

Teaching Tip: Promoting Academic Integrity

Responding to a case of academic misconduct in a class is one of the most distressing experiences faculty encounter. The problem of academic misconduct must be addressed with a combination of strategies: education of students about academic integrity, proactive design of exams and assignments, and diligent follow-up and enforcement when academic misconduct occurs. This teaching tip describes proactive approaches instructors might use to promote academic integrity. Although these strategies might not deter the student who is determined to cheat, they might reduce the frequency of inappropriate behaviors by students who violate norms out of ignorance or other situational factors.

Variability in scholarly conventions across disciplines creates ambiguous situations in which misconduct is more likely to occur

Many students arrive on campus with an unclear or erroneous understanding of appropriate methods for paraphrasing or citing ideas in scholarly writing. They may have inadequate authorship skills. Standards and criteria for when and how work should be cited, when direct quotations are necessary, when and how to paraphrase ideas, and conventions for citing ideas within the text of a written assignment vary across academic disciplines and are understood differently by faculty and students (Roig, 2001). These inconsistencies are an unavoidable aspect of academia, but they create opportunities for misunderstanding. Explicit instruction about discipline-specific scholarly conventions should be part of the student's socialization into the discipline.

Provide students with explicit instructions about acceptable and unacceptable practices

Rather than assume that students understand the scholarly conventions in your discipline, include explicit instructions and guidelines and provide clear examples (Roig, 2006). The web is an excellent source for a variety of exercises and examples of assignments

designed to help students define plagiarism, recognize examples of text that are plagiarized and those that are appropriately paraphrased, and develop skills for appropriate authorship practices. The UWF History department created a tutorial on plagiarism that is available on the UWF Library tutorials web site. This tutorial could be assigned as a class assignment. It includes a quiz that students can e-mail to their instructor to document their completion of the tutorial. The tutorials site includes modules to assist students with writing, conducting library research, and identifying plagiarism.

A variety of quizzes and exercises to improve the ability to recognize plagiarism and develop skill in writing paraphrases can be found on academic web sites. Michigan State University has a useful resource page on academic integrity that includes links to a large number of such sites. Indiana University hosts an excellent tutorial on how to recognize plagiarism.

Web Resources on Plagiarism and Paraphrasing

UWF Pace Library tutorials:

http://library.uwf.edu/eli2/new_tutorials/index.html

Indiana University plagiarism tutorial:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>

Michigan State University resource page:

<http://library.msstate.edu/content/templates/?a=393&z=0>

Advantages of these strategies for instructors

Instructors who discuss these issues as part of class instruction send a clear message to students that they value academic integrity and take these matters seriously. Instructors who include a description of institutional policy on academic integrity on a syllabus will have a strong case should they need to prosecute a student for misconduct. However, a statement about academic misconduct in the syllabus by itself is a weak endorsement of the instructor's commitment to academic integrity.

Explicit instructions clearly communicate the instructor's expectations for his or her course and eliminate ambiguity about "what counts" as acceptable and unacceptable behavior. This clarity is

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particularly important if the course includes collaborative work, which can raise questions about the degree to which written assignments should be based on individual writing or shared work. Clear articulation of your expectations might help you avoid future problems associated with dealing with students who mistakenly assume that your rules are the same as those of another instructor or a hypothetical instructor in the student's high school.

Remember that some conventions for scholarly writing are discipline-specific. Explicit instruction about these scholarly conventions should be part of the student's socialization into the discipline.

Structure assignments to make plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty ineffective

Meizlish (2005) describes eight strategies instructors can use to deter academic misconduct. These strategies generally entail creating unique assignments and structuring student work. When assignments make unique demands, students are unlikely to find suitable work to copy.

1. Vary the assignment by altering a few elements each time you teach a course. For example, use different cases or assigned readings as the basis for the assignment. This strategy renders most student work from prior terms useless for the current assignment.

2. Assign specific materials (a case study, readings, etc.) that students must use when completing the assignment. Collections of papers in a campus file or on a commercial web site are unlikely to include a paper that uses these specific materials.

3. Include elements in assignments that are difficult to copy or fabricate (data collection, analysis or interpretation of data using a particular method, work with a client on campus or in the community, formal evaluative feedback from the client).

4. Break large projects into a series of milestone assignments. A semester-long research paper might entail a series of related assignments: submit a brief proposal or overview of the topic by week 3, an annotated bibliography by week 7, a draft that undergoes peer review 2 weeks before the submission date for the final paper). Milestone assignments force students to begin projects earlier and reduce problems with procrastination, which is a common contributing factor to the decision to plagiarize (Roig & DeTommaso, 1995). In addition, milestone assignments can serve as low-stakes opportunities for

students to practice skills. Interim assignments create an opportunity for you to give students constructive feedback about their work. This strategy supports the development of skill and enables students to produce a better-quality final product. With appropriate guidelines, peer review assignments effectively delegate the task of providing constructive feedback to the students themselves and teach skills in self-reflection and self-editing.

5. Create specific criteria about the source materials that students will be required to use and describe how you expect students to cite sources.

6. Require students to submit their assignments electronically for potential screening with text-matching software (such as turnitin) as well as submitting a paper copy. Review the UWF guidelines on turnitin if you plan to use this tool to screen student work.

7. Require students to provide copies of all supporting materials as part of the finished assignment (e.g., data collection sheets, copies of cited work, etc.).

8. Create an in-class writing assignment on the day the project is due that requires a detailed knowledge of the project. Students might be required to reflect on their work by answering prompts such as: *Describe the most challenging aspect of the project. What did you learn by completing this project? If you were starting this project today, what would you do differently and why would you make this change?*

References

Meizlish, D. (2005). Promoting academic integrity in the classroom. *Occasional Paper #20*, University of Michigan, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching.

Available online:

http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/CRLT_no20.pdf

Roig, M. (2001). Plagiarism and paraphrasing criteria of college and university professors. *Ethics & Behavior, 11*, 307-323.

Roig, M. (2006). Ethical writing should be taught. *British Medical Journal, 333*, 596-597.

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Roig, M., & DeTommaso, L. (1995). Are college cheating and plagiarism related to procrastination? *Psychological Reports, 77*, 691-698.

College of Arts and Science Launches Teaching Partners Program

The College of Arts and Sciences launched the Teaching Partners Program in Fall 2008 to promote the exchange of effective and innovative teaching strategies among its faculty. The program is designed to support faculty in their efforts to provide high-quality teaching and improve their teaching methods, and facilitate peer observations of their teaching for both informal feedback and formal reviews.

Fourteen CAS faculty who signed up during the fall were partnered based on their teaching interests and goals. Partners visited each other's face-to-face or online classes to learn about and share their teaching practices, and discussed their feedback in follow-up meetings.

Feedback received from participants indicated that they found the program useful and are interested in continuing in the program.

Join the Spring 2009 Teaching Partners group

Faculty who are interested in becoming a Teaching Partner are encouraged to sign up in Spring 2009. The application deadline for this semester is Jan. 26. An informational meeting for the program will be held Jan. 23 from 11 a.m. to noon in the CAS Dean's conference room (Building 11, Room 219).

How to apply

The online application form for the Teaching Partners program is available on the Teaching Partners web site or you can contact Eman El-Sheikh at eelsheikh@uwf.edu.

Teaching Partners Web Site:
<http://www.uwf.edu/cas/partners/>

ArgoGrams Coming to the CUTLA Web Site

We all like to hear when we are doing something well. An ArgoGram allows students to communicate their appreciation of the effort and commitment to excellent teaching demonstrated by faculty at the University of West Florida. Faculty members will appreciate hearing that a student has benefited from their efforts.



CUTLA will offer the ArgoGram service during the Spring Term. An ArgoGram is an easy way for students to express their appreciation to a UWF instructor.

Students can send a note of thanks to an instructor whose hard work, dedication, expertise, and effort made a meaningful contribution to their educational experience at UWF.

How does the ArgoGram service work?

Students can send an ArgoGram to any instructor at the University of West Florida (professors, instructors, adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, or graduate teaching assistants). Messages posted on the ArgoGram web page will be screened and printed as part of a letter that explains to the instructor that a student submitted a note of appreciation on the instructor's behalf. Messages might be

edited to delete typographical errors or minor errors in grammar. Messages submitted to the ArgoGram web site will be sent to instructors at the end of each term after course grades have been posted.

How can a student send an ArgoGram?

The ArgoGram page includes a form on which students enter the name of the instructor and the student's thank you message. Messages can be sent to any University of West Florida professor, adjunct faculty, instructor, visiting faculty, or graduate teaching assistant.

Calendar of Events for Spring Term

February 20, 2009

Articulation Day

The Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment will provide a faculty development workshop during the Articulation Day program, which is coordinated by Enrollment Services. Members of individual departments will meet with their counterparts from regional colleges and community colleges to discuss common issues related to the successful transition of students from 2-year institutions to UWF.

NOTE: This event has been cancelled and will be rescheduled for Fall 2009.

February 27, 2009

Best Practices for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Mini-Conference

University Conference Center, Room A

9:00 AM—3:00 PM

Session Topics

Getting Started with an SoTL Project

SoTL-based Publications and Curricular Improvement

Getting External Funding for SoTL Projects (Office of Sponsored Research)

IRB Information for SoTL Projects
Campus Support Services for SoTL Projects

Innovative Teaching at UWF is published twice a year by the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment.

Editor, Dr. Claudia Stanny, Director, CUTLA

Contact CUTLA at: 473-7435

cstanny@uwf.edu

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Interest Group

The SoTL Interest Group meets once a month to discuss the nature of teaching-related scholarship and provide mutual support for participants' SoTL projects.

Meeting Time:

12:00 noon— 1:00 PM

BLDG 53 , Room 214

January 8, 2009

February 12, 2009

March 12, 2009

April 9, 2009

March 3, 2009

Making Honor Codes Work (Even if You Don't Have One)

Academic Leader Webinar

12:00 noon – 1:30 PM

BLDG 11, Room 219

Gary Pavela will share a blend of strategic insight and practical how-to's, covering a wide range of issues related to honor codes.

May 13, 2009

CCR Submission Workshop

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

University Conference Center, Room A

Guidance on writing SLOs and preparing CCRs for new and revised courses and academic programs. Chairs and faculty involved in the submission of CCRs in 2009/2010 are encouraged to attend.



Faculty Fridays

Meet for collegiality and lunch followed by a program on topics related to teaching and faculty career issues.

All Faculty Friday workshops begin with a lunch at noon.

The formal session begins around 12:45 PM and ends at 2 PM.

January 23, 2009

Promoting Academic Integrity and Responding to Student Misconduct

University Conference Center, Room A

February 6, 2009

Techniques for Enhancing Online Teaching and Learning

University Conference Center, Room A

March 20, 2009

Preparing for Tenure, Promotion, and Annual Evaluations

Library Conference Room, BLDG 32

