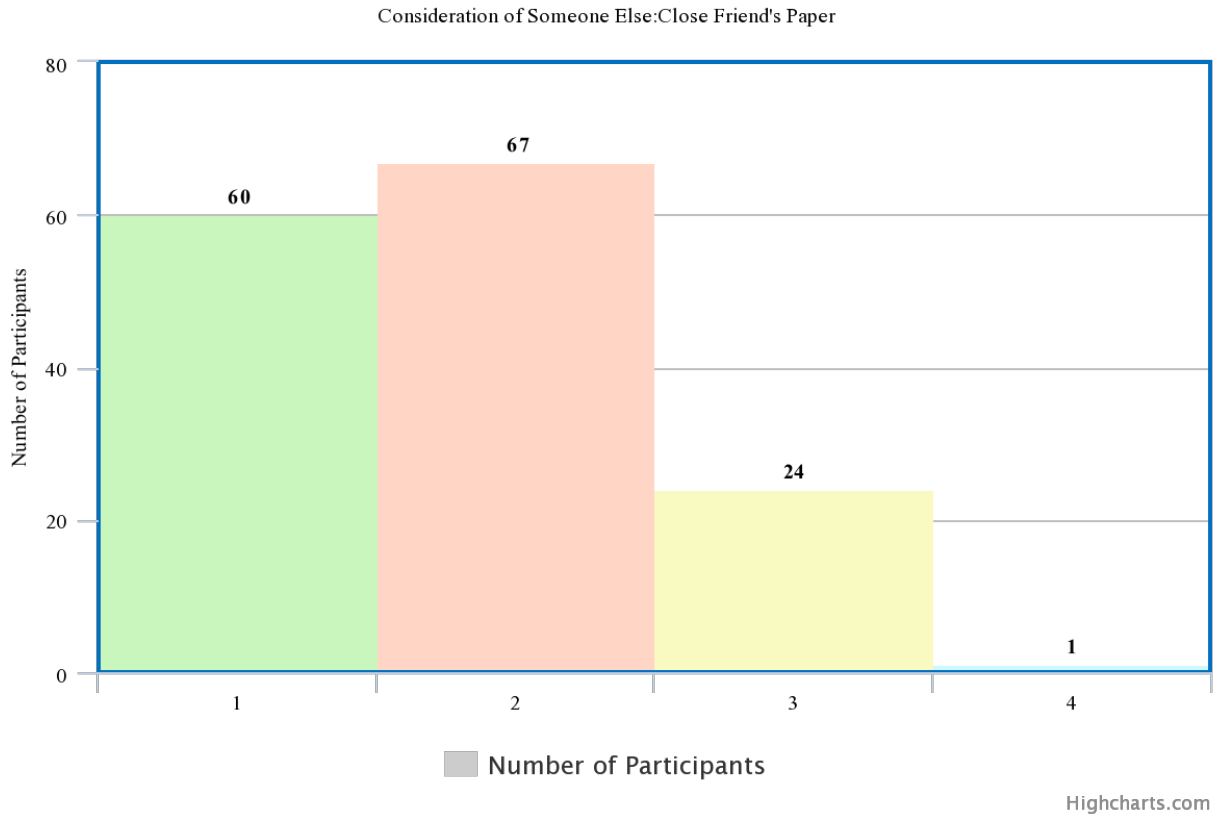


Likelihood of Plagiarism: Acquaintance

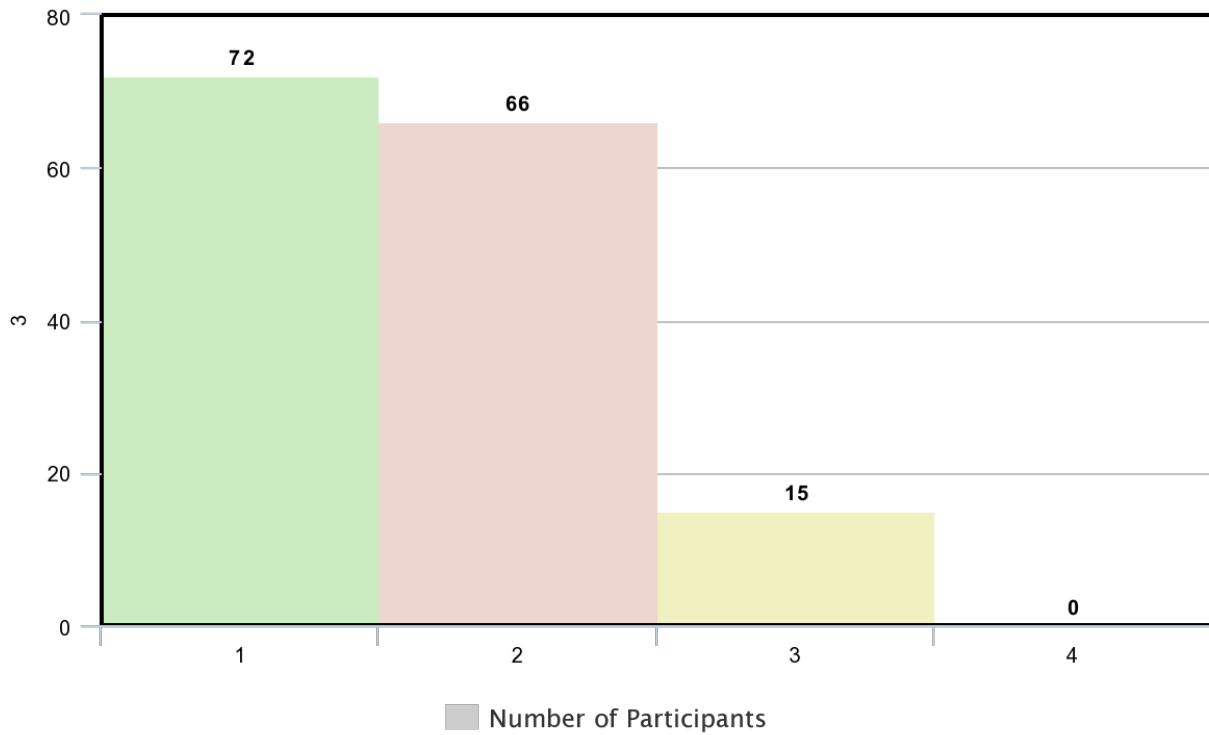


Consideration of Someone Else: Own Paper



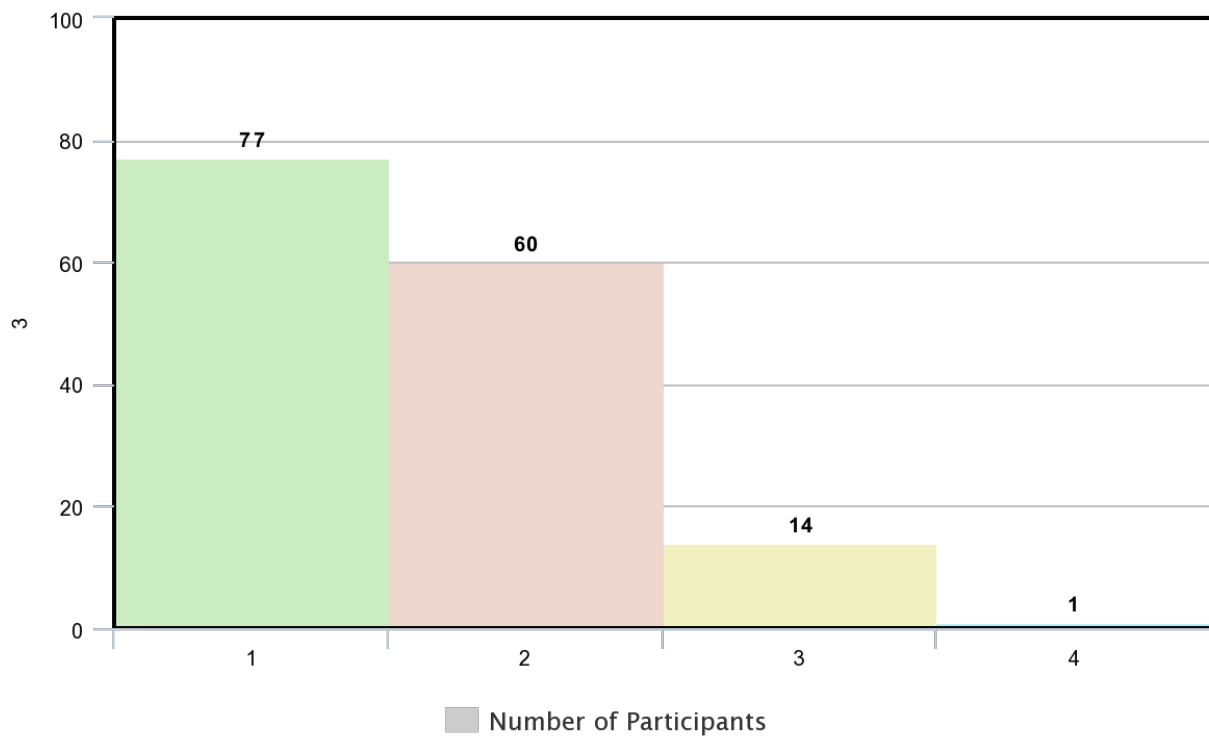


Consideration of Someone Else:Classmate



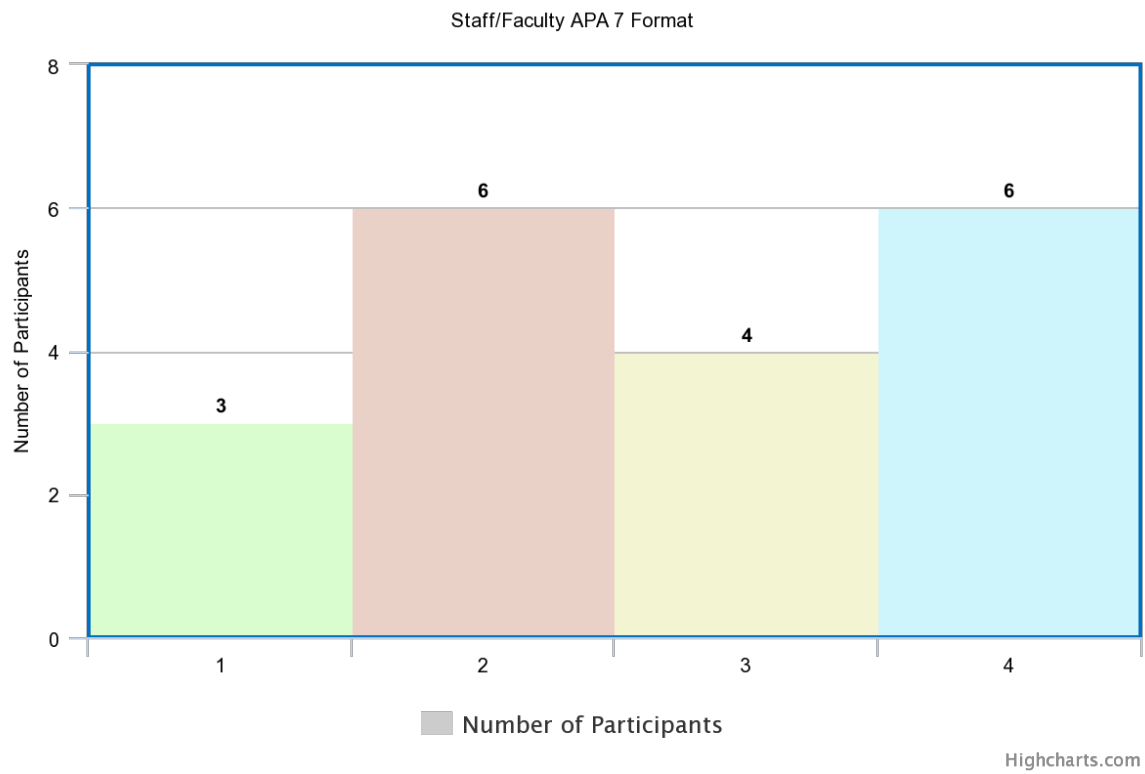
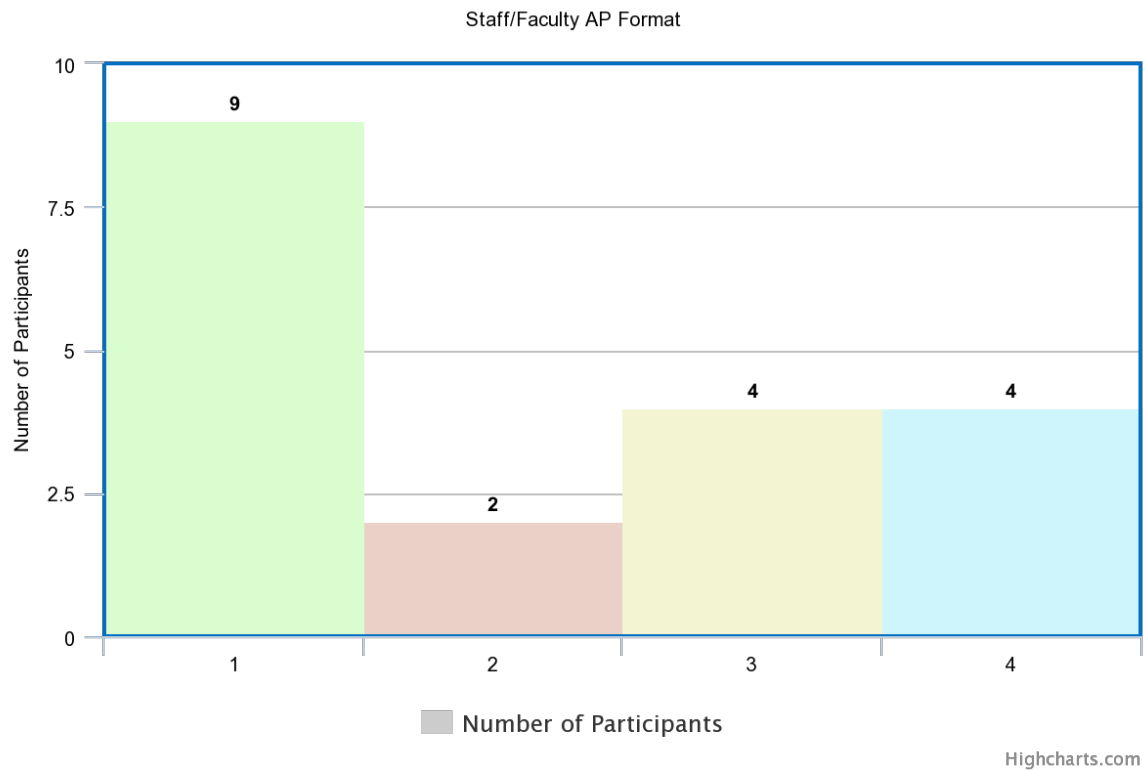
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Consideration of Someone Else:Acquaintance

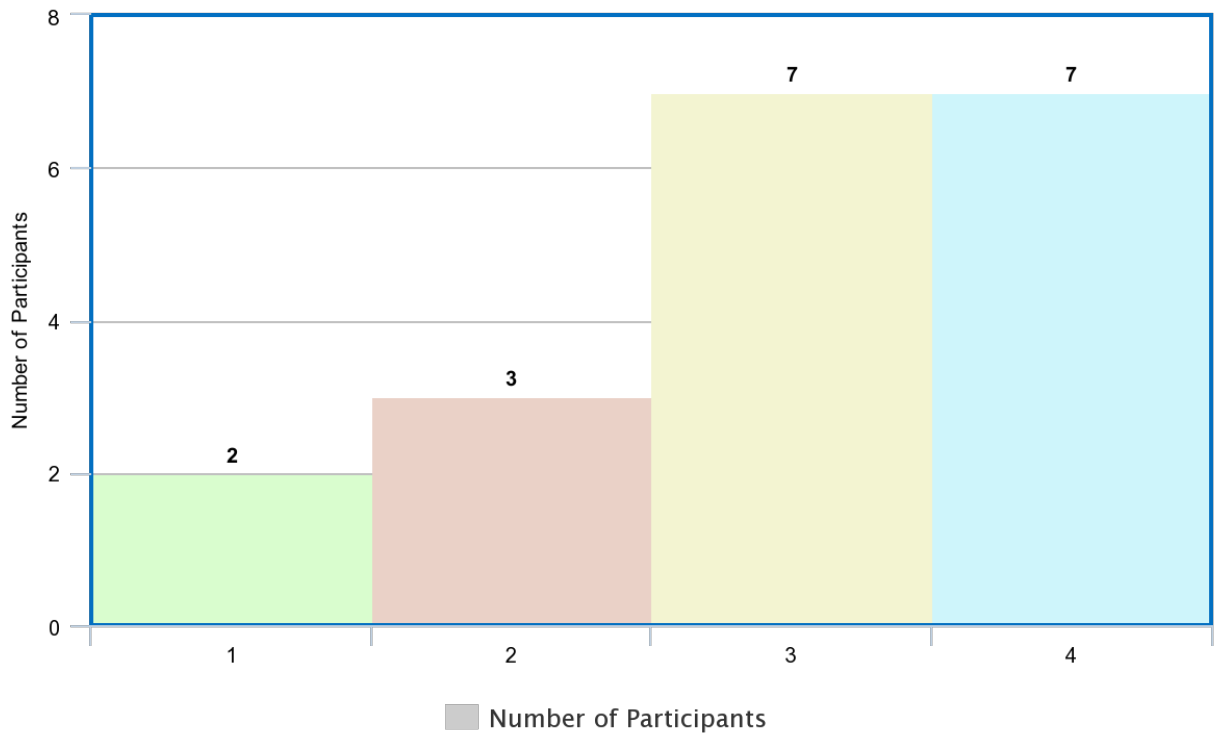


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Staff/Faculty Responses

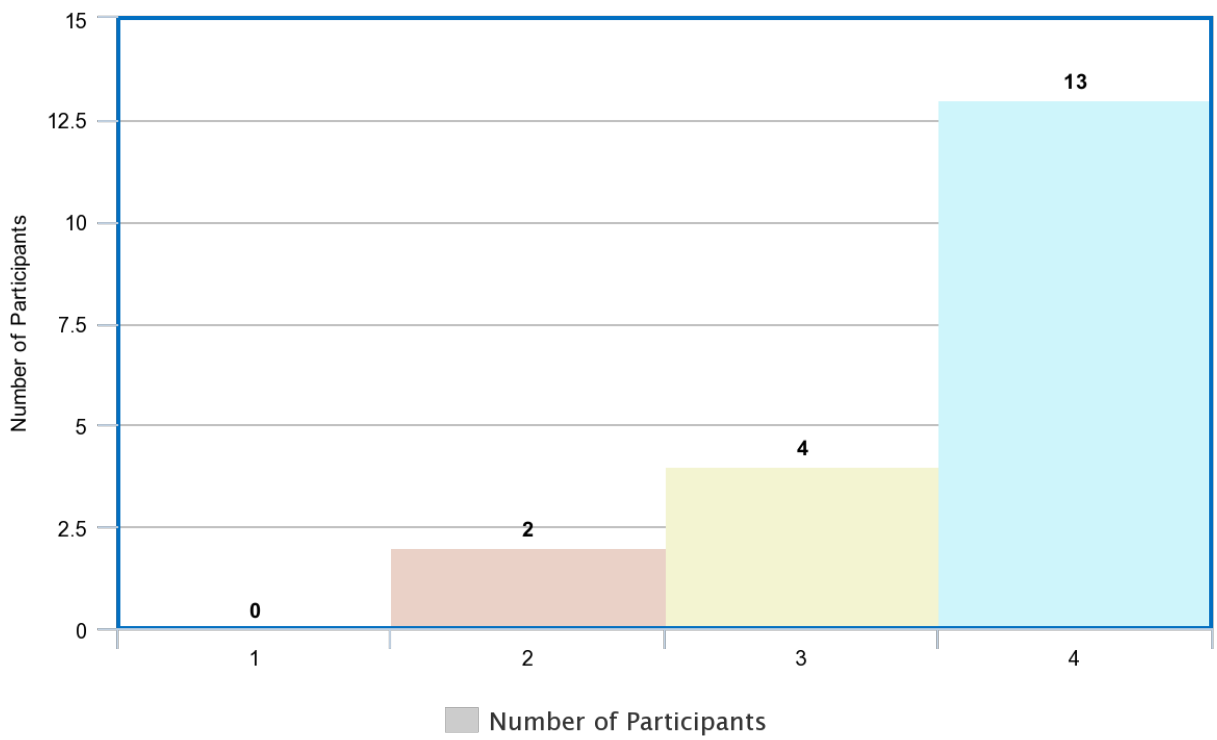


Staff/Faculty Chicago Format

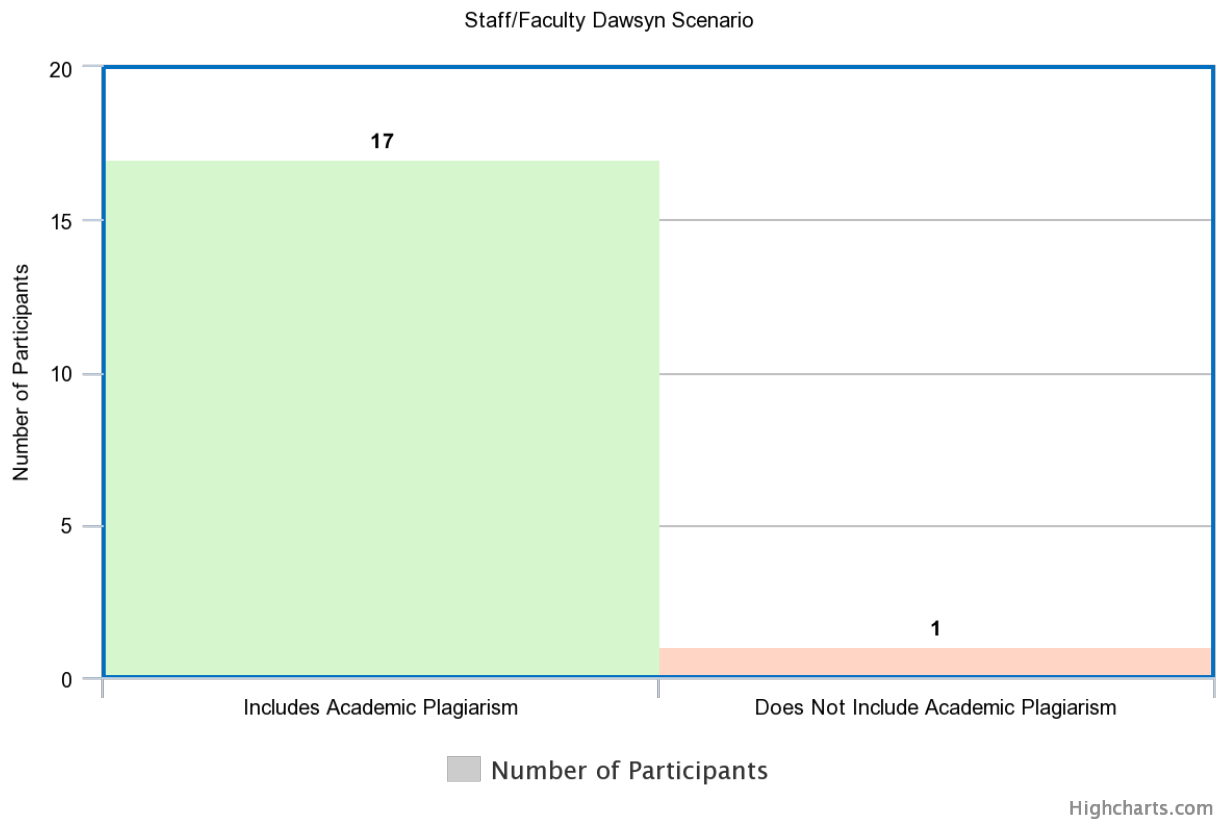
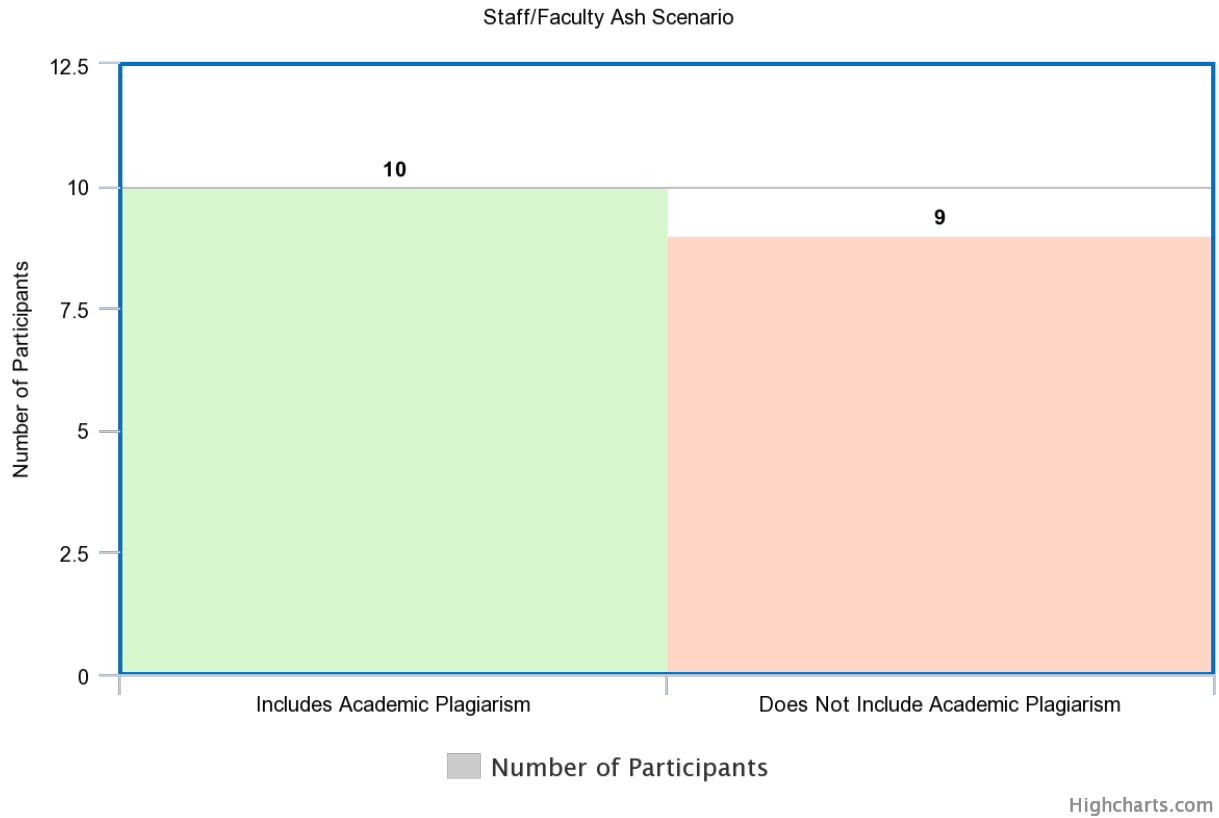


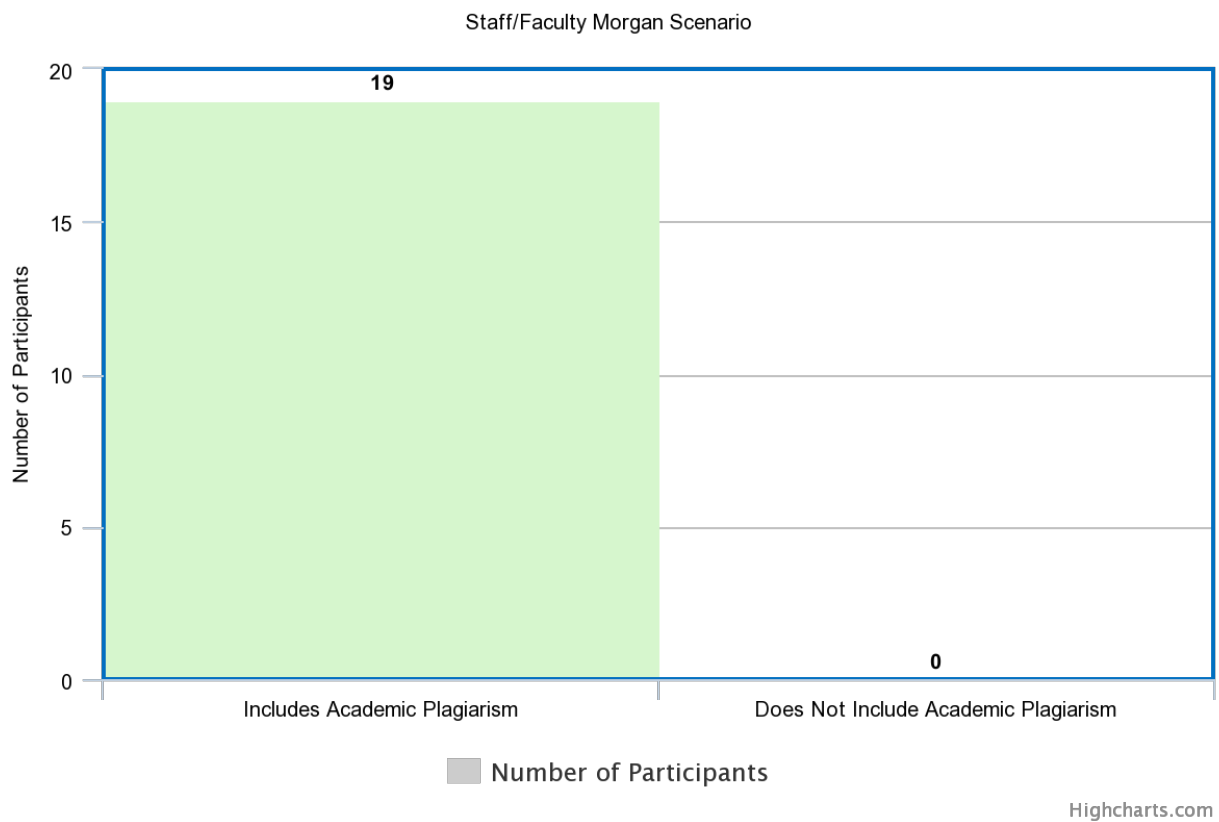
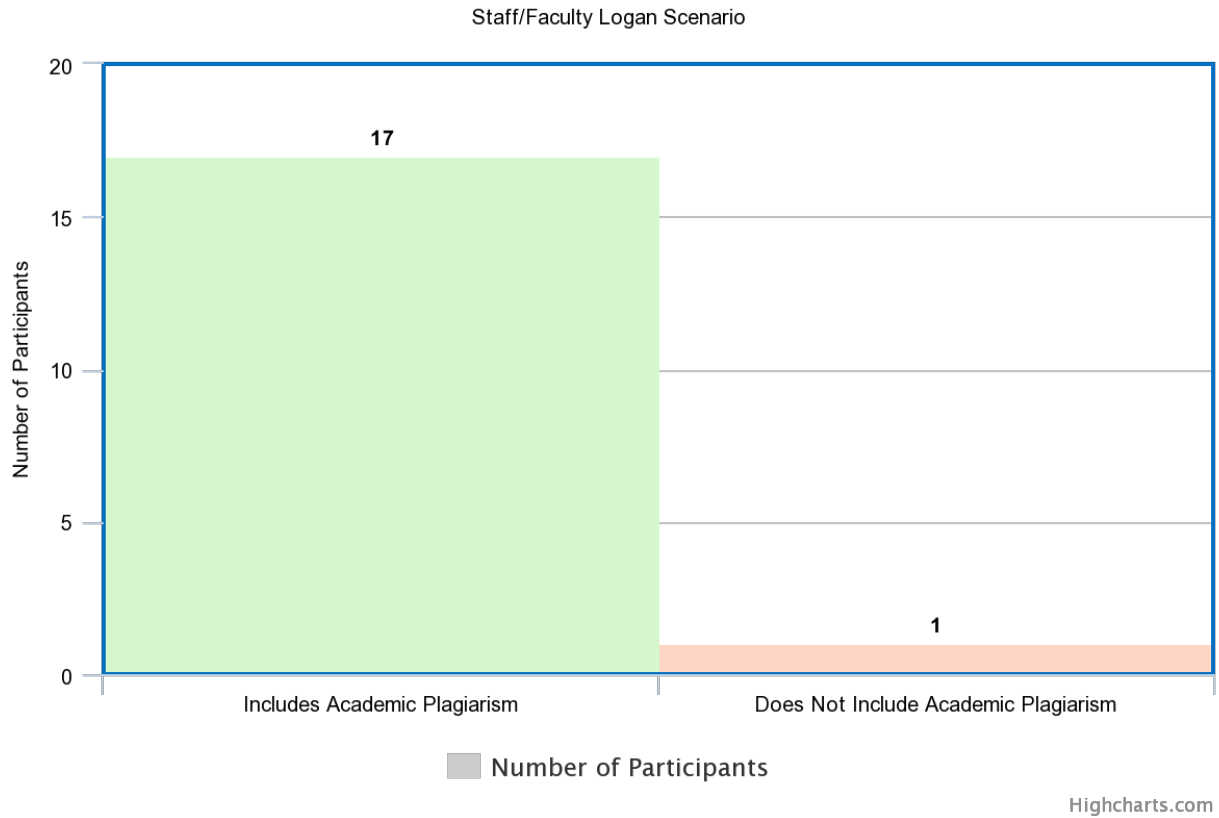
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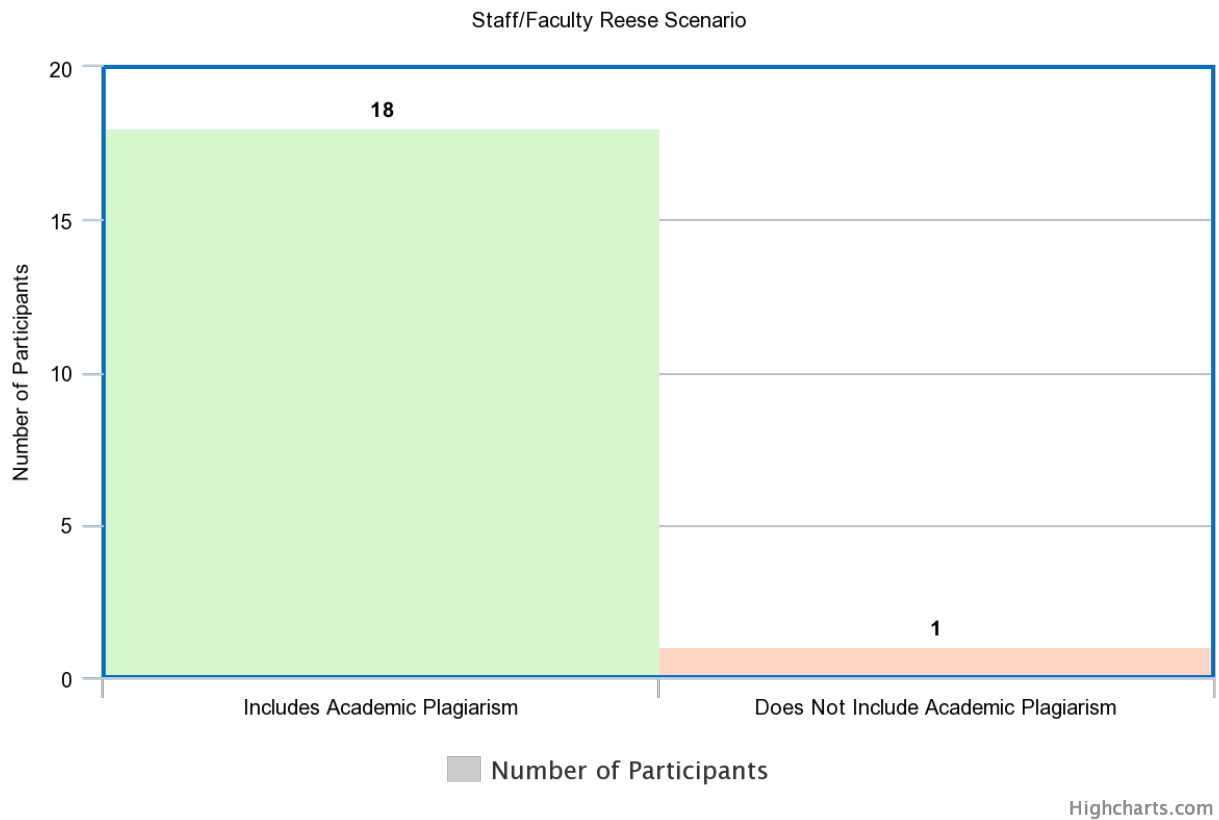
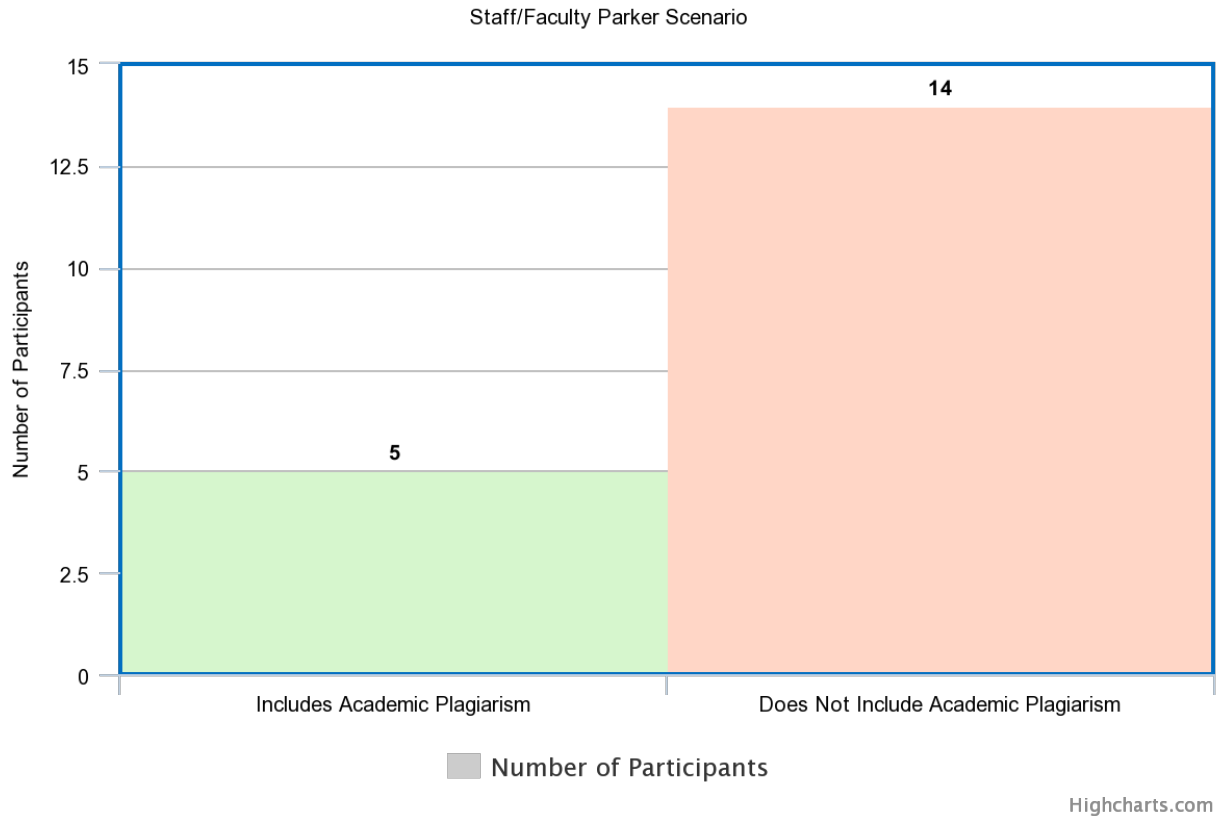
Staff/Faculty MLA Format

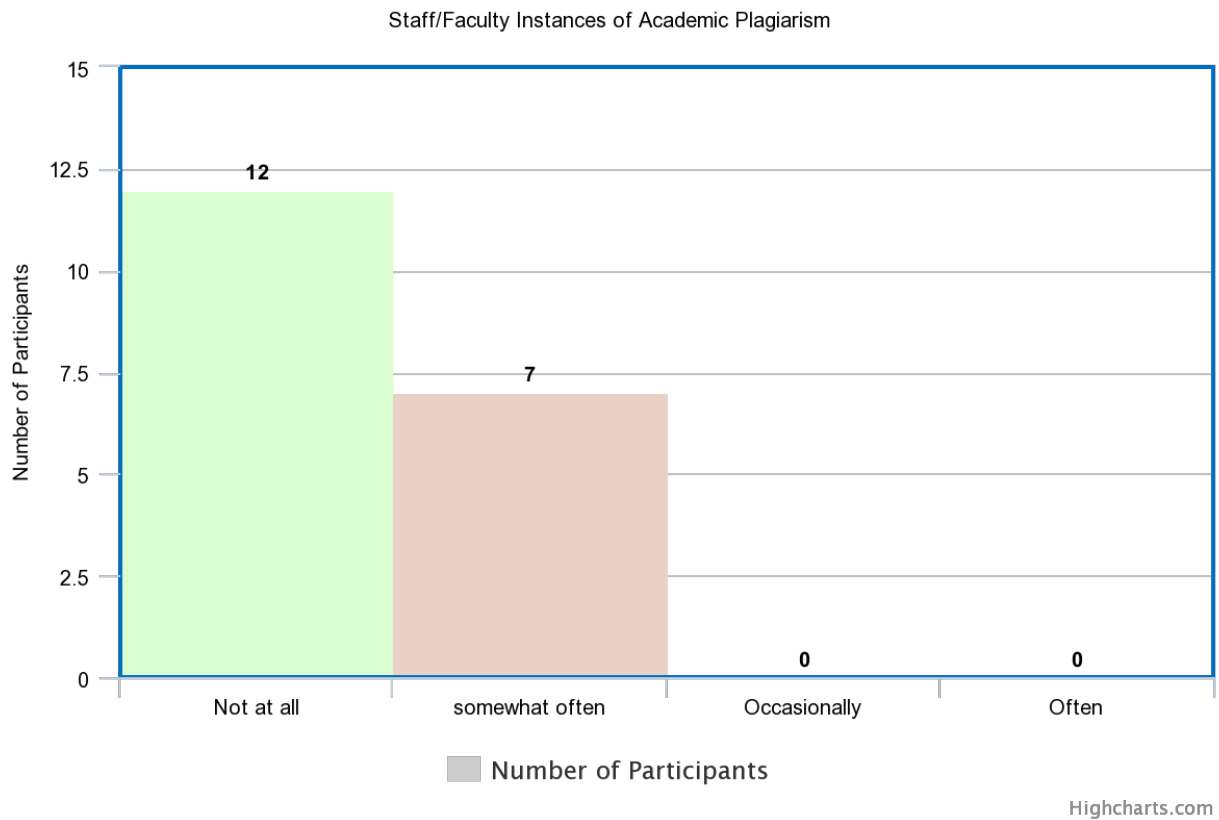
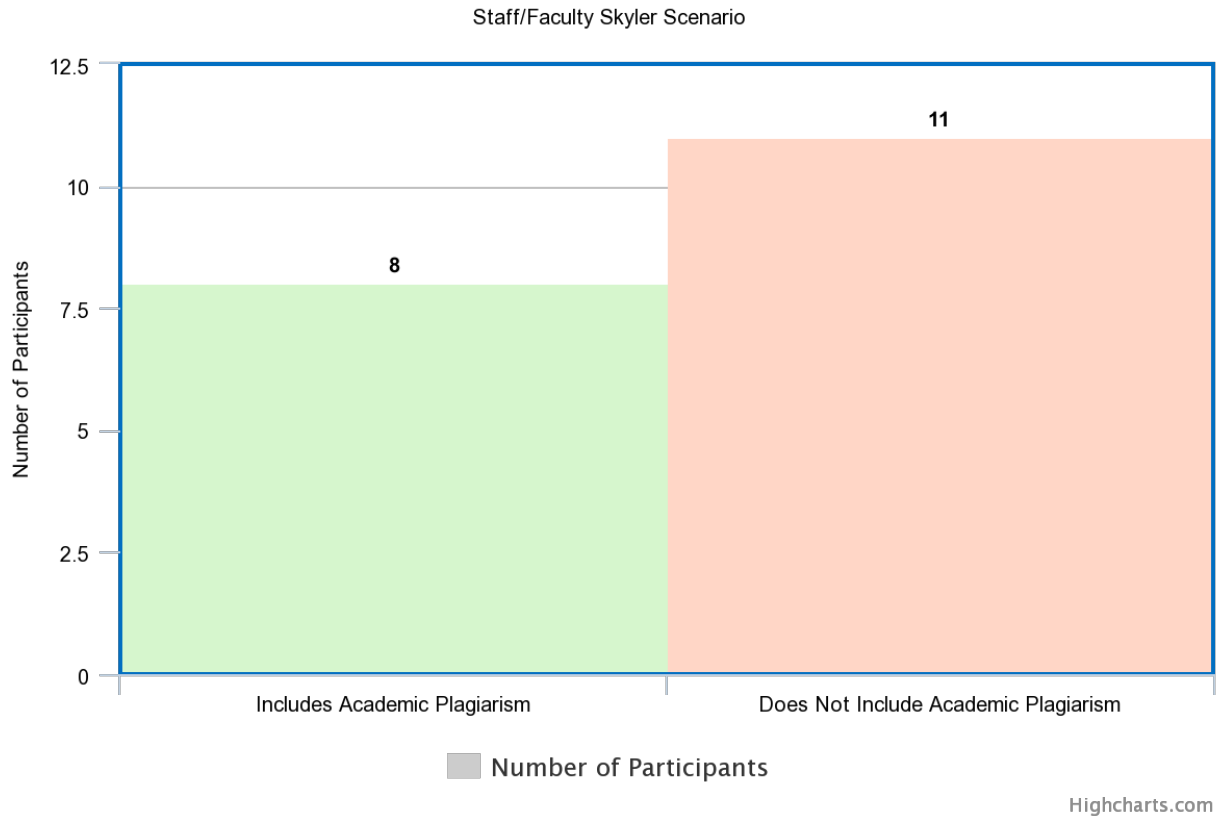


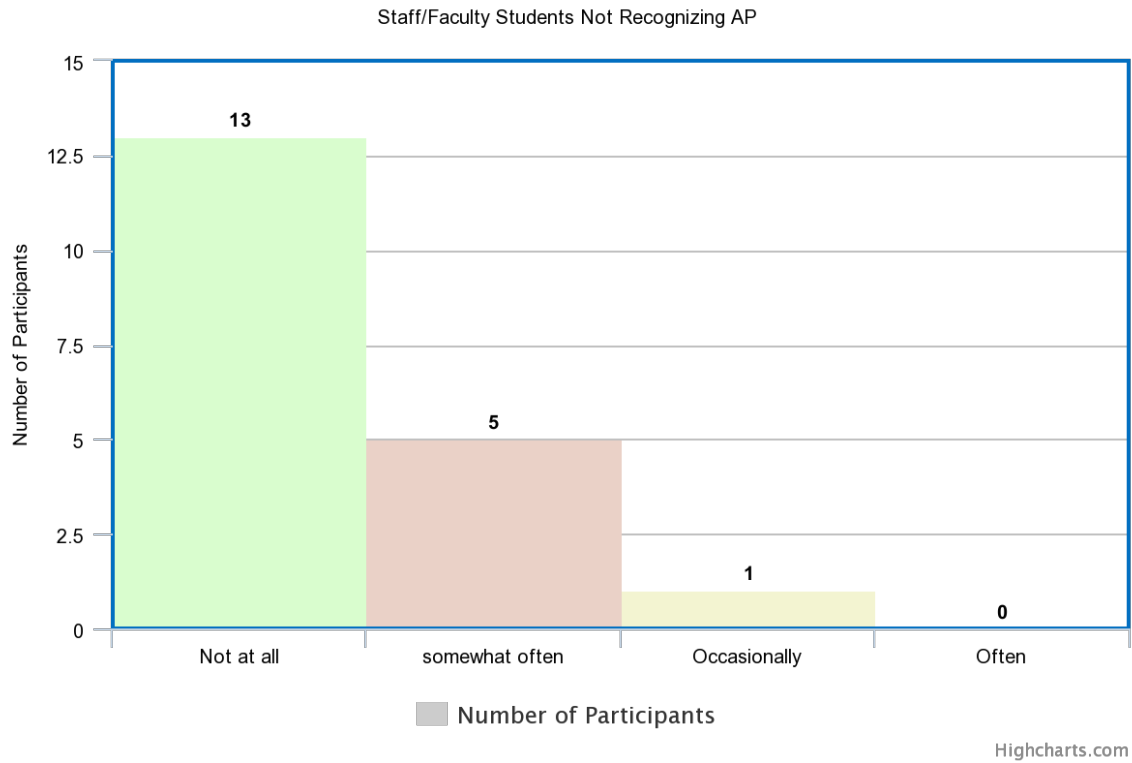
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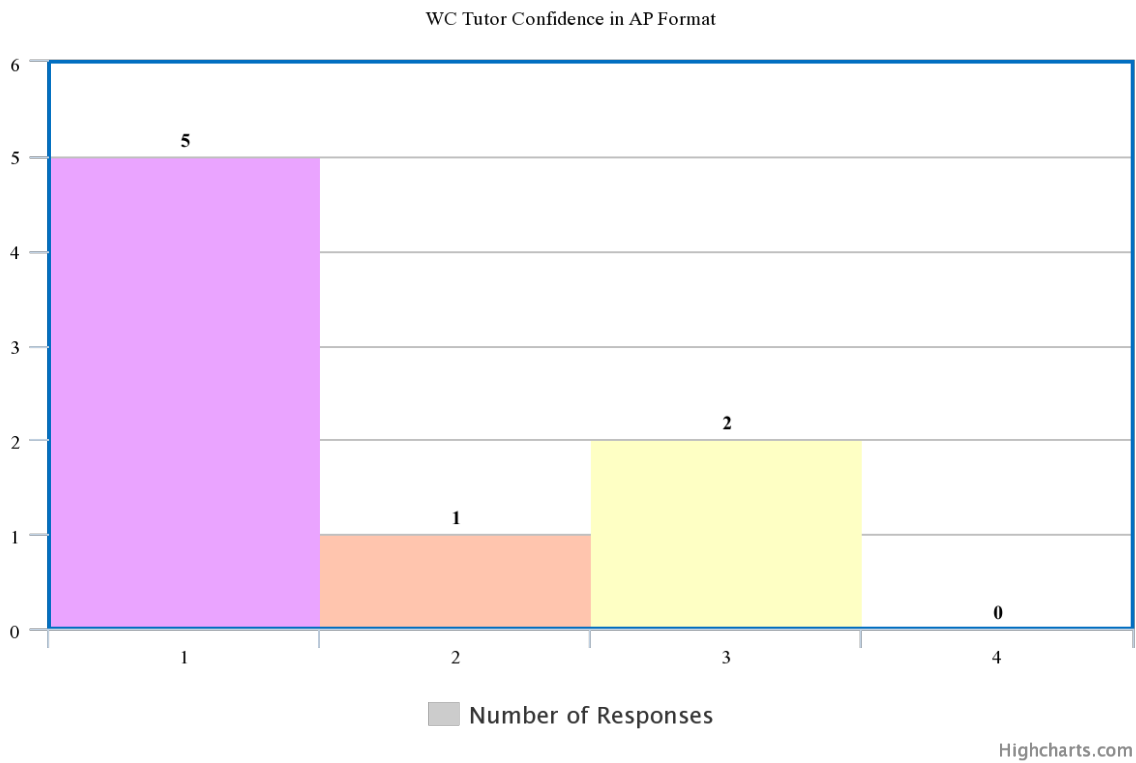




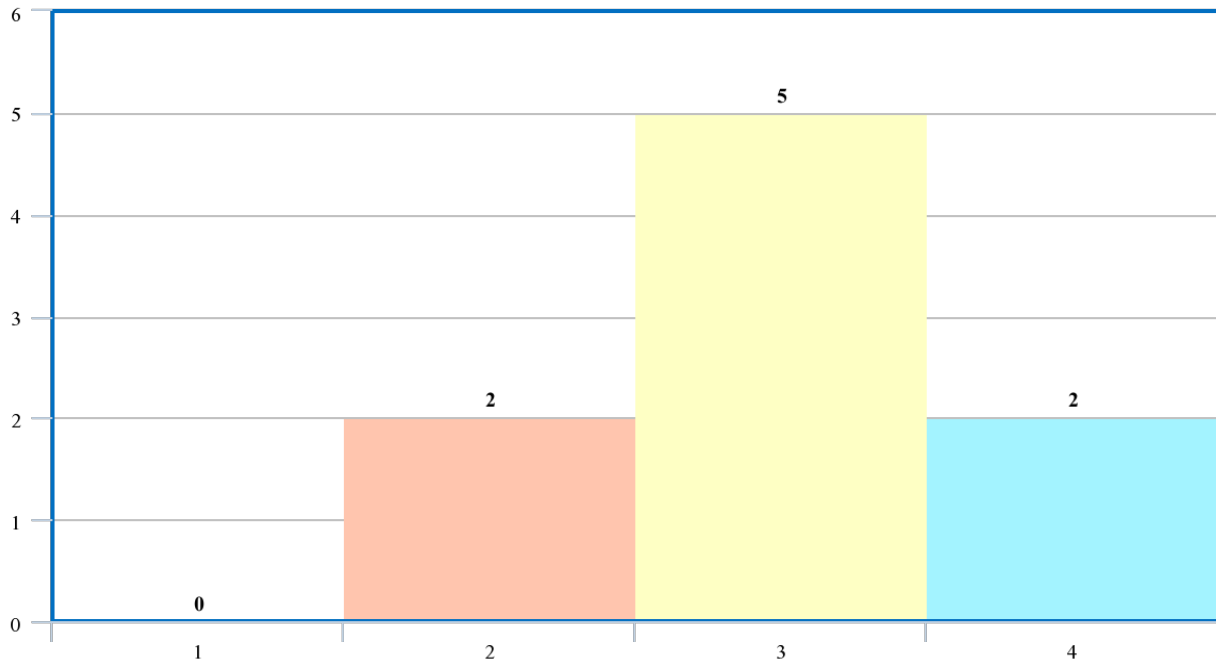




Writing Center Tutor Responses



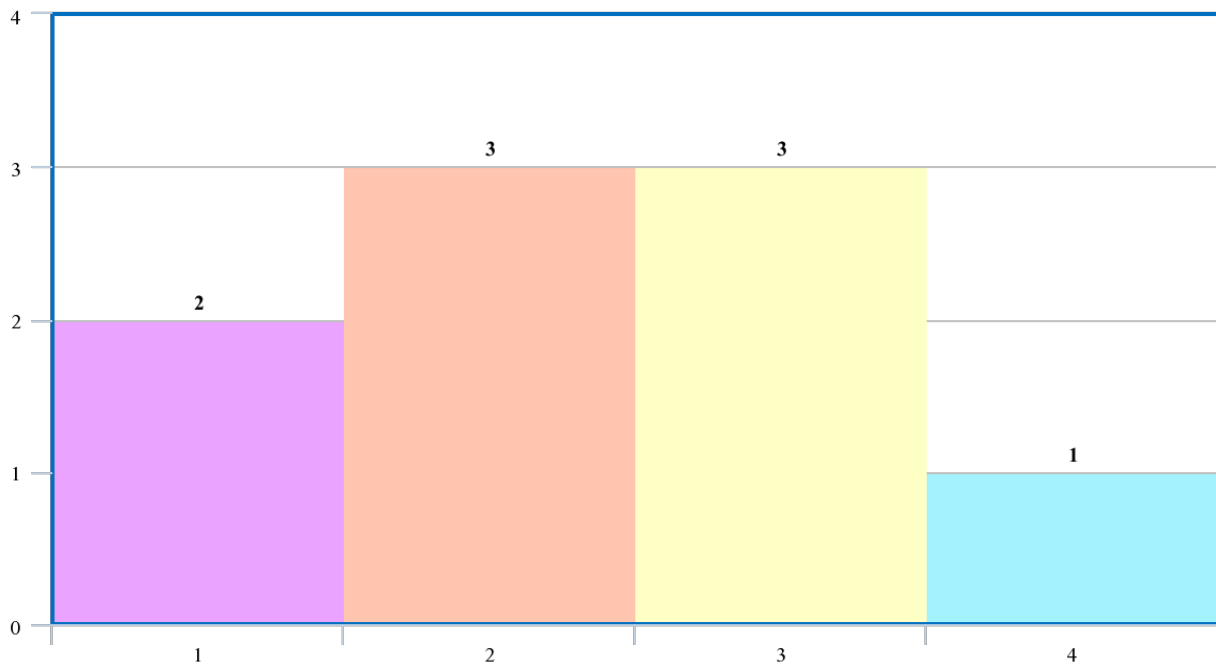
WC Tutor Confidence in APA 7 Format



■ Number of Responses

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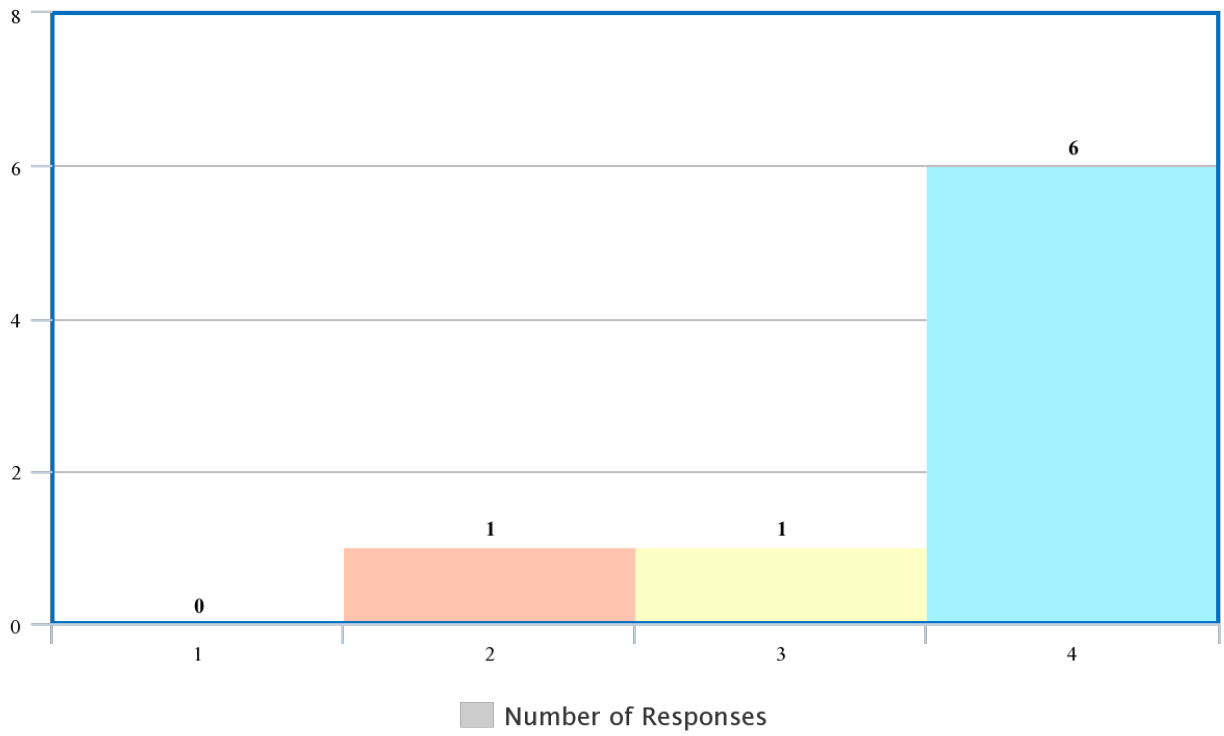
WC Tutor Confidence in Chicago Format



■ Number of Responses

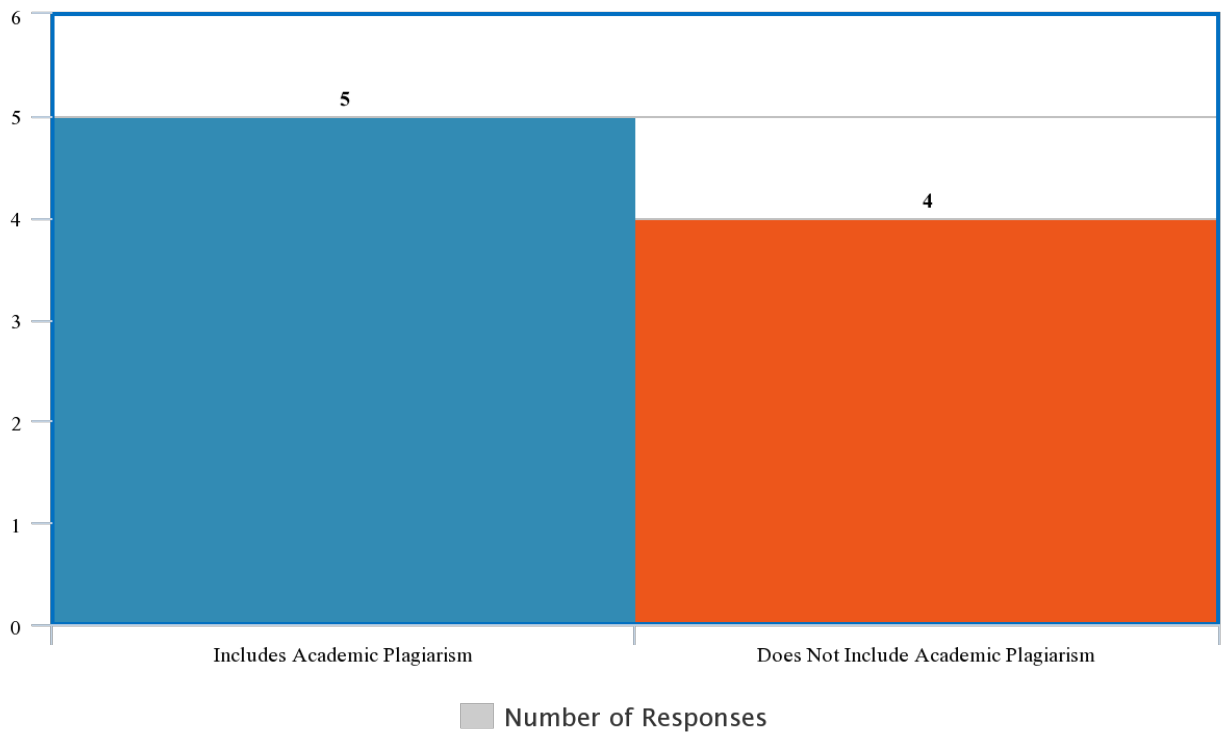
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WC Tutor Confidence in MLA Format



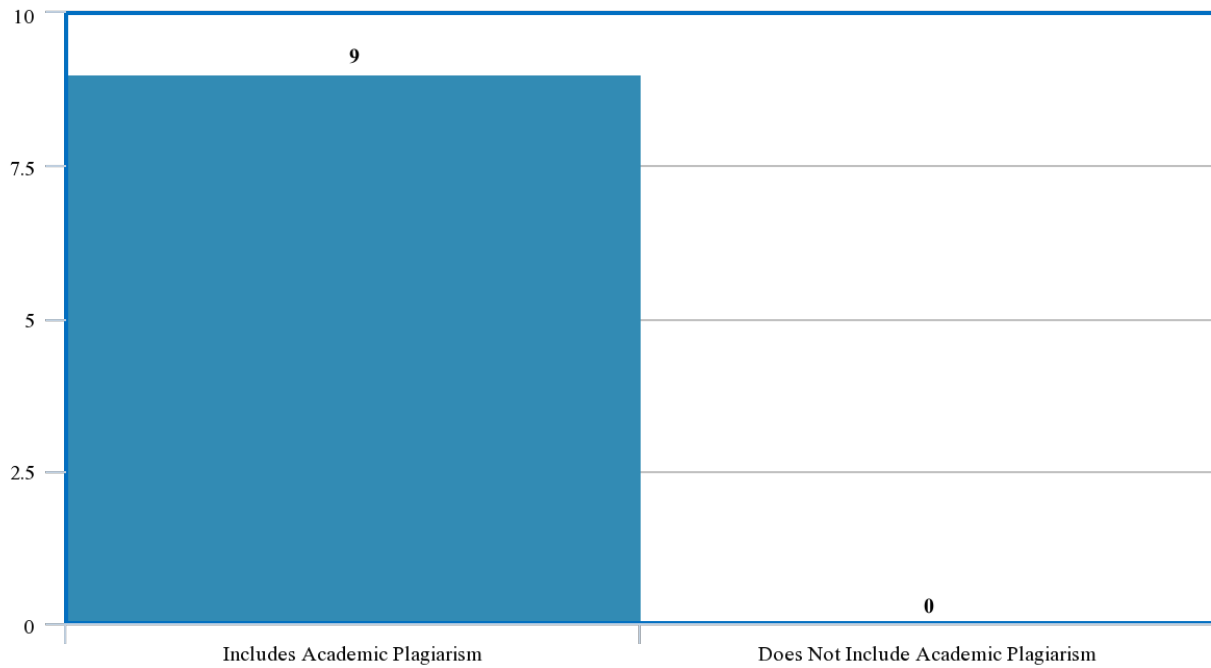
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WC Tutor Ash Scenario



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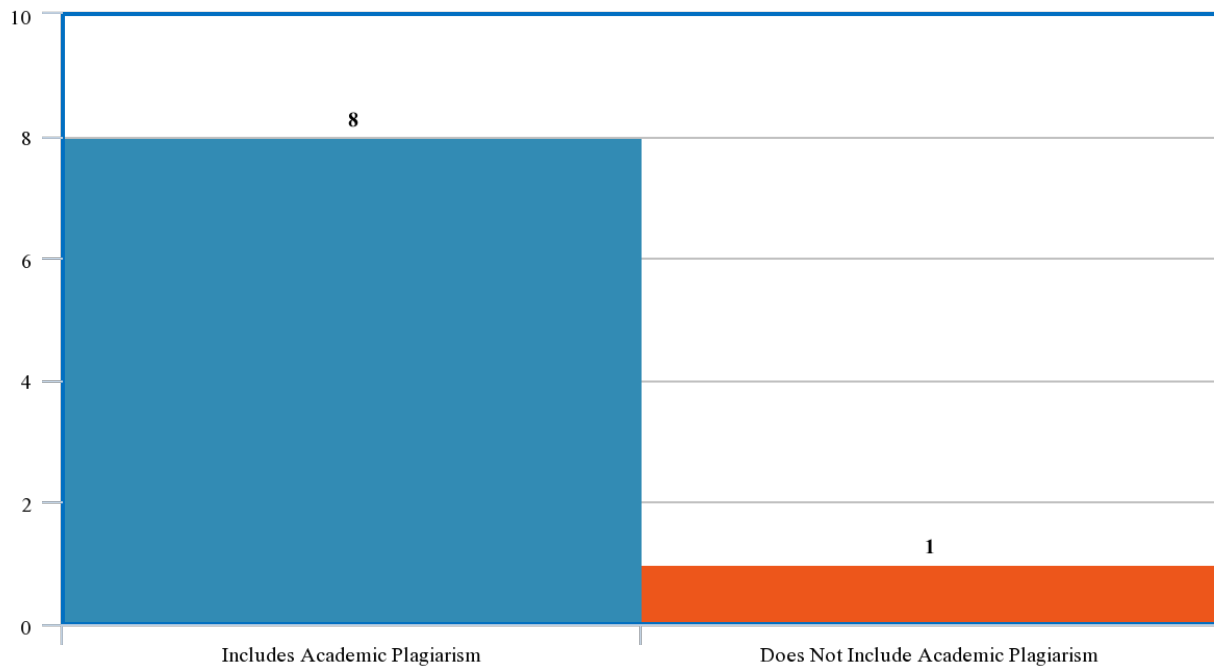
WC Tutor Dawsyn Scenario



■ Number of Responses

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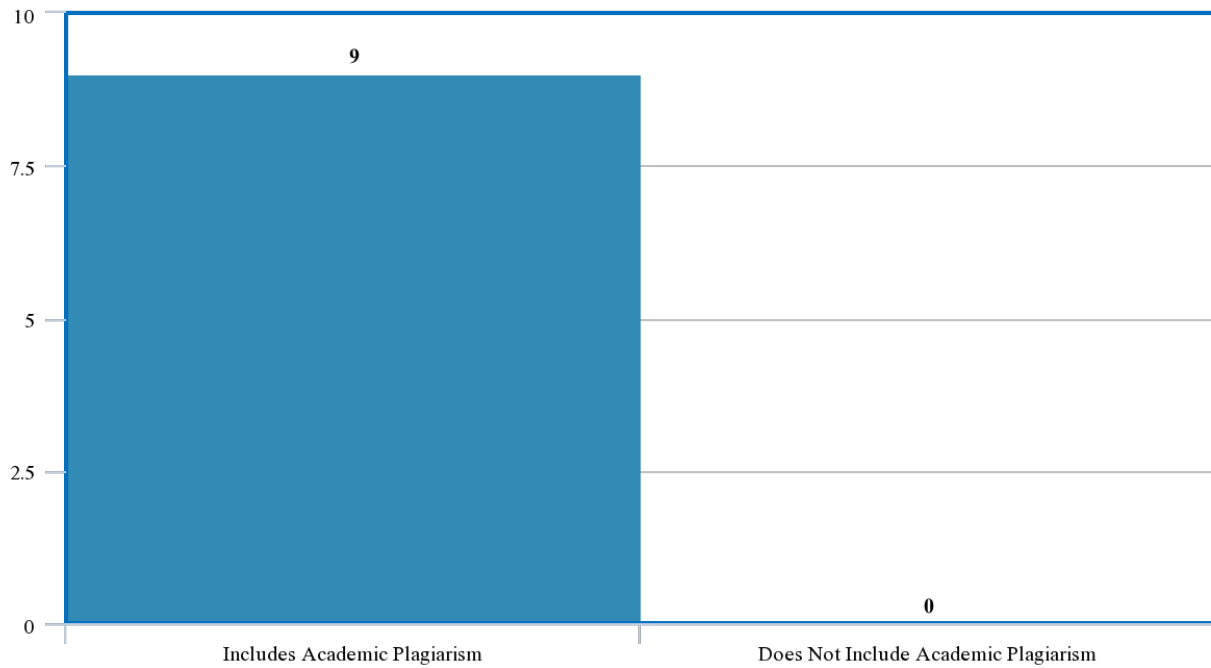
WC Tutor Logan Scenario



■ Number of Responses

Highcharts.com

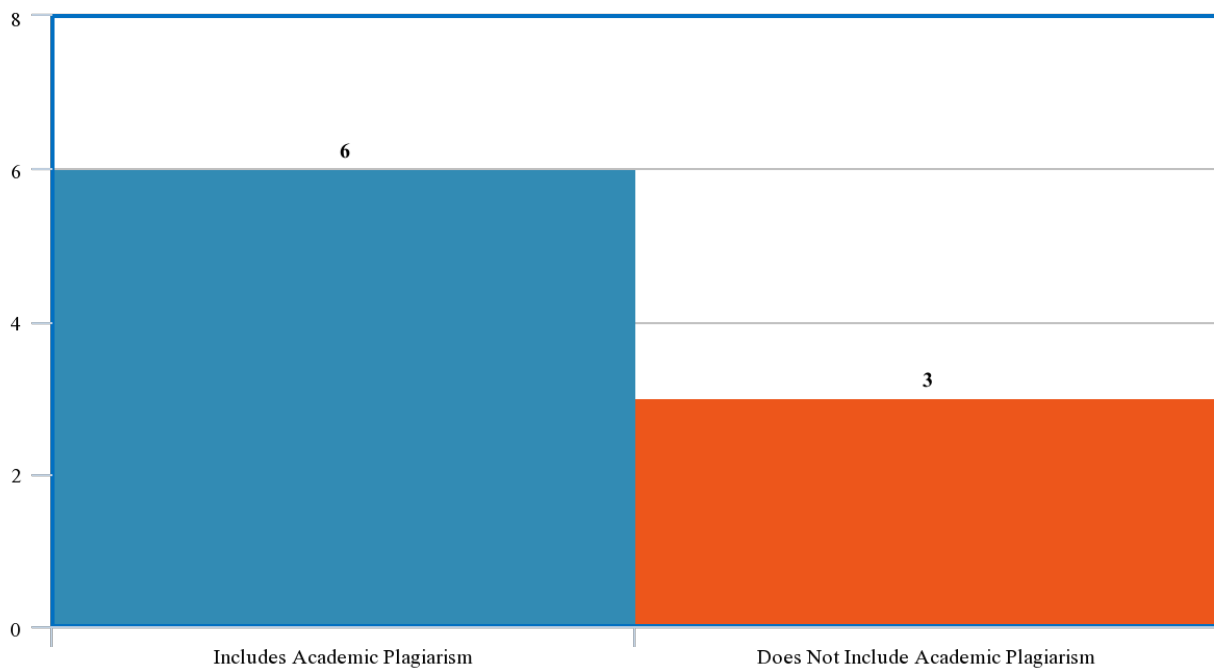
WC Tutor Morgan Scenario



■ Number of Responses

Highcharts.com

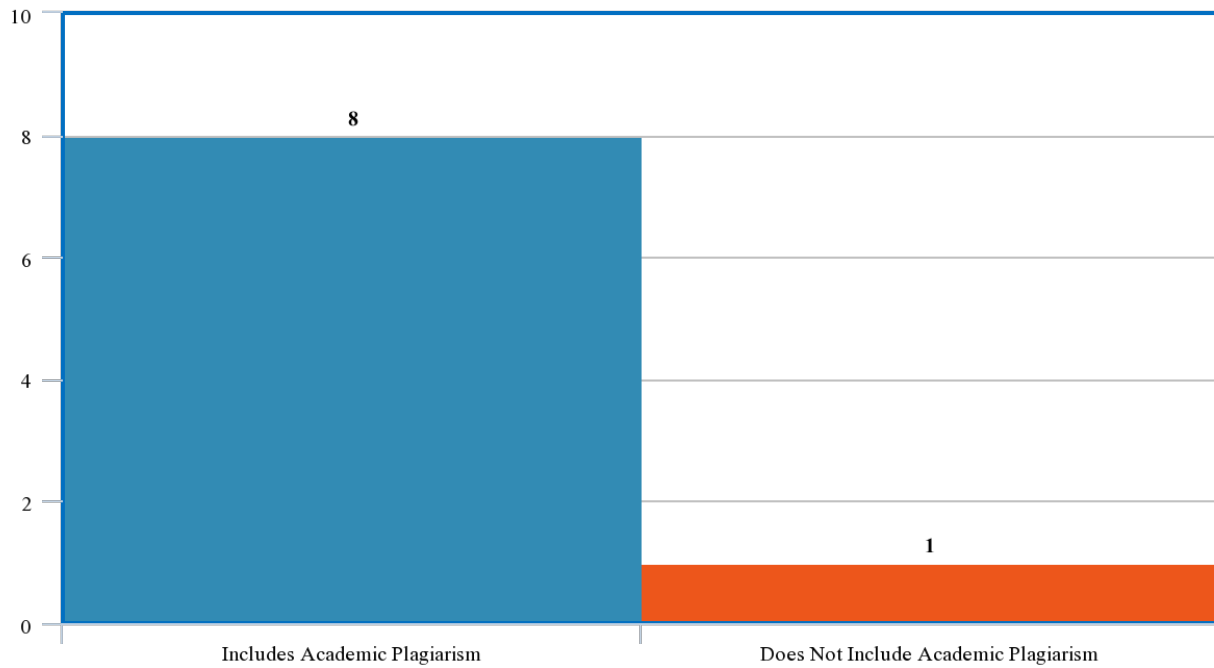
WC Tutor Parker Scenario



■ Number of Responses

Highcharts.com

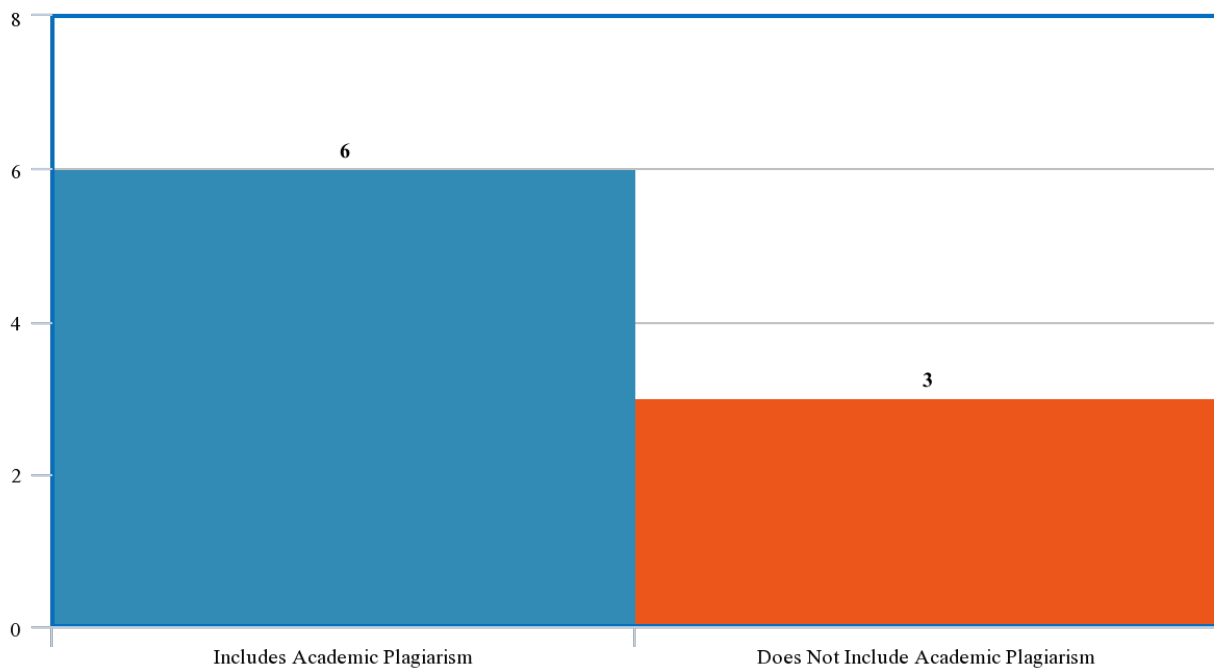
WC Tutor Reese Scenario



■ Number of Responses

Highcharts.com

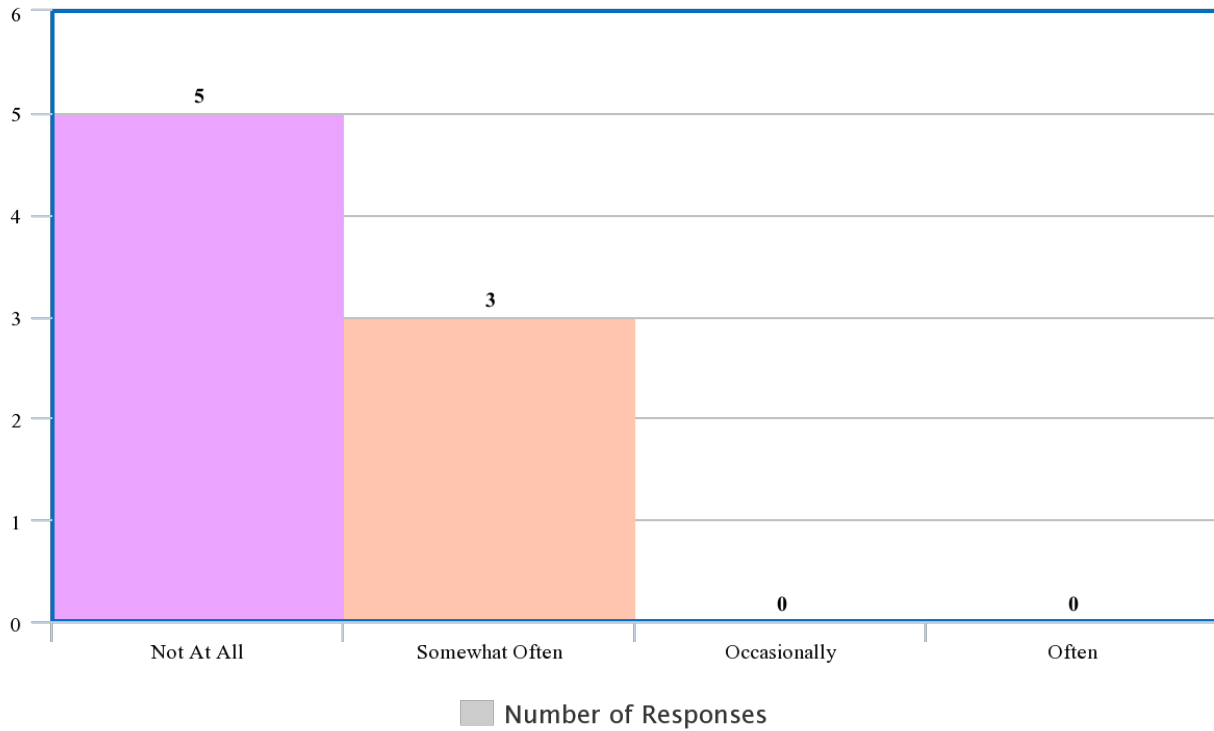
WC Tutor Skyler Scenario



■ Number of Responses

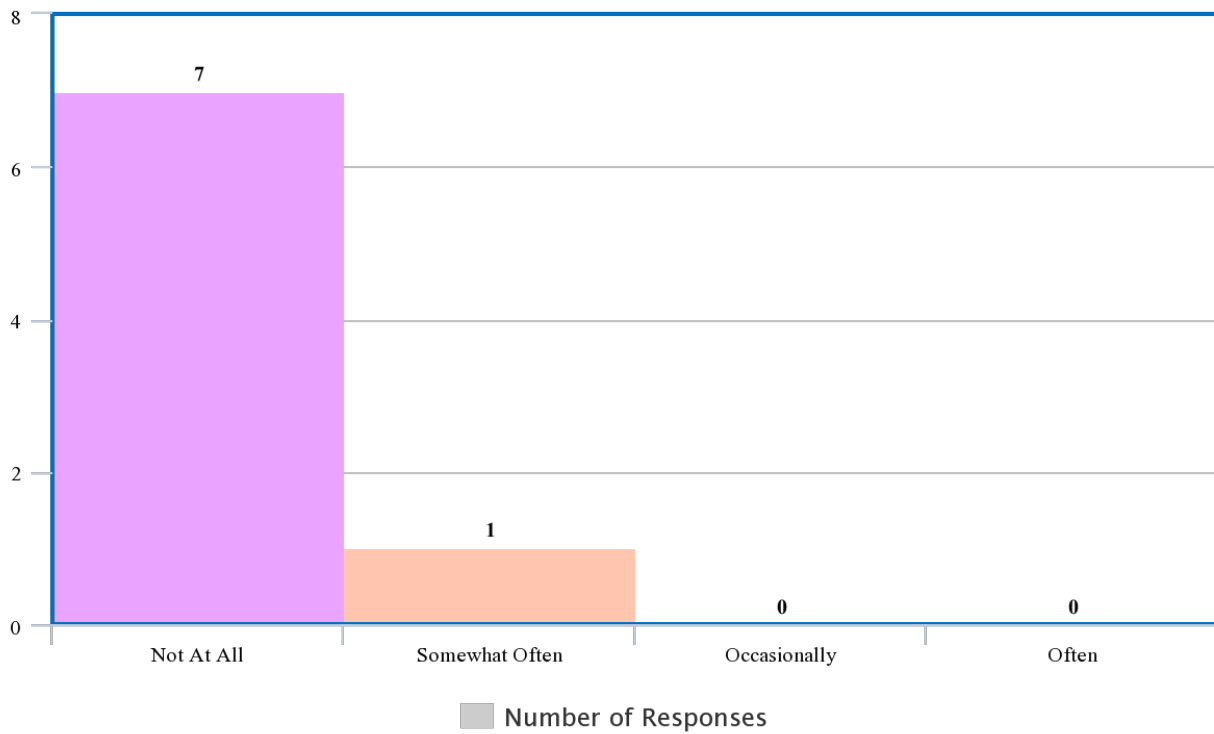
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Instances of AP



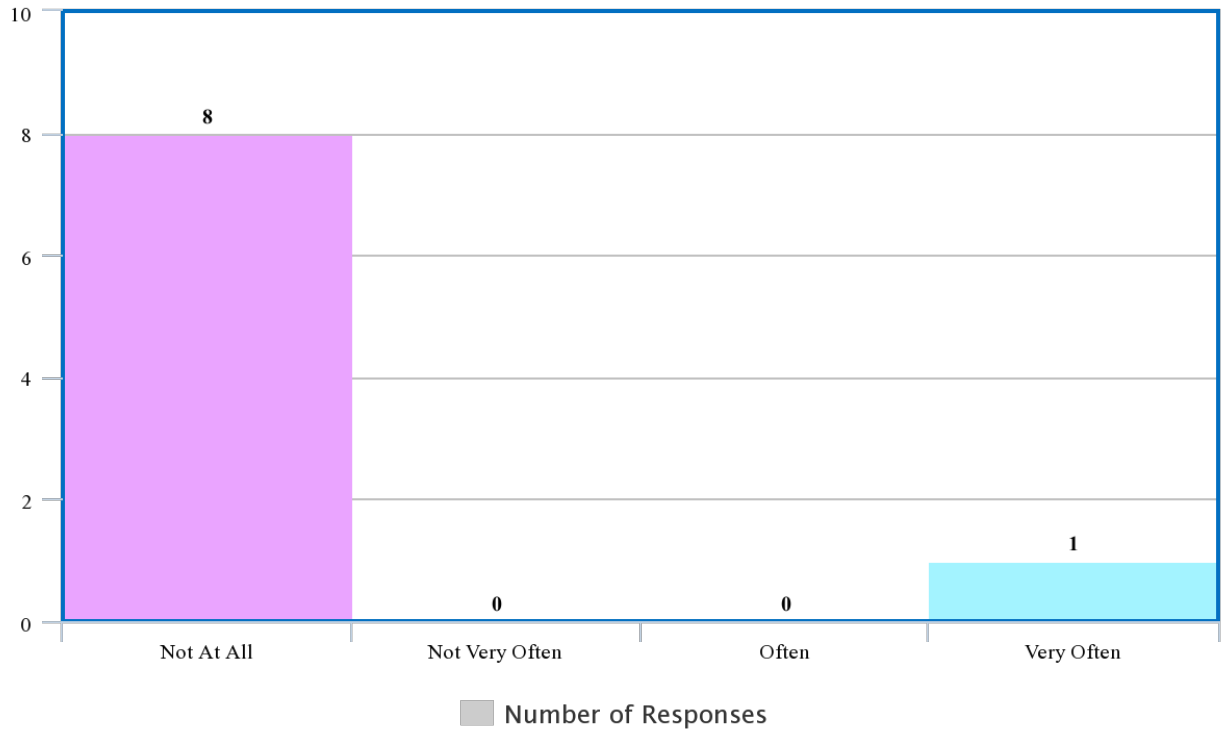
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Students Not Recognizing AP



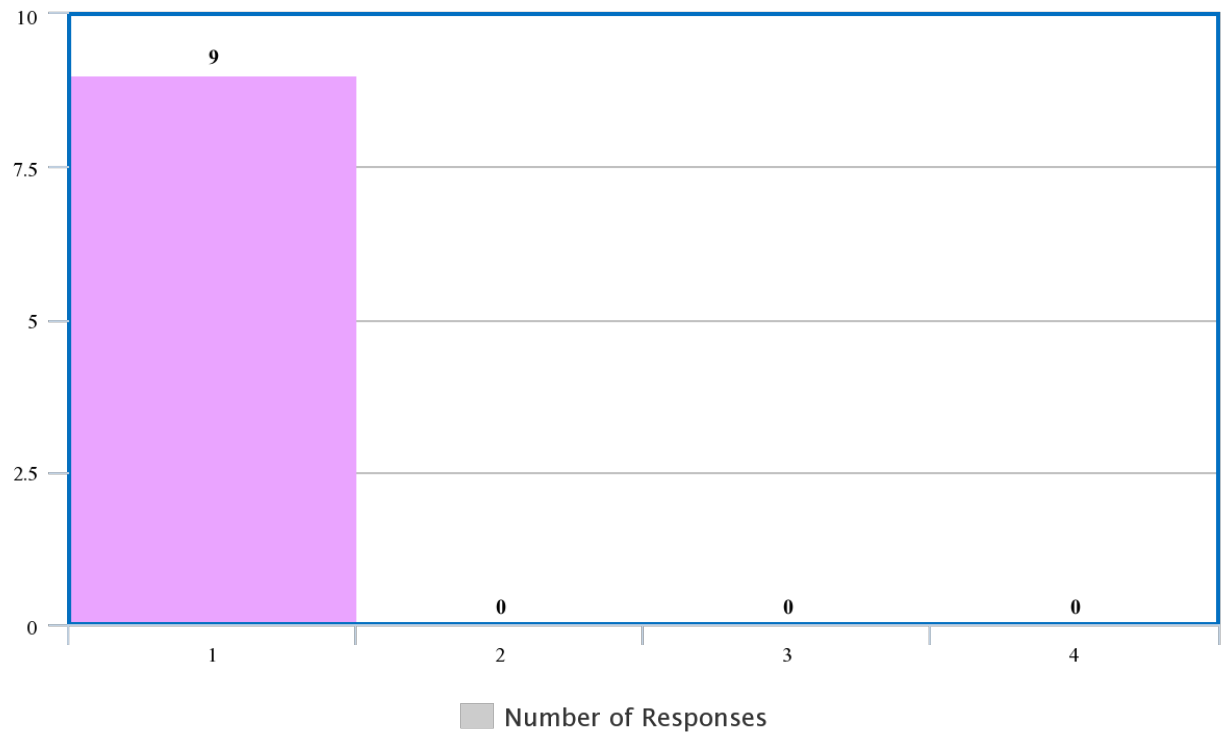
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Consideration of Use:Yourself



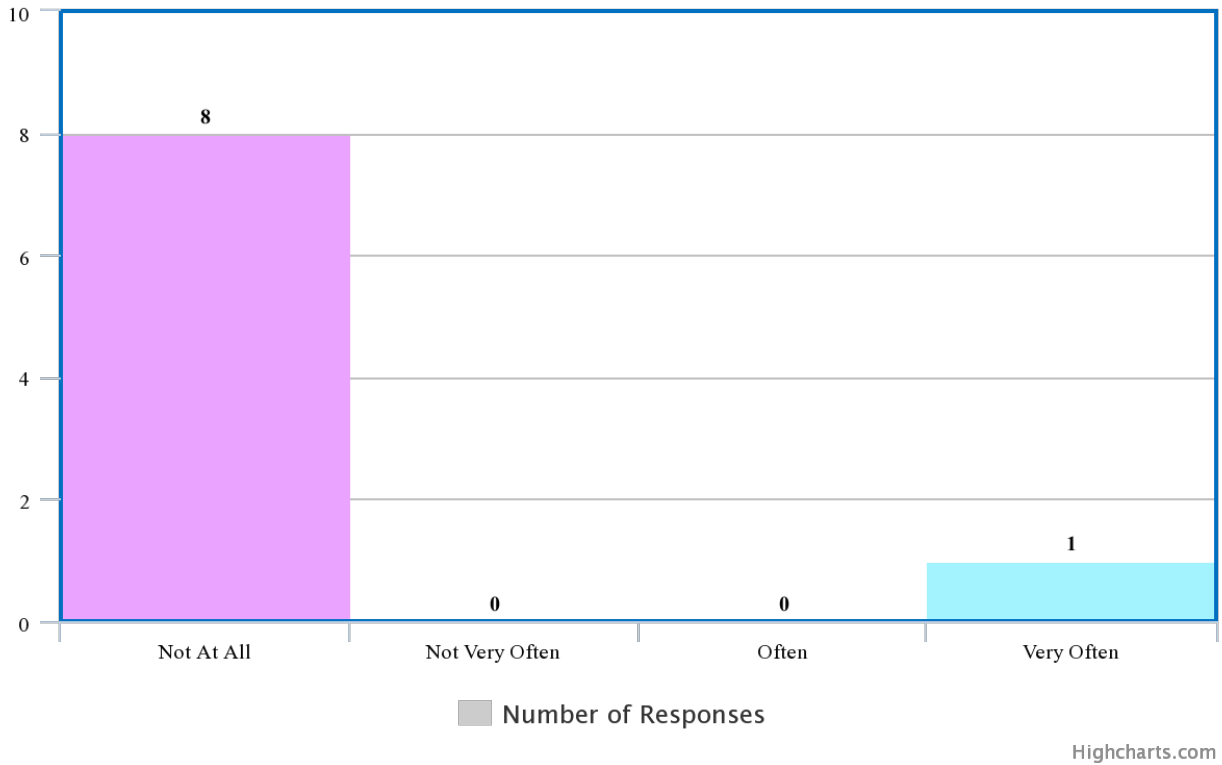
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Likelihood of Plagiarism:Yourself

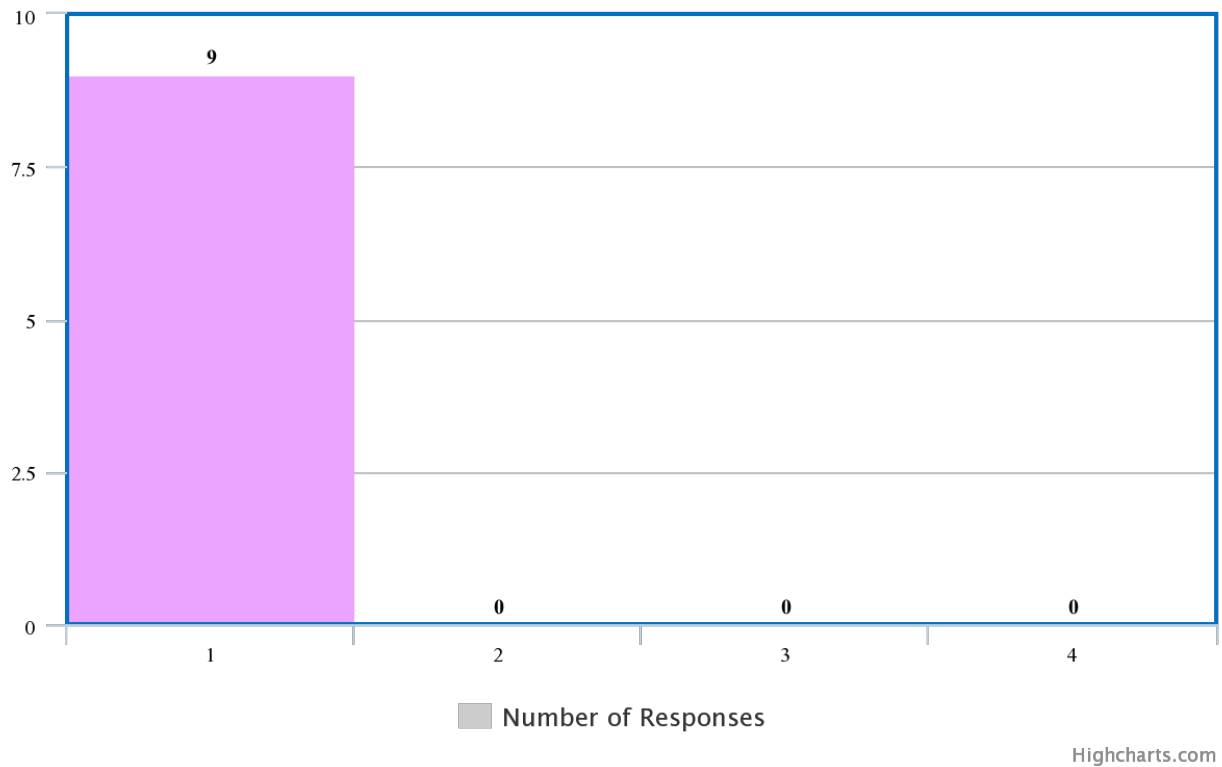


Highcharts.com

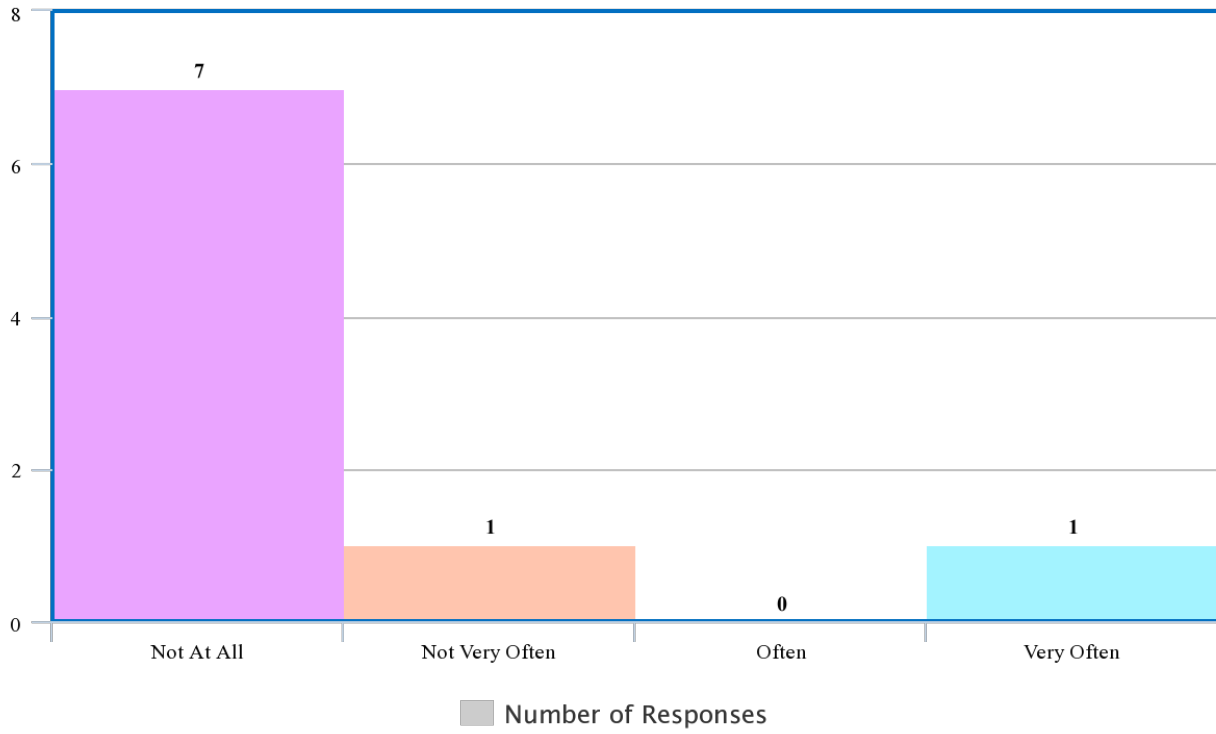
WC Tutor Consideration of Use:Close Friend



WC Tutor Likelihood of Plagiarism:Close Friend

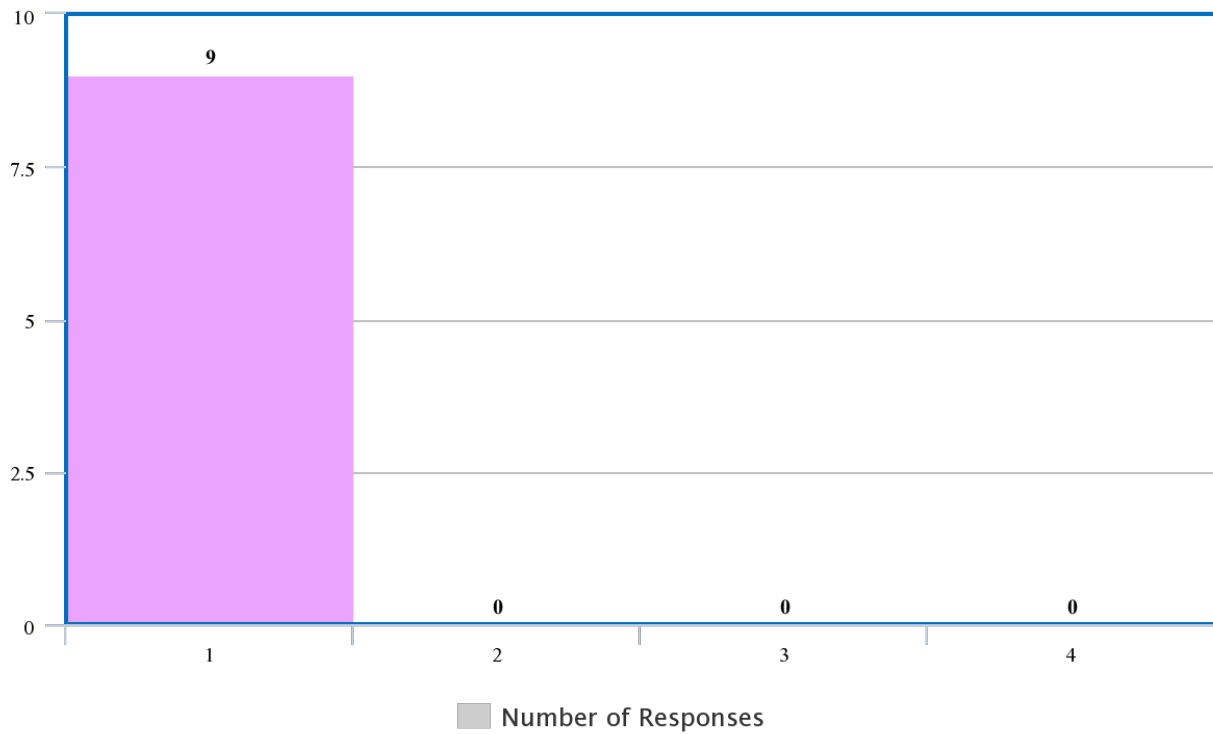


WC Tutor Consideration of Use:Friend



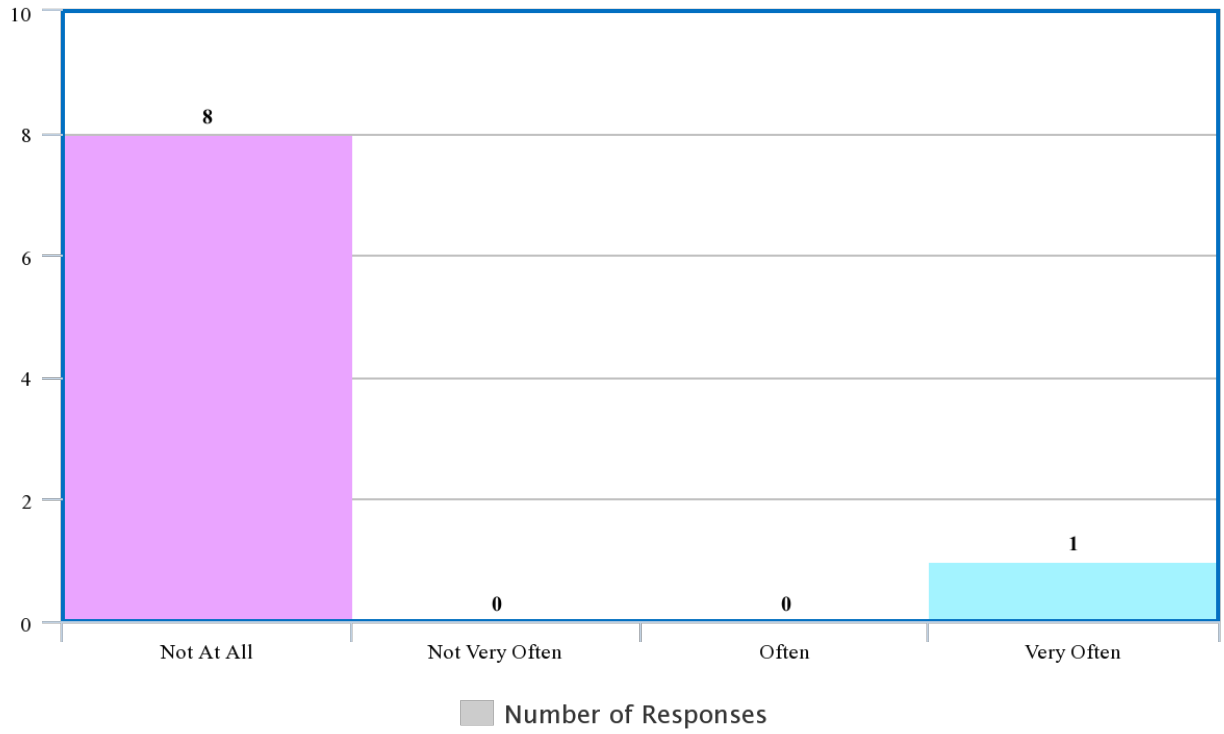
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Likelihood of Plagiarism:Friend



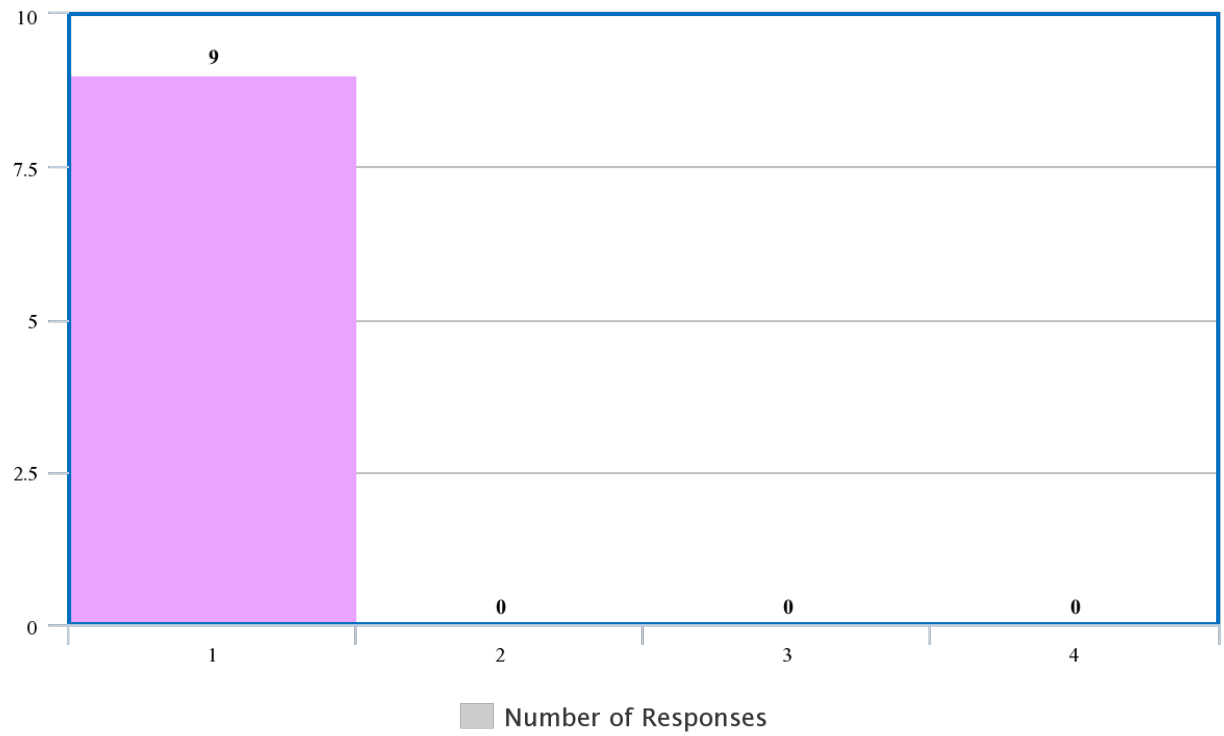
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Consideration of Use:Classmates



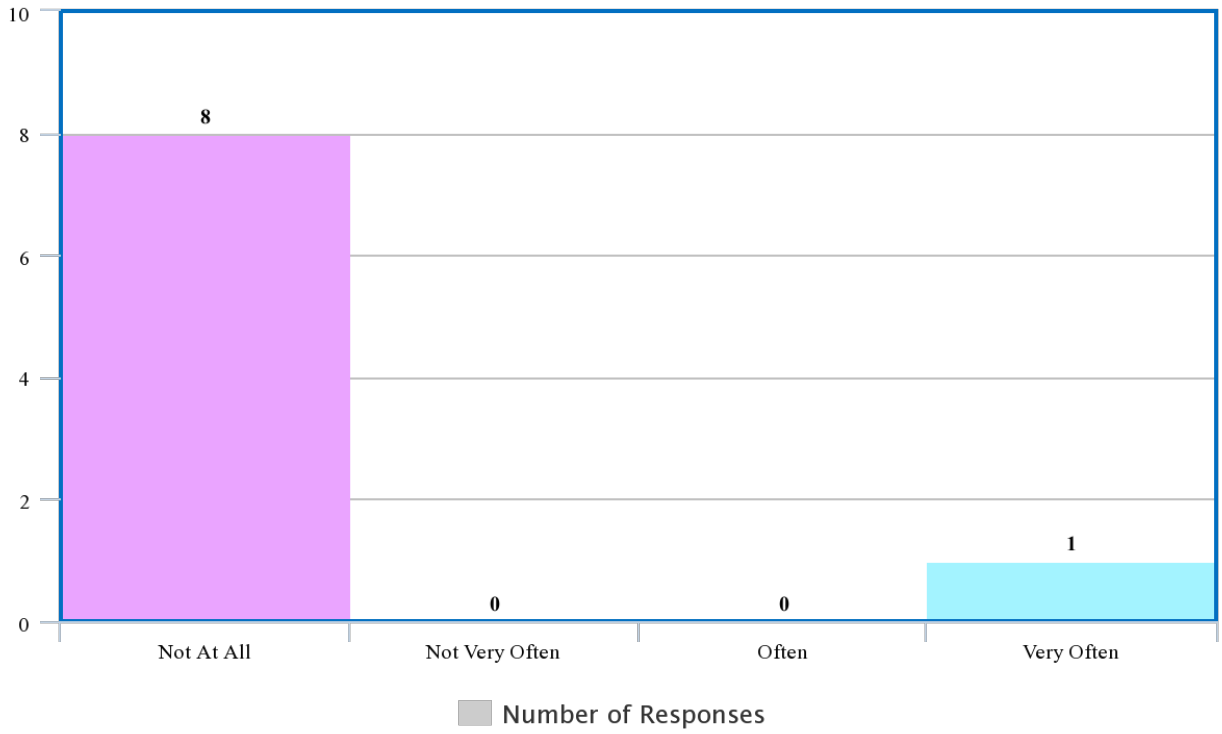
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WC Tutor Likelihood of Plagiarism:Classmate



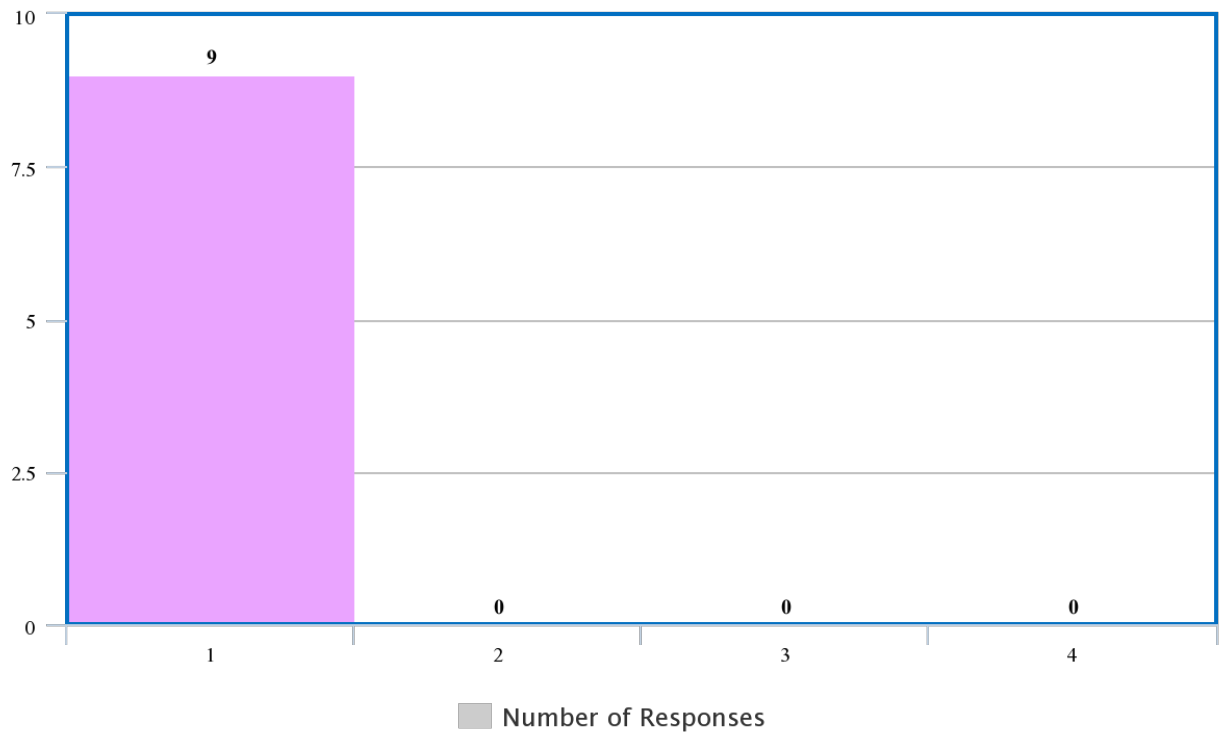
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Consideration of Use:Acquaintance



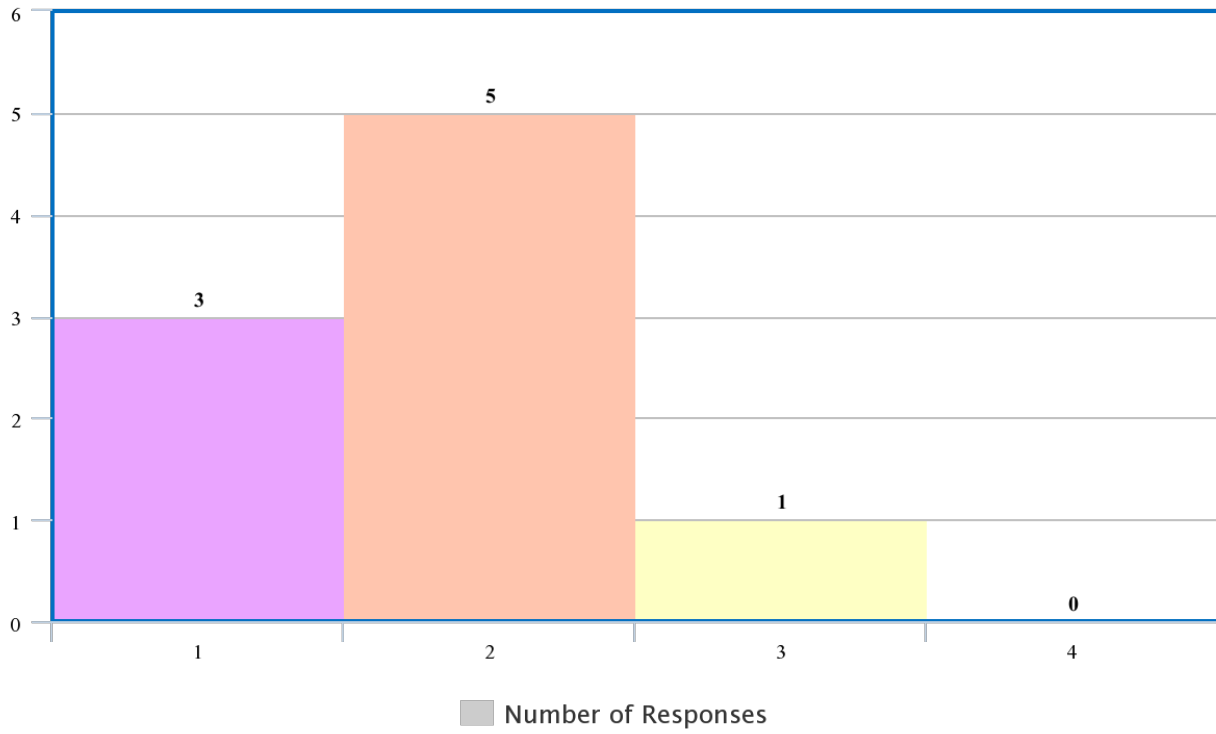
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WC Tutor Likelihood of Plagiarism:Acquaintance



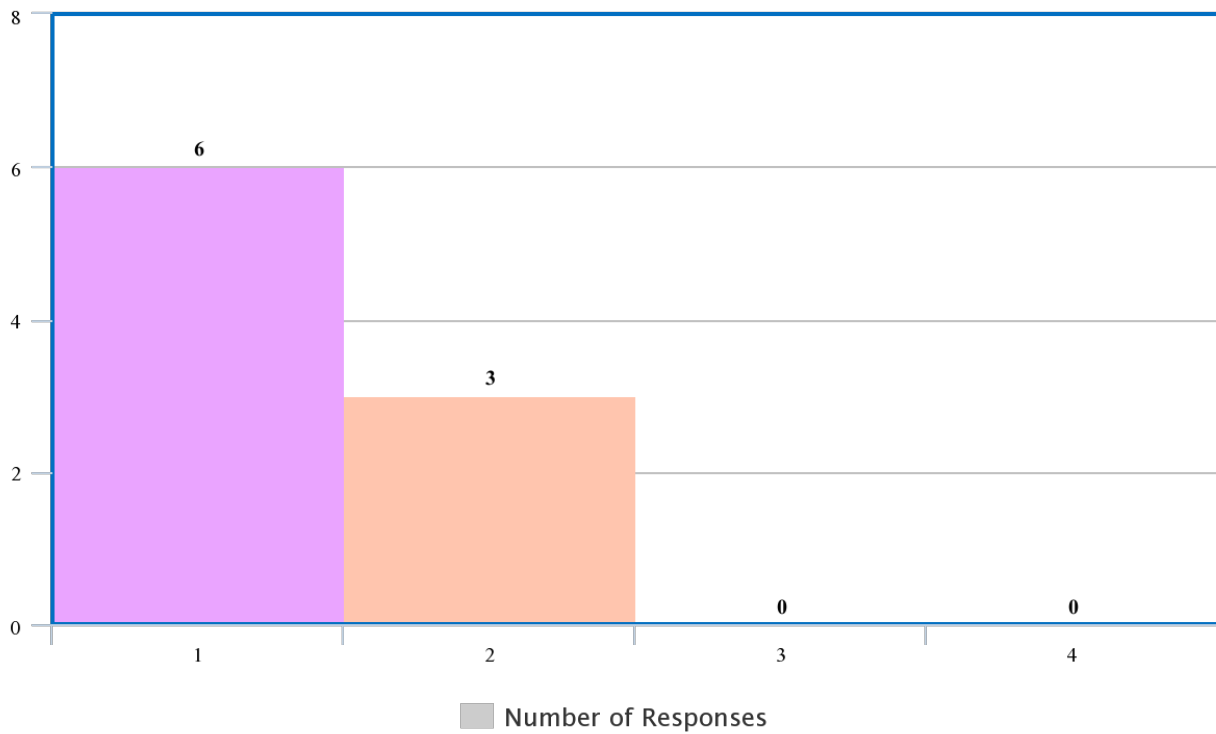
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Consideration of Someone Else:Own Paper



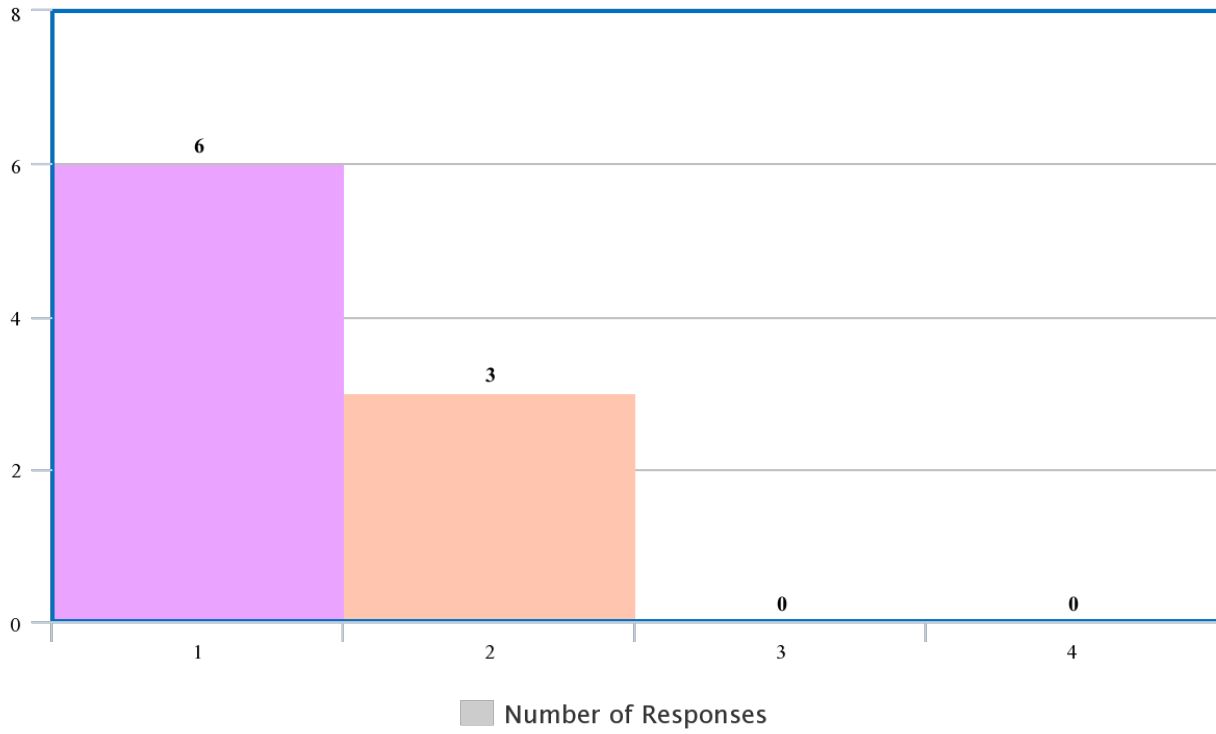
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Consideration of Someone Else:Close Friend



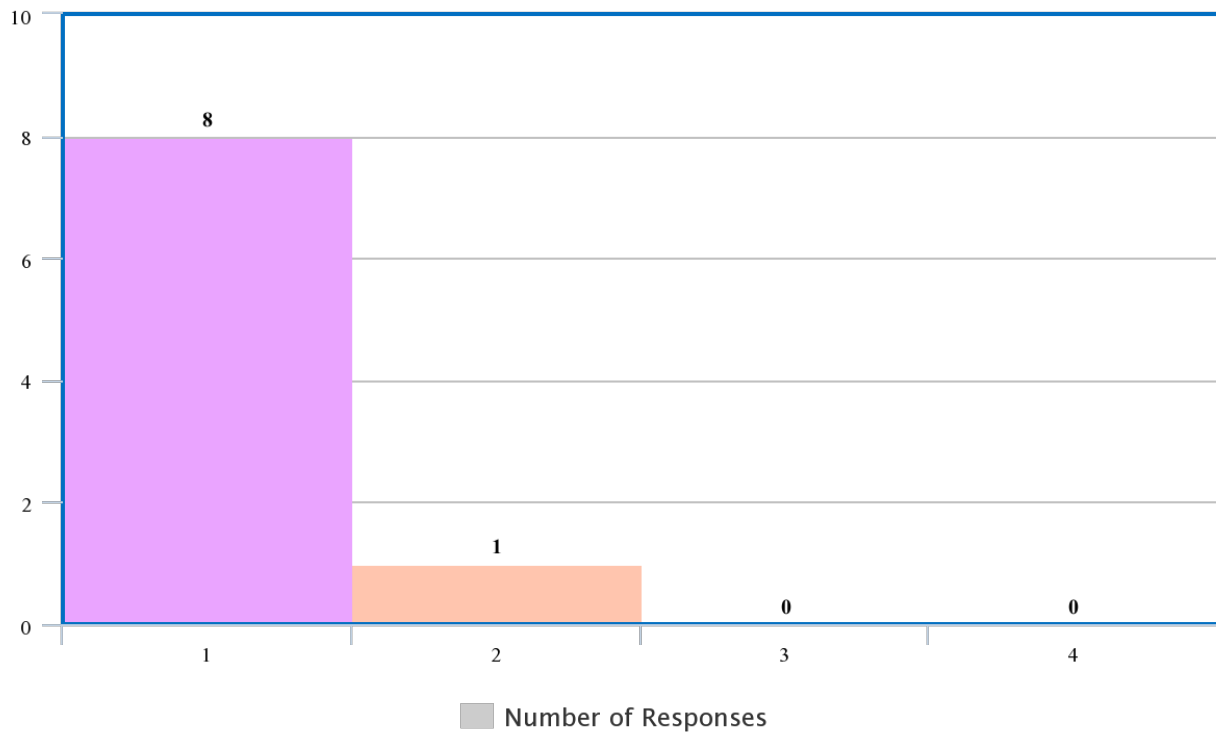
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Consideration of Someone Else:Friend



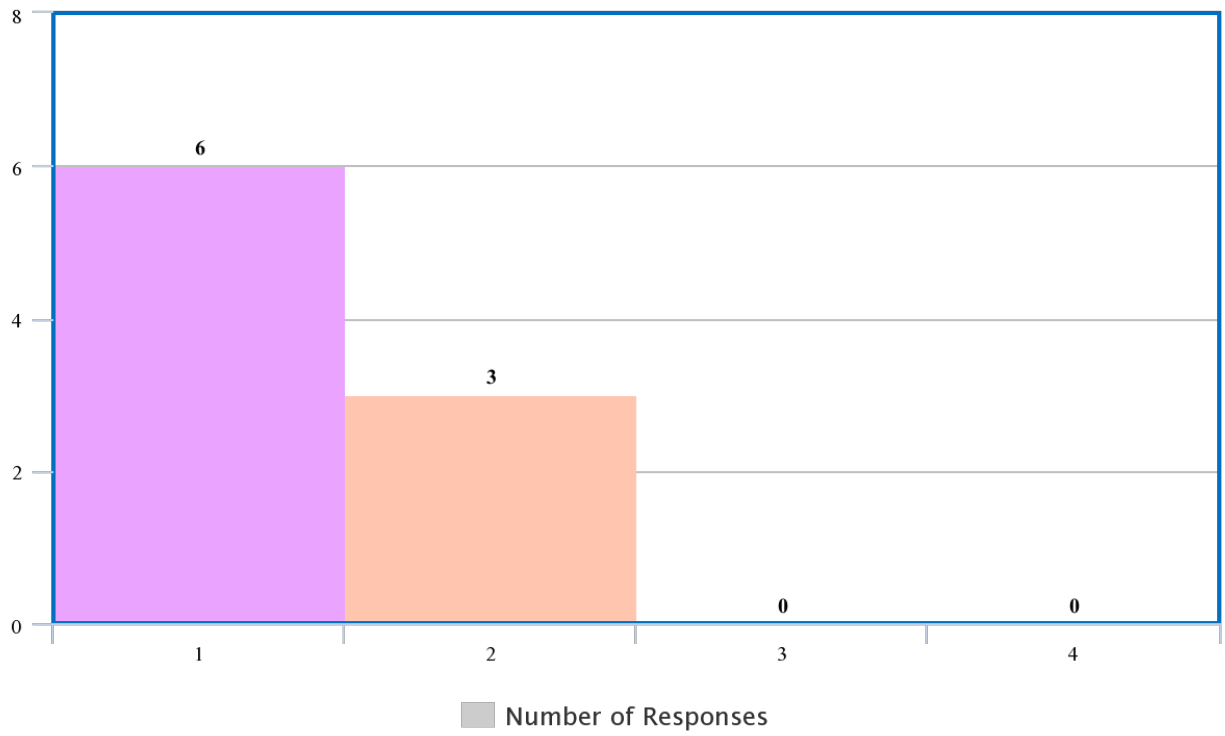
Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Consideration of Someone Else:Classmate



Highcharts.com

WC Tutor Consideration of Someone Else:Acquaintance



Appendix C: IRB Documents

Student Email

TO: cwgrad@listserv.okstate.edu; engl-majors-minors-1@listserv.okstate.edu;

FROM: Kaitlyn.long@okstate.edu

SUBJECT: Academic Plagiarism Study

DATE: 09/10/2021

Good morning,

My name is Katie Long. I'm a Senior Professional Writing major working on my Seniors Honors Thesis.

My thesis looks at the current climate surrounding academic plagiarism. I'm very interested in the differing knowledges of academic plagiarism between students, writing center tutors, or staff/faculty members. The survey asks questions regarding the situations surrounding academic plagiarism and citation styles. I sent this email to your appropriate listserv email, but if you are a student AND a writing center tutor, please fill out the Writing Center Tutor portion of the survey instead of the student portion. This survey is completely anonymous; while you will be asked for demographics such as age range, ethnicity, gender, and international status, these data points will be coded for privacy, and you are free to select "prefer not to answer" on any question!

This survey takes approx.. 5-15 minutes to complete. You are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at Kaitlyn.long@okstate.edu.

If you wish to participate in the study, please use this link to access the survey:

<https://forms.gle/8hVKEGR1ZPmENBUPA>.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katie Long

Professional Writing

Honors



Approved: 09/01/2021
Protocol #: IRB-21-352

Writing Center Email

TO: WC-L@listserv.okstate.edu

FROM: Kaitlyn.long@okstate.edu

SUBJECT: Academic Plagiarism Study

DATE: 09/10/2021

Good morning,

My name is Katie Long. I'm a Senior Professional Writing major working on my Seniors Honors Thesis.

My thesis looks at the current climate surrounding academic plagiarism. I'm very interested in the differing knowledges of academic plagiarism between students, writing center tutors, or staff/faculty members. The survey asks questions regarding the situations surrounding academic plagiarism and citation styles. I sent this email to your appropriate listserv email, but if you are a student AND a writing center tutor, please fill out the Writing Center Tutor portion of the survey instead of the student portion. This survey is completely anonymous; while you will be asked for demographics such as age range, ethnicity, gender, and international status, these data points will be coded for privacy, and you are free to select "prefer not to answer" on any question!

This survey takes approx.. 5-15 minutes to complete. You are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at Kaitlyn.long@okstate.edu.

If you wish to participate in the study, please use this link to access the survey:

<https://forms.gle/8hVKEGR1ZPmENBUPA>.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katie Long

Professional Writing



Approved: 09/01/2021
Protocol #: IRB-21-352

Honors

Staff/Faculty Email

TO: OSU-ENGLISH2-L@listserv.okstate.edu
FROM: Kaitlyn.long@okstate.edu
SUBJECT: Academic Plagiarism Study
DATE: 09/10/2021

Good morning,

My name is Katie Long. I'm a Senior Professional Writing major working on my Seniors Honors Thesis.

My thesis looks at the current climate surrounding academic plagiarism. I'm very interested in the differing knowledges of academic plagiarism between students, writing center tutors, or staff/faculty members. The survey asks questions regarding the situations surrounding academic plagiarism and citation styles. I sent this email to your appropriate listserv email. This survey is completely anonymous; while you will be asked for demographics such as age range, ethnicity, gender, and international status, these data points will be coded for privacy, and you are free to select "prefer not to answer" on any question!

This survey takes approx.. 5-15 minutes to complete. You are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at Kaitlyn.long@okstate.edu.

If you wish to participate in the study, please use this link to access the survey:
<https://forms.gle/8hVKEGR1ZPmENBUPA>.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katie Long



Approved: 09/01/2021
Protocol #: IRB-21-352

Professional Writing
Honors



Approved: 09/01/2021
Protocol #: IRB-21-352

You are invited to participate in a research survey on perceptions of academic plagiarism conducted by Katie Long - Senior Honors Professional Writing major, working on her Senior Honors Thesis - under the direction of Anna Sicari, PhD, Writing Center, OSU. Your participation in this research survey is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent for participation at any time during the survey.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will complete the following survey (5-15 minutes). During the survey, you will be asked questions about your perception on academic plagiarism, which includes scale, free response, and scenario type questions. Your response to these questions will not cause any academic repercussions; the data is only meant to assist in the assessment of the current climate of academic plagiarism.

Compensation: You will receive no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The only information you will provide will be from the survey you take. These questions will help the researcher better understand the current climate of plagiarism at Oklahoma State University and provide accurate interventions to limit plagiarism. Only Katie Long and the director of the Writing Center will have access to this information. All information will be coded, so that no identifiable information about you will go beyond these two people. Your name will not be shared with anyone. This data will be stored in a secure, password-protected Google Drive folder.

The research team will ensure anonymity to the degree permitted by technology. Your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to everyday use of the internet. If you have any concerns about your privacy, you can consult the survey provider's privacy policy at https://privacy.google.com/your-security.html?categories_activeEl=sign-in.

Contact and Questions: If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact the Principal Investigator at kaitlyn.long@okstate.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the OSU IRB at (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.



Approved: 09/01/2021
Protocol #: IRB-21-352

If you agree to participate in this study, please select the answer Yes to complete the survey.



Approved: 09/01/2021
Protocol #: IRB-21-352