Strategies for Fostering Academic Integrity

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What is academic integrity?

• Definitions usually focus on either the ethical components of the word “integrity” or refer to specific policies and procedures.

• At the University of Windsor, academic integrity is:
  “...centering your academic journey around the core values of honesty, respect, fairness, and responsibility.” (Academic Integrity Office Webpage: http://www.uwindsor.ca/academic-integrity/)

• Academic integrity is often explained in terms of avoiding specific behaviours: i.e., NOT cheating.
# Behaviours to Avoid: Types of Cheating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written Work*</th>
<th>Tests/Examinations</th>
<th>Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copying material without quotation or citation</td>
<td>Copying from another student</td>
<td>Fabricating or falsifying data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing material without citation</td>
<td>Helping another to complete a test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falsifying a bibliography</td>
<td>Using crib notes or consulting sources inappropriately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning in work done by another</td>
<td>Impersonating: student doesn’t write his/her own exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating on assignments requiring individual work</td>
<td>Learning exam questions before test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying (eg about handing in assignment)</td>
<td>Sharing exam questions with another inappropriately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lying (eg reasons for absences, make-up exams, etc.)</td>
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</table>

*Note, however, that many definitions of plagiarism in written work are disputed*
Frequency of cheating

• Web surveys of over 40,000 undergraduates on 68 campuses in the United States and Canada:
  • 21% acknowledged at least one incident of serious test or exam cheating, and
  • 51% acknowledged at least one incident of serious cheating on written work. (McCabe, 2005)

• Frequency is not greater online than in the classroom; some studies indicate that cheating is less likely to occur online (McGee, 2013; Beck, 2014).
Cheating: Not a new problem

- From 1963-1993 some types of cheating increased; others decreased.
- Some changes in frequency reflect perceptions: For example 83% of the students surveyed in 1993 did not think collaboration was serious cheating, and almost one in four did not think it was cheating at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1963</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tests/Examinations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copied from another student</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped another student cheat</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used crib notes</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copied material without footnoting</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarized</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falsified a bibliography</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turned in work done by another</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborated on assignments requiring individual work</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Students Admitting to Selected Cheating Behaviors, 1963 and 1993 (McCabe & Trevino, 1996)
Perceived Seriousness vs Frequency for Different Types of Cheating

Frequency of cheating varies by type: Those types perceived as most serious occur less frequently than those perceived as less serious (Franklyn-Stokes & Newstead, 1995)
Fostering Academic Integrity

There are two basic approaches to fostering academic integrity:

1. Assume students will try and cheat, and increase efforts to detect and prevent cheating (eg proctoring, keeping students apart, use plagiarism detection software, etc.)

2. Engage students in building a culture that values academic integrity

(Cole & Kiss, 2000)
When tackling the problem, consider:

• Why do students cheat?
• When preventing cheating, what are we trying to accomplish?
Why do students cheat?
Click on a heading to see further detail, or the next arrow to continue

Engagement
- Lack of interest in the assignment
- Habitual laziness
- Lack of ethics / don’t see anything wrong

Culture
- Ease of access to usable resources
- “Everyone else is doing it”
- Lack of follow up or penalty for breaches

Skill
- Unfamiliarity of the task and how to meet expectations
- Confusion about disciplinary conventions (including citation)
- Misunderstandings around expectations of collaborative work

Pressure
- Parental pressure to do well
- Compete successfully with peers (for top grades, scholarships, etc.)
- Overwhelmed by workload

(Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006; Howard & Jamieson, 2019; McCabe, 2001; McCabe 2005; McCabe & Trevino, 1996; Owunwanne et al., 2010; Willen, 2004)
What are we trying to accomplish?

“It is a challenge to develop students who accept responsibility for the ethical consequences of their ideas and actions. Our goal should not simply be to reduce cheating; rather, our goal should be to find innovative and creative ways to use academic integrity as a building block in our efforts to develop more responsible students and, ultimately, more responsible citizens” (McCabe, 2005)
Remedy: Invigilation?

- Fear of being caught does reduce cheating (McCabe, 2005).
- Invigilation and detecting cheating will likely always be a part of the strategy to reduce academic dishonesty (Cole & Kiss, 2000).

But:
- Cheating still occurs in proctored environments, both online and in person.
- Methods of cheating vary, but increases in sophistication in detection are matched by increases in sophistication of cheating.

“The levels of surveillance and policing required to eliminate cheating would more likely detract from rather than enhance student learning” (McCabe, 2005).

Click here for detail on detecting cheating.
Remedy: Assignment Design

1. Create meaningful, targeted, and authentic assignments linked to specific course material and relevant application.
2. Start early and provide regular, developmental writing assignments with opportunities for feedback.
3. Rotate assignments, altering key elements or details to prevent recycling of previous students’ materials.

“Without a reader, the whole process is diminished.”
- Student (quoted in Sommers 2006)

“With a thoughtful reader ... the whole process is enriched, deepened, and inscribed in memory” (Sommers, 2006)
Remedy: Testing Practices

1. High level questions that require synthesis and application
2. Open-book or collaborative exams that encourage scholarly consultation of sources
3. Multiple versions of tests and, where appropriate, random ordering of questions
4. Change details to create banks of similar, but yet different, questions
5. Collect, count, safe storage
6. Decrease high stakes; include low-stakes formative testing as well
Remedy: Additional Strategies

1. Consider employing Academic Honour Codes (or integrity statements)
2. Ensure assessment practices are fair and aligned to course expectations
3. Ensure assigned workload is reasonable, not just busywork
4. Enlist students as partners in developing a culture of academic integrity*

*“Not only does such ‘consultation’ result in policies in which students feel a greater degree of ownership and responsibility, but it also helps to convince students they truly are partners in their own education” (McCabe, 2005).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Cheating</th>
<th>Summary of Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pressure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>High-Stakes</td>
<td>• Emphasize process, include low stakes assignments with feedback to help students do well</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>• Ensure workload is relevant to course, reduce busy work</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skill</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confused about</td>
<td>• Provide explicit instruction on key skills relevant to the assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>expectations</td>
<td>• Have clear descriptions of expectations in syllabi and assignment prompts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unfamiliarity with</td>
<td>• Provide models</td>
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<tr>
<td>disciplinary conventions</td>
<td>• Remember that disciplines vary in views about collaborative work, use of quotation vs summary, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Everyone is doing it”</td>
<td>• Be candid about the value of academic integrity, consider having students sign an Academic Integrity Statement; build a culture of integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of punishment;</td>
<td>• Follow up on suspected plagiarism; include a focus on education, not just punishment and deterrence</td>
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<tr>
<td>won’t get caught</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy access to</td>
<td>• Create assignments that are unique, targeted to your specific course, require higher order critical thinking and are not easy to find answers to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources</td>
<td>• Design assignments with collaboration in mind, to encourage consultation of resources and build habits of consultation and scholarly inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of interest</td>
<td>• Create meaningful assessments with clear purpose, audience, format, and task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laziness</td>
<td>• Design assignments with intriguing problems or clear relevance to student interests</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Involve students in building a scholarly community and self-directed learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References

Not all descriptions of plagiarism are clear cut. Consider the following:

• a direct quotation cited, but without quotation marks, as part of an original argument
• a re-write of a published article using a very different style and cited, but without any original thought

Opinions about the academic honesty issues from these types of examples have varied over time, in different cultures, and between different people (Owunwanne et al., 2010; Howard & Jamieson, 2019)
Engagement (detail)

Students who have no interest in an assignment or do not see its relevance are much more likely to cheat (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006).

Remedy: Meaningful assessments engaging students as partners in their own learning

Give students a RAFT and a TIP (Bean, 2011)

- **R**ole (or purpose)
- **A**udience
- **F**ormat (or genre)
- **T**ask
- **T**ask as
- **I**ntriguing
- **P**roblem
“Regardless of the campus integrity policy, if students see others cheating, and faculty who fail to see it or choose to ignore it, they are likely to conclude that cheating is necessary to remain competitive.”
(McCabe, 2005)

Remedy: Build a culture of integrity (Willen, 2004; McCabe, 2005)

• **Building a culture of integrity** is an institution-wide project, not just an individual one and includes being explicit about values, building trust, modelling, targeted education, and follow-through on suspected cases

• **Academic honour codes**: Institutions with honour codes tend to have less cheating (McCabe, 2001)
Many students lack skills to avoid plagiarism, particularly in 1st year, when they are taking a range of courses in new and unfamiliar disciplines with diverse expectations (Owunwanne et al., 2010; Howard & Jamieson, 2019).

For example: (Bean, 2011)

1. How to ask research questions
2. How to find sources
3. Why to find sources
4. How to integrate sources into a paper
5. How to manage sources
6. How to cite sources
7. How to establish rhetorical context, role, and purpose
8. Disciplinary conventions and genres for writing

Remedy

- Remember that disciplinary conventions, formats and genres can be very different!
- Be very clear on expectations with respect to assignment
- Provide instruction and feedback to help students
Pressure (detail)

A variety of pressures make cheating a more tempting option. In particular:

- Parental pressures (investment in tuition, expectations of success, etc.)
- A high-stakes competitive environment: shortage of careers and opportunities where grades perceived as currency for scholarships, admission to graduate school, and tickets to lucrative careers.

Remedy: valuing process, not just results. Focus not just on what the final product is worth, but reflect on what is gained through each step.

- Include low-stakes and formative assignments to support students along the way
- Be explicit about purpose of assessment alignments between outcome and assessment

(McCabe 2005; Willen, 2004)
Creating a culture of academic integrity (detail)

- One reason for student cheating is the perception that no one will catch them, or if they do, won’t do anything about it.
- Faculty often do not follow through on suspected cases of cheating. Concern cited most frequently for not following up is the amount of bureaucracy involved ... but not all follow-up need to be about penalty. They can involve “teachable moments”.
- Academic Honour Codes (or Integrity Statements) are used at many institutions
- Can use plagiarism detection software (eg SafeAssign) to help identify incidence of plagiarism
• Academic honour codes (or integrity statements) require students to explicitly commit to academic integrity values and policies.

• Examples of honour statements for the University of Windsor

• Institutions that employ academic honour codes tend to have lower incidence of cheating, even those that have unproctored or self-scheduled exams

• Comparative research with institutions without codes indicates, however, that it is not the code itself that deters cheating, but the culture of the institution.

• Institutions that provide multi-pronged supports and actively promote a culture of academic integrity have much less cheating.

(McCabe, 2001; McCabe 2005; McCabe & Trevino, 1996; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2002)
SafeAssign (Detail)

- SafeAssign is an option available in Blackboard to assist with detecting plagiarism.
- Compares assignment submissions against a database including other student work, the web, and many journals for evidence of inappropriate copying.
- Results need to be interpreted with caution, as there are always false positives and false negatives.
- This link leads to a wiki with detailed tips for using and interpreting SafeAssign.
Detecting Cheating (detail)

• Look for generic responses that do not address assignment specifics or draw in course materials and discussions as possible indicators.

• Plagiarism detection software (like SafeAssign) can help determine if students are copying from each other or inappropriately from sources. More detail about SafeAssign.

• Viewing metadata on documents (dates, properties, authors) or length of time answering test questions can also provide clues about the source.