

Preserving Academic Integrity in the Classroom

Violations of the academic integrity policy occur on a daily basis. It is quite likely that for any given course taught here at Rutgers, there will be at least one student who decides to violate academic integrity, and many more who may be tempted. TAs who ignore this startling fact contribute to the problem. The single most effective barrier to academic dishonesty is early prevention, and prevention is the responsibility of the instructor and TA. Awareness of the class policies and atmospheres that might be conducive to violating academic integrity is not enough. The instructor and TA must actively create the appropriate environment and procedures to reduce academic dishonesty. There is truth to the saying 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.'

Students expect to be treated fairly by their instructors, and all cases of academic dishonesty create an imbalance of equity in the classroom. Reward based on merit is fundamental to the student-teacher relationship, and this is directly undermined when students violate academic integrity. Furthermore, when the instructor or TA ignores potential problems that may lead students to violate academic integrity, then the instructor or TA is tacitly approving of the resulting inequality and thereby breaching their basic contract with the students. Consider the hardworking, honest students when protecting the academic integrity of your classroom.

Letting students get away with violations of academic integrity only serves to encourage future violations. Given that according to university policy it is an instructor's and TA's obligation to report any and all instances of academic dishonesty, not wanting to deal with the 'hassle' of reporting them is absolutely no excuse; by not doing so, you are harming all of your students who devoted the time and energy to submit their own original work.

In summary, 1) not only is it the duty of all instructors and TAs to report students who violate academic integrity, but

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Shakespeare featured in Library Special Collections

The Rutgers University Libraries invite members of the public to view "Shakespeare: In Print, On Stage, On Film, Online," an exhibition that explores the Bard's continuing impact and the ways in which his work has been adapted and interpreted during the past 400 years. The exhibition will run through March 22 on the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus.

The exhibition, housed in the Special Collections and University Archives Gallery on the lower level of Alexander Library, features works by and about Shakespeare spanning a period of 400 years. The earliest volumes include a 1619 quarto edition of "The Merchant of Venice," plus the second and third folio editions of his plays, works by Shakespeare's friend and rival Ben Jonson, and contemporary editions of the two English translations of the Bible Shakespeare knew best.

For more information on this exhibition, or library hours, please call Special Collections & University Archives at 732-932-7006.

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2) it is the duty of all instructors and TAs to work to prevent academic dishonesty. Failure to do either is a testament to lack of professional responsibility. The following prevention tips should make it relatively easy to create a classroom atmosphere where violating academic integrity is extremely difficult and violations of academic integrity are readily detectable.

Setting Expectations

The TA must set the tone of the course in regard to academic integrity. By telling students what they can and cannot do on papers, tests, quizzes or independent work, you can reduce instances of actual ignorance about academic integrity policy and also make them aware that you take academic integrity seriously.

1. Provide, along with your syllabus, a copy of the University's academic integrity policy, and/or the section on academic integrity from the undergraduate handbook.
2. If your class is research

heavy, you can have as one of your required texts a style manual appropriate to your discipline. This will give them detailed information on when they ought to cite sources and how to cite these sources properly.

3. Explain to your students that plagiarism is not only failing to cite properly another author's words but also failing to cite properly another author's ideas.
4. For each assignment of a different nature (tests, quizzes, papers, group work), be sure to tell students what is expected of them with regard to academic integrity.

Prevention Tips (Tests and Quizzes)

1. Provide your own blue books for tests. Although students may not be aware of your test questions, they may, prior to the test, write notes in their own blue book. By providing blue books for your class, and further by marking them in such a way that you can immediately tell when a submitted blue book is not your own, academic dishonesty in this manner can be eliminated.
2. When feasible, have the students clear their desk area before a test or quiz. During a test, there is no need for a student to have his or her bag, purse, or notebooks nearby. Make students aware of this policy prior to the test so that they have the option to leave these things, and any valuables, behind.
3. If possible, increase the

space between students. Space permitting, you may stagger the position of students so direct copying from another student's exam is much more difficult. If the class is large, create multiple versions of the test with the same questions but in different order, then pass these out so that no adjacent students have identical versions.

4. Do not repeat the same tests or quizzes each semester. Many students and student organizations have test banks filled with previous tests and quizzes from a variety of courses. By not varying your tests from semester to semester, you are increasing the chances of a key being available to enterprising students willing to violate academic integrity.
5. Be aware of your surroundings during an exam or quiz. Reading a book, doing your own work or otherwise being disengaged from the class should be avoided. If you are actively watching the class during exams, not only will your ability to spot violations of academic integrity increase, but those students who might have previously been tempted to violating academic integrity, will be discouraged.

Papers and Research Projects

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TapTalk is produced by the Teaching Assistant Project (TAP), Graduate School-New Brunswick.

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Letters, submissions, calendar items, and suggestions for articles should be directed to the Editor.

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1. Assign specific topics that are germane to the course material. While allowing students free choice in their paper topics encourages creativity, it also encourages dishonesty. Papers on vague and general topics are readily available from outside sources, but papers on topics that presuppose knowledge of the specifics of your course are few and far between. As with tests, if you assign topics, vary those from semester to semester.

2. Require students to turn in an outline with the source material before the paper is completed. An outline of the paper can encourage students to get started early, it allows you to gauge their progress and offer help, and it shows you that their work is their own. If the final paper does not even remotely match the outline, this may be a clear sign of dishonesty.

3. Require that the sources (if any) be turned in with the paper according to the appropriate format in your discipline. This prevents the students from using false sources and further ensures that their citations match with the quotes or paraphrased portions. Also, this makes it more difficult for papers written by others to be used. Finally, make sure that the students know how to cite electronic sources properly.

4. If class size permits, ask your students to talk with you about their paper topic and/or outline. Speaking with the students about their papers

can alert you to potential problems and also can give you a comparative point from which to evaluate the final paper.

5. Utilize resources that can detect plagiarism. Sites exist to combat the proliferation of internet paper mills and the relative ease with which the internet itself can be used to plagiarize a paper. Try www.plagiarism.org (Glatt Plagiarism Services, Inc.), or IntegriGuard. Also, some search engines employed in everyday use of the internet, like www.google.com or www.lycos.com, can be a fast, cheap way of detection. Simply place a portion of the paper into the search field. You may find it helpful to alert your students to the availability of these resources and advise them that you will employ these resources if necessary.

6. If you suspect academic dishonesty, asking the student about the intricacies of the paper may reveal a lack of knowledge that may point to violations of academic integrity.

Group Work and Group Presentations

While group work may allow students to utilize the strengths of each member, some students may see group work as an invitation to copy or receive the benefits of others' labour without doing the work. Group work including group presentations is the hardest area to identify academic dishonesty, but there are important tools the

instructor can use to ensure that students get credit for their contribution.

1. Ask each participant in the group to email you with a percentage breakdown of the work contributed by each member in the group including themselves. Comparing the reports from each group member may highlight a group member or members unduly taking credit for work done by others. Although this is, of course, not a hard and fast rule, it may give an outlet to students who otherwise might not report such behavior, and allow the instructor to investigate possible violations of academic integrity.

The preventative tips offered here require some effort, but they can seriously decrease instances of academic dishonesty in your classroom. It would be unwise to rely on the students to change their values as a means of preventing academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is virulent and pervasive and ignoring this fact contributes to the problem. Failure to take active measures to prevent it is irresponsible and dangerous.

Employing these simple measures in your class maintains fairness and alerts your students to the fact that you care about hard work, and this is not supererogatory but a necessary feature of any classroom.

TA
Helpline
Call
932-11TA
Monday-Friday
between
the hours
of
8:30-4:30

**Want to be a Movie
Star?**
Then get your class videotaped!

Call 932-11TA for details
<http://tapproject.rutgers.edu>

TAP Calendar

3/6	<i>Public Speaking and the TA: Improving your Voice in the Classroom</i>	12:00 noon ³
3/8	<i>Postgraduate Employment for International Students</i>	9:00a.m.-12:00 noon. ¹
3/26	<i>CV/Resume Writing</i>	4:00-5:00 p.m. ²
4/2	<i>Transition from Backpack to Briefcase: A Discussion with Representatives from Price Waterhouse</i>	6:00-7:30 p.m. ²

1. College Avenue Campus. To register call 932-7997 ext. 15
2. College Avenue Campus. To register call 932-7997.
3. 25 Bishop Place, College Avenue Campus. To Register call 932-7747

**Interested in Peer Observa-
tion of your classes?
[http://tapproject.rutgers.edu/
services.php3](http://tapproject.rutgers.edu/services.php3)**

Teaching Assistant Project

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