Fostering Academic Integrity in an Online Learning Environment

Prepared by Jackie Rea, Laurie McNeill, Tara Lee, Loren Gaudet, Mi-Young Kim, Jennifer Cowe

Guiding Principles

1. Activities meant to foster academic integrity in online learning environments should reflect the overall learning goal of WRDS 150: to cultivate identifications and practices associated with scholarly research cultures.
2. Activities meant to foster academic integrity should parallel activities that we, as researchers and instructors, engage in ourselves, e.g.:
   a. **discuss** our work with colleagues in our scholarly communities
   b. **reflect** on our practices as researchers, writers and as learners
   c. **reliably collaborate** with colleagues on our research or related tasks
   d. **seek feedback** for the purposes of revising/reimagining our work.

Based on these principles, the following strategies are imagined as extensions of the learning we ask students to do in the course rather than strategies for "policing" students; these strategies ask students to engage in practices informed by the values associated with scholarly knowledge production -- values that we teach and model in the course.

5 Strategies

Community-building

1. To foster a scholarly community, in your first week of classes you might put students into groups and ask each group to come up with a definition of academic integrity using materials you supply on Canvas (e.g. UBC Calendar/policy documents, short videos from the Learning Commons, the online version of UBC's Policy on Academic Misconduct, the Melania Trump-Michelle Obama plagiarism event, some scenarios that students find a bit trickier to assess [e.g. asking a friend to rewrite a paragraph]). Each team then shares their definition to the whole class (orally or via a post to the discussion thread). The class agrees on a class definition of academic integrity based on all the teams' contributions. This definition is then included on all assignment instructions (for an example of how to organize this activity, consult the Learning Commons academic integrity faculty resource page at https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/faculty-resources/).
2. Alternately, you might ask students, in groups, to create a meme that displays their current understandings of academic integrity. This activity is meant to give students an opportunity to work together, to 'gel' as a group, and to begin to reflect on what

academic integrity is. Then, you would deliver an academic integrity workshop, after which students, in their groups, revise the meme (add another panel or two) to demonstrate a more refined understanding of academic integrity (the meme could be organized as a before/after sequence).

"Flipped" Academic Integrity Workshop

Ideally, this workshop would occur in the 2nd week of the semester if you chose not to do the activity described above in the first week of your course. If you did ask your students to do the activity above, think about adapting this activity as a follow up activity (knowing that learning is iterative).

Provide students with reading and viewing materials (see https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/faculty-resources/ for ideas) that highlight some of the academic integrity issues students face as writers and learners (e.g. scenarios around getting tutoring help, using translation software, using 'writing' software such as Grammarly). Have students read and view these materials, then reflect on them before 'coming to class'.

During class, put students into break-out groups to (a) discuss their reflections and (b) create one power-point slide that best captures the issue students focused on the most while discussing their reflections, or (c) create a one-paragraph scenario of a student who struggles with an academic integrity issue such as the ones your students have been discussing in their break-out groups. Students could include a question or prompt after their scenario to encourage other students to think more deeply about the case described in the scenario. You should provide your students with a model of such a scenario. [1]

Students would post their work on the Canvas discussion board for others to comment on. If you choose the scenario activity for students to complete, on the discussion list, students could 'offer advice' to the imagined student in the scenario based on their growing understanding of academic integrity.

Reflection Activities

Reflections on Individual Work

Asking students to reflect on their work at the time of submission provides you with information about their ability to talk about the work itself as well as the processes involved in producing this work, ensuring some degree of accountability.

As a more manageable alternative to a post-assignment oral defence or exam, you could produce a bank of questions and reflection prompts that could be assigned randomly to students via the Canvas Quiz tool (so that students aren't given the same questions). Students

would then complete these questions and prompts within a set time frame after uploading their assignment. Questions/prompts might include:

- What excites you about your research?
- How did you come up with your topic – what prompted you to research this area and not another area?
- What do you think is the most significant aspect of your research?
- Write a 4-sentence abstract of your research.
- What are the 5 key words that highlight the most important aspects of your research? In a few sentences, reflect on these words' importance to an understanding of your research.
- Why did you choose the research methods you used?
- What areas of your research (or assignment) did you have the most difficulty with and how might you address these difficulties if you had more time to complete the assignment?

Reflections on Collaborative Work

Students can encounter academic integrity issues while working collaboratively with their peers on assignments and class activities. To encourage reliable/accountable collaboration amongst peers, you might ask students to reflect on their contributions to group work and make this the individually graded part of the assignment. For example, you might ask students to reflect on the following questions: [2]

- What were you particularly good at during group work?
- What are 1-2 things you still need to work on for group projects?
- Think about what each member brought to the group, how each individual enriched what you did together. What was the most important contribution (or contributions) made by each team member, including yourself? Write down 1-2 specific ways each member (including yourself) made the group project work.
- What were the most significant things you learned by doing this group project?

Discussing Research and Seeking Feedback

1. You might put students into break-out groups to discuss and 'defend' their research. Before the session, students could share each other's research proposals or introductions to research papers. Students would read these documents and create a question for the writer of each document to ask during the break-out group session. Each student would submit the questions they have for their peers to you before the session. After the break-out group discussion, students could be asked to compile a list of broader questions for other writers to consider as they revise (based on the more specific questions they discussed during the break-out session) or, alternately, students could be asked to produce a power-point slide that highlights key issues that arose during the break-out discussion.
2. You might also book group sessions for students to 'present' their research. This would involve booking blocks of e.g. 20 minutes for a group of 3 students. Students would 'nutshell' their work to you and the other two participants (explain their research in 1-2

minutes). They would then take 1 question from you and 1 from another student. Alternatively, you could structure this session around the questions the writers have about their own work. That is, students would bring 2 questions they have about their writing/research project and seek feedback from participants in the group.

Peer Group Discussions

You might use the Canvas Discussion tool to encourage a conversation amongst your students, which will also allow you to assess their ability to write and think about topics being explored in the course. For example, you could put students into groups on the Canvas discussion board to discuss one of the course readings. You might ask a specific question about the reading, and assign each participant a role to play in the conversation they will have as they attempt to answer this question. One student, the first 'speaker', could be given the role of attempting to answer the question you posed. The second student is given the role of responding to the first student's answer. The third asks two related questions arising from the first two students' conversation and includes some commentary about why they are asking these questions. The fourth student chooses one of the questions posed by the third student and, with reference to the reading, attempts to answer. The fifth student summarizes the discussion in 3-4 sentences.

This activity is an adaptation of an activity described here: Spark Effective Discussions with Canvas Discussion Boards

---

[1] The following sample scenarios come from work Jackie Rea did on the Vantage Academic Integrity Resources Project:
1. Skyler is required to work in a group of 4 other students for a presentation in APSC 176. Two students in the group have spent a considerable amount of time working on the project that will be presented on and another student has spent a lot of time putting the actual presentation together. Skyler, however, is having trouble managing his time. He often misses group meetings and has offered nothing substantial to the project. He is stressed out about his other courses and therefore tends to focus mainly on them, which has left the other 3 students in his group to do the work. In total, Skyler has contributed very little – if anything – to the presentation. **Question:** While the UBC policy does not explicitly talk about contributions to group work, how might you apply the policy to this instance? What advice would you give Skyler's group mates who might be stressed out about his lack of contribution to the presentation?
2. Ariel must write a 300-word summary of a peer-reviewed article called "My funny valentine: How humor styles affect romantic interest" for her WRDS 150 course. The summary is due in 12 hours, but she hasn't started the assignment yet. She begins to read and finds the article difficult to understand: "What's their hypothesis again?" "Why do the authors talk about evolution in the context of dating?" "I don't understand these results about humor styles!" She decides to try to write the summary anyway. As she does, she incorporates phrases and sentences from the article into her document. She provides the names of the authors (Didonato et al.) and the date of the publication (2013) near these phrases and sentences but does not use quotation marks to let her reader know that these are the direct wordings of the authors. Question: Is this an instance of academic misconduct? If you think it is, what advice would you give Ariel for how to handle future summaries she produces?

[2] These questions come from Laurie McNeill's 'Archives Project Personal Reflection' assignment.