



www.collegepubs.com

September 23, 2011

Vol 16: #29

TPR articles 11.44 and 11.45

EDITOR'S NOTE: This issue includes a content update for Academicintegrityseminar.org (AIS). Please [click here](#) for student comments about AIS tutorials. Inquiries about AIS tutored seminars should be sent to: contact@integrityseminar.org.

IN THIS ISSUE

11.44 Advice from students to faculty members on protecting academic integrity

KEY QUOTATION: "A passing reference to academic integrity on the first day of class isn't sufficient. Reiteration highlights the importance of the topic. Initiate a short discussion or class e-mail on 'ways to avoid plagiarism' several weeks before a major paper is due."

11.45 READING: Passing the "grit" test

KEY QUOTATION: (From the editor): "[S]tudents found responsible for disciplinary offenses like academic dishonesty have just encountered failure (an adverse finding against them). This is precisely the moment when they're most receptive to an educational intervention suggesting that adaptation to failure is the beginning of true learning."

11.44 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Advice from students to faculty members on protecting academic integrity

EDITOR'S NOTE: Last spring Syracuse University sponsored an academic integrity forum featuring presentations by student leaders from the University of Maryland, Princeton University, Vanderbilt University, and Syracuse University. Participants were:

- Shaun Gates, Honor Council Chair at the University of Maryland;
- Austin Elder, Honor Council Chair at Vanderbilt University;
- Pauline Nguyen, Honor Committee Vice Chair at Princeton University;
- Eric Montgomery, Syracuse University Academic Integrity Hearing Officer.

Each student leader offered specific suggestions on ways to protect and promote academic integrity. Their suggestions--edited by Gary Pavela--appear below. Please scroll to the end of this section for additional resources, including resources available at the Vanderbilt, Maryland, and Princeton academic integrity websites.

EARLY IN THE COURSE

[] Include a syllabus statement about University academic integrity standards.

[] Discuss academic integrity expectations on the first day of class. Share personal examples and perspectives highlighting why academic integrity is important to you.

[] Emphasize the mutual obligations of teachers and students. [See Professor Bill Taylor's "[Letter to my Students](#)" (designed to "show . . . students that academic integrity isn't something that we as faculty do to them, but it's a set of principles that bind all of us equally for the good of inquiry and learning")].

[] Ask students to discuss why academic integrity is important to them. Doing so helps break through an "us vs. them" (students vs. faculty) attitude toward academic integrity. Refer to relevant letters or published statements from student leaders (see e.g. Shaun Gates' "[Welcome from the University of Maryland Honor Council](#)") and a "[Letter to the Faculty](#)" from Andrew Canter (a previous University of Maryland Honor Council Chair).

Editor's note: Pauline Nguyen, honor committee vice chair at Princeton University, said the Princeton Honor Code arose out of student and faculty dissatisfaction with a climate of widespread cheating in the late 1800s. The [Honor System website](#) at Princeton contains this overview:

Examinations at the College of New Jersey (as Princeton University was then known) in the late 19th-century were rife with cheating; students saw cheating as a way to outwit the faculty, while professors went to great lengths to uncover undergraduate cheating. Booth Tarkington '1893, as quoted in W. Joseph Dehner, Jr.'s 1970 paper, described this rivalry as a "*continuous sly warfare between the professor and the student.*" Crib sheets were common, as was sharing answers during examinations. Students who refused to collaborate were ridiculed. Reporting fellow students to the faculty was seen as dishonorable and out of the question for most students. Professors, on the other hand, would spend exams stalking the recitation rooms watching for any inconsistencies, and sometimes hired extra sets of eyes for the purpose of catching cheaters [italics added].

REMIND AND REITERATE

[] A passing reference to academic integrity on the first day of class isn't sufficient. Reiteration highlights the importance of the topic. Initiate a short discussion or class e-mail on "ways to avoid plagiarism" several weeks before a major paper is due. Consider use of an "honor pledge" on examinations and other academic work [see *TPR* 08.27 "[Classroom honor codes](#)" and research cited therein about the impact of timely reminders]. The University of Maryland provides faculty members with this "[Question and Answer](#)" resource on the Honor Pledge.

BE PERSONAL

[] Discuss why you were attracted to your field or discipline. Why does the subject interest you? What questions or mysteries remain to be solved?

[] Discuss the academic challenges you encountered and the strategies you developed for success.

[] Invite discussion about the academic and ethical standards applicable to your discipline or profession.

[] Pay attention to students as individuals. Identify interests, strengths, and weakness. Urge students who are struggling to ask for help.

[] Participate on one hearing panel a year so you can discuss your personal insights with students about how the academic integrity system works.

[] Emphasize that cheating and plagiarism are a *breach of trust* with fellow students and with you.

PREVENTION: CHEATING

[] Don't reuse examinations.

[] Don't use standard textbook homework exercises (answers are likely to be online).

[] Change the design or wording of lab assignments from year to year.

[] Provide an examination "cover sheet" with an academic integrity reminder and specific examination instructions (e.g. your policy on use of calculators; display or use of cell-phones; asking permission to use bathrooms, etc).

[] Use assigned seating during examinations.

[] Provide ample space between examination takers.

[] Vary the order of questions on different copies of the same examination.

[] Allow students to see graded examinations, but require that the examinations be returned to you at the end of class.

[] Provide specific instructions about when collaboration is or is not permitted.

[] Assume collaboration is likely to occur on any take home examination. Set time limits for take-home examinations keyed to when the questions are downloaded and answers submitted.

[] Consider allowing students to use a legal "crib sheet" (specified size) during examinations. Doing so encourages students to think about, synthesize, and organize materials before the examination.

PREVENTION: PLAGIARISM

[] Give students practical guidance on how plagiarism is defined and can be avoided. [Refer them to resources such as [The Harvard Guide to Using Sources](#) and the Syracuse University guidance "[What does Academic Integrity Mean?](#)"]

[] Assign focused topics likely to be engaging to students.

[] Use shorter and more frequent papers, including in-class writing exercises. Learn student writing styles.

[] Have students submit components of major papers in stages (e.g. start with a proposal and outline).

[] Review and comment on how students use citations.

[] Ask students to "present" their papers and respond to questions in class.

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

[] Use general words of caution when appropriate (e.g. "remember, there is to be no discussion during this examination").

[] Allow students to complete challenged examinations, but make note of circumstances and students sitting nearby.

[] Discuss your concerns privately and individually. Allow students to respond before reaching firm conclusions.

[] Initiate charges and decide cases sooner rather than later. Waiting for a pattern of repeated misconduct increases the likelihood more serious penalties will be imposed by a hearing panel.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Vanderbilt Center for Teaching](#)

A comprehensive list of published reports and recommendations on preventing academic dishonesty.

[The University of Maryland Honor Pledge](#)

Analysis and data on the usefulness of honor pledges

[Princeton Honor System](#)

Overview and history of the Princeton University Honor Code

[University of Washington: Preventing Cheating in Distance Education](#)

Suggested strategies and resources; see especially the Utah State University guide on [How to Prevent Cheating in Distance Education](#).

[University of California at Berkeley "Tools for Teaching"](#)

Detailed list of prevention strategies

11.45 ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

READING: Passing the "grit" test

New York Times writer Paul Tough provides thoughtful insights on issues related to student development. We last reported on his work in TPR 10.3: "[Student conduct and the brain's 'executive function'](#)" (January 29, 2010). This week we alert you to Tough's September 14, 2011 *New York Times Magazine* article "[What if the Secret to Success is Failure?](#)" The thesis of the article is implicit in the title: many of the best qualities we hope students will develop are associated with learning *how to recover from failure*, not the illusory quest to avoid failure altogether.

Tough's article begins with an observation from Dominic Randolph, Headmaster of a leading preparatory school in New York:

[A] critical missing piece [in American education], Randolph explained as we sat in his office last fall, is *character* — those essential traits of mind and habit that were drilled into him at boarding school in England and that also have deep roots in American history . . . People who have an easy time of things, who get 800s on their SAT's, I worry that those people get feedback that everything they're doing is great. And I think as a result, we are actually setting them up for long-term failure. When that person suddenly has to face up to a difficult moment, then I think they're screwed, to be honest. I don't think they've grown the capacities to be able to handle that . . ." Randolph and other educators are influenced by the work of University of Pennsylvania psychology professor Angela Duckworth. Duckworth has developed a test to measure qualities of character like self-control, tenacity, perseverance, and focus.

Editor's note: Resources on the "Grit Scale" are available at these links:

[Grit as a virtue](#)

[Grit Scales](#)

Tough wrote that the "grit test" is "deceptively simple," but has proven reliable in predicting successful completion of demanding tasks:

[The test] requires you to rate yourself on just 12 questions, from "I finish whatever I begin" to "I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one." It takes about three minutes to complete, and it relies entirely on self-report — and yet when Duckworth took it out into the field, she found it was remarkably predictive of success. At Penn, high grit ratings allowed students with relatively low college-board scores to nonetheless achieve high G.P.A.'s. Duckworth and her collaborators gave their grit test to more than 1,200 freshman cadets as they entered West Point and embarked on the grueling summer training course known as Beast Barracks. The military has developed its own complex evaluation, called the Whole Candidate Score, to judge incoming cadets and predict which of them will survive the demands of West Point; it includes academic grades, a gauge of physical fitness and a Leadership Potential Score. But at the end of Beast Barracks, the more accurate predictor of which cadets persisted and which ones dropped out turned out to be Duckworth's 12-item grit questionnaire.

Dominic Randolph and others have linked qualities of "grit" with social intelligence (the ability to cooperate with others) and a short list of additional attributes, including *gratitude*, *optimism* and *curiosity*. These qualities are now being promoted in a character education program that goes beyond what Randolph called "Nice-guy values." The danger with character is if you just revert to these general terms — respect, honesty, tolerance — it seems really vague, he said. If I stand in front of the kids and just say, 'It's really important for you to respect each other,' I think they glaze over. But if you say, 'Well, actually you need to exhibit self-control,' or you explain the value of social intelligence — this will help you collaborate more effectively — then it seems a bit more tangible.

As described in Tough's article, schools following this approach display frequent character reminders (e.g. signs that read "Got self-control?") and foster discussions with students that promote skills associated with [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#). Increased emphasis is being given to *perseverance*--an aim highlighted in the article conclusion:

"The idea of building grit and building self-control is that you get that through failure," [headmaster Dominic] Randolph explained. "And in most highly academic environments in the United States, no one fails anything."

Practice Implication

The relationship between perseverance (adaptation to failure) and character development is highlighted by this recently expanded exercise in the [Academic Integrity Seminar](#):

Please consider this [list of failures and successes](#) in the life of Abraham Lincoln. One of Lincoln's greatest attributes may have been his ability to recover and learn from failure.

The quality of *perseverance* seemed especially useful to Lincoln as he struggled with "melancholy" (what might now be called depression) [Please read this related article](#) by Joshua Wolf Shenk.

For Lincoln, learning how to persevere also meant learning how to *adapt*. Based on your reading of Shenk's article, please identify three of Lincoln's most

successful adaptation strategies (skills, habits, or ways of thinking) that helped him use his struggle with depression to accomplish worthy goals.

Students found responsible for disciplinary offenses like academic dishonesty have just encountered failure (an adverse finding against them). This is precisely the moment when they're most receptive to an educational intervention suggesting that adaptation to failure is the beginning of true learning.