Jill the Collaborator

Jill is a rising senior planning to enter a professional program in the fall. She has a "B"/"C" average. During the summer term she was enrolled in a lab section of a science course. A Teaching Assistant who was a graduate student in the science area taught the section.

Following a number of lab assignments that were completed by Jill, the instructor has called her and her lab partner in for a conference. The instructor asked Jill and her partner to go to separate rooms and write down how they completed their last lab assignment. Both students indicated they had worked in collaboration to complete this assignment. Receiving this information, the instructor indicated to both students that they had cheated on this assignment. The instructor indicated that the penalty for this offense was a "zero" on the assignment and a recording of the offense as a violation of the institutional honor policy. The instructor further indicated that failure to accept responsibility for this offense would lead to a hearing and more severe actions including suspension or expulsion. Both students agreed to accept the penalty and signed an admission of the violation.

Jill, upon reflection and after reading the Policy on Academic Integrity, has made an appointment with the Coordinator of Academic Integrity to discuss this matter. During this appointment, Jill tells the coordinator that she did not know that collaboration on these assignments was "wrong", that many of the students in the class collaborate on such assignments and that the only instructions received concerned a prohibition against plagiarism. Further, she feels she was not given any information about the honor policy, the procedures to be followed in making an allegation, and her rights as a student accused of a violation.

Discussion:

• Has Jill done anything wrong?
• Has the instructor done anything wrong?
• Should Jill be punished? How?
• Should the instructor be punished? How?
• What are the implications for Jill and the instructor?
    - personally
    - professionally