

Promoting Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is reflected when a student commits to an ethical code of honesty, trust, and responsibility in academic settings. Promoting academic integrity in online environments can be challenging. Preventive steps can be taken to reduce or eliminate the occurrence of academic dishonesty when teachers plan, have clear learning outcomes, and take measures that promote academic integrity.

1. What is academic integrity?
2. Why is promoting academic integrity challenging in online environments?
3. How do I facilitate academic integrity in online environments with my students and families?



to Consider



Academic integrity is defined as a student's commitment to an ethical code of honesty, trust, and responsibility in academic settings. When students understand, complete, and submit their work on their own including attributing sources, they demonstrate academic integrity. On the other hand, when students plagiarize or cheat on assignments, they demonstrate academic dishonesty. Learning in online environments presents many challenges to promoting academic integrity, such as how assessments are monitored and how teachers ensure that students are not cheating. While challenges exist, there are ways to promote academic integrity in online environments including: having clear learning outcomes or goals; planning, preparing, and executing measures that promote academic integrity; and taking preventive steps to deter academic dishonesty.

Having clear learning outcomes or goals helps students plan and prepare for activities or classes in advance and reduces student stress associated with how to meet certain standards. When possible, it is beneficial to emphasize mastery over performance in desired learning outcomes and goals. Mastery outcomes and goals put an increased focus on understanding, or mastery, rather than achieving particular grades. Along with relaying clear learning outcomes or goals, it is also important to ensure students understand how academic integrity will impact their future choices, goals, and opportunities.

Advanced planning or preparation, and timeliness of implementing those plans, can go a long way to ensuring academic integrity in online environments. Foster students' intrinsic motivation by affirming their achievements, even if they are small. Utilize frequent low-stakes formative assessments to gauge students' understanding and progress regularly. Use project-based assignments that align with real-world scenarios to increase motivation and engagement. Plan project-based assignments in advance to provide students with deadlines and opportunities to clarify expectations and meet needs.

Remember that some students face increased pressure and anxiety as they learn in online environments. Continue to prioritize the social-emotional well-being of students, even while promoting academic integrity. Intentionally providing opportunities for one-on-one communication with students and families allows teachers to convey their support of students' academic and social-emotional well-being.

Preventative measures can minimize incidences of academic dishonesty related to written assignments. Consider requiring students to utilize plagiarism detection tools such as Turnitin, SafeAssign, and Grammarly to proactively check for instances of unintentional plagiarism. Additionally, depending on school policies, student device monitoring tools can also be utilized to broadly identify academic dishonesty and promote integrity. Regularly remind students about what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences of academic dishonesty. Although there are inevitable challenges to maintaining academic integrity in online environments, it is vital to take steps to continually promote academic integrity.

KEY Elements