Discouraging Academic Misconduct

A list of tips for discouraging academic misconduct

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Academic misconduct is a real concern for both in-person (face-to-face) and online courses. Yet, in the online space the threat of academic dishonesty seems to be particularly troubling. The tips below have been compiled to provide instructors with some strategies for discouraging academic misconduct. A student determined to cheat will try to cheat. But with a little thoughtful planning, the opportunity for academic misconduct can be reduced. The easiest tips to implement are provided first. An accompanying video has been created to help you see how to implement some of these tips.

TIP 1: RANDOMIZE TEST ITEMS

When students take different versions of a test it's harder for them to share answers. There are two ways to add a random element to your tests and quizzes:

1. Shuffle answers - Instructions for doing this are provided in the Canvas guide on quizzes.
2. Create a question group (sometimes called a "question bank") - A question group allows you to specify how many questions from a particular group you want to include on the test/quiz. The algorithm will then randomize which questions appear on the test/quiz.

TIP 2: SET A TIME LIMIT

Use the tools in WebCampus to set up time limits using two different strategies:

1. Restrict access to an assessment - You can control when students can access the assessment. You can also require a code to access the course. This code can be provided to students at the start of a limited time period to simulate some aspects of a synchronous testing situation.
2. Set a time limit - To reduce the amount of time students have to search for answers, set a time limit such that students won't be able to complete the exam unless they are well-prepared and familiar with the material.

Instructions for both of these tips are provided in the Canvas guide on quizzes.

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TIP 3: REQUIRE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Students are more likely to cheat in an environment where there are no clear definitions of academic dishonesty and high stakes assessments make up much of their grade (Pavela and McCabe, 2005 and Lang, 2013). To make the definition of academic dishonesty clear, you can use the following resources in the UNLV Canvas Commons by following the directions in [this](#) guide:
- [UNLV Academic Integrity Assignment Template](#)
- [UNLV Academic Integrity Quiz Template](#)

To include the specific expectations that you have for students in your course, add your individual restrictions to the assignment and/or quiz template above the statement of the UNLV Academic Misconduct Policy. Some individual restrictions you may want to add include:
- A definition of collaboration, if collaboration is allowed.
- Which, if any, outside resources are permitted and/or not permitted.

TIP 4: ADD SHORT QUIZZES TO REDUCE TEMPTATION

Consider including multiple short quizzes in your course, to reduce the pressure of high stakes assessments. These quizzes can also be used to check for consistency in performance with more inclusive exams. Weekly, low stakes quizzes can also improve student confidence, and inform your teaching practice.

TIP 5: CREATE AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

A big drawback to authentic assessments is that they require more time to grade. However, they are the most effective way to discourage academic misconduct. The [seminal work](#) on authentic assessment makes a convincing case for taking the time to use this approach. Examples of authentic assessments include:

- Reflective journal assignments.
- Simulations.
- Case studies.
- Portfolios.
- Graded discussion boards
- Peer assessments

An easy process to create authentic assessments is provided in this [Authentic Assessment Toolbox](#). If you would like assistance in creating authentic assessments, please contact the Office of Online Education at online@unlv.edu.

REFERENCES

Lang, J. M. 2013. *Cheating Lessons: Learning from Academic Dishonesty*. Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA.

Pavela, G. & McCabe, D. 2004. Ten Updated Principles of Academic Integrity. *Change 36*(3):10-15.

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