

Episode #183 -- Maintaining Academic Integrity

9:46

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

students, academic integrity, classroom, teachers, creating, definition, tools, cheating, plagiarized, gotcha, positive, encourage, find, number, understand, ideas, padlet, behavior, share, benefit

SPEAKERS

Paul, Intro, Student

Paul Beckermann 0:01

Welcome to Tech Talk for Teachers. I'm your host, Paul Beckermann.

Intro Music 0:06

Check it out. Check it out. Check it out. What's in the toolkit? What is in the toolkit? So what's in the toolkit? Check it out.

Paul Beckermann 0:16

The topic of today's episode is "Maintaining Academic Integrity." I don't know about you, but when I hear the phrase academic integrity, it's easy to immediately think about student cheating. I sometimes find myself asking questions like, Are my students cheating on my test? Or are they plagiarizing on their writing assignment? The longer I've taught, however, the more I realized that these types of questions lead me to focus too much on the negative connotations of academic integrity. For that reason, I like the definition provided by the International Center for Academic Integrity, or ICAI. They define academic integrity as, quote, a commitment even in the face of adversity to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

I really liked this definition, because it focuses on the positive attributes that we would like our students to learn and demonstrate, rather than the negative behavior that we might be tempted to focus on more often. It's a little bit like when we say, don't throw your garbage on the floor. Well, this plan is an image of the negative behavior in the students mind. They see garbage on the floor. Instead, we should be framing it in the positive. Please put your trash in the wastebasket. This instills the positive image. They see the garbage going into the wastebasket, which is what we want them to do. So I think we should approach academic integrity the same way. As we think about maintaining academic integrity in our classrooms, I'd encourage us all to focus on developing positive mindsets and habits. Rather than setting up potential "gotcha" moments, where students feel like we're out to get them. That's no fun for anybody. And these positive attributes will benefit students well past their time in our academic classrooms. They will

help them develop positive character traits that will serve them in their careers and their personal lives. So in that context, let's look at eight ways that we can help our students own their academic integrity in our classrooms.

Student 2:20

How do I use integration? Integration inspiration. Integration ideas.

Paul Beckermann 2:26

Number one, define academic integrity. Well, you could simply provide a definition of course, it can be more powerful to have the class develop their own working definition, guided by you, of course. One effective way to do this is to create anchor charts, or T-charts or Y-charts with your students to detail what academic integrity looks like, sounds like, and feels like. In fact, you can find T- and Y-Chart templates on our AVID Open Access website. You can print these out or replicate them as a poster if you want. You can even use them digitally with your students. You can also use digital tools like Padlet to collect and post those ideas virtually if you'd like to do it that way. I've seen this process done effectively with anywhere from preschoolers all the way up to high schoolers. I've personally done it with students as old as juniors and seniors in high school. And when I do this, I usually require every student to add at least one idea, so that everyone's involved in it. I find that giving them a voice and defining these behaviors gives them ownership in it. And when they own it, they're more apt to put these behaviors into practice.

Number two, compare student-generated definitions with ICAI six foundational values for academic integrity. I mentioned those earlier—honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. Then have the students fill in any gaps that they might have missed during their original brainstorm. You can find a poster of the six attributes on the AOA website as well. You can print it or make a digital copy to share with your students.

Number three, discuss common reasons for cheating and have students reflect on how they can face these challenges in ways that help them maintain their academic integrity. Some examples of why students often say they cheat include peer pressure, and a sense of "everyone is doing it." Anxiety about failing, managing social, personal, and academic demands, or not knowing and understanding academic integrity expectations. If we help students identify these reasons, as well as coping skills for avoiding those things to push them into cheating, we can really have a positive benefit and empower students at the same time.

Number four, generate and post the list of examples and non-examples of academic integrity. This might be done when you're creating the class definition, and it gives students clear and concrete examples that they can understand. Again, you can do this offline or online using tools such as Flip, which used to be Flipgrid, or Padlet, or even discussion boards in a Learning Management Systems.

Number five, model academic integrity. It can be really powerful to call out how you are personally practicing academic integrity. For instance, maybe you're creating a slideshow PowerPoint or you've created one already that you're going to show to the class. Maybe point

out how you have cited the sources for the pictures you've used, or indicate the source of content that you are inserting into your presentation. This can be great modeling. As we know students often do what they see done, so it's very powerful to model.

Number six, use plagiarism checkers. Plagiarism is a big concern for a lot of teachers and this is only increased with the introduction of AI tools like ChatGPT and there are a lot of plagiarism checkers available out there like Grammarly, TurnItIn or the Originality Reports feature in Google workspace for education accounts. There are also AI detectors like GPTZero, TurnItIn AI detector and IdentifAI by Bartleby. It's tempting to use these as "gotcha" tools to catch students cheating. I'd actually encourage you to have students use these tools to detect plagiarism in their own work. As a former English teacher, I found that a lot of times when students plagiarized it was because they didn't understand how to paraphrase something or how to properly give credit through citations. By allowing students to screen their own work, they can learn what is acceptable and what is not. And this will benefit them long after they leave your classroom and no longer have someone else monitoring their work, they need to learn to take responsibility of their work themselves.

Number seven, use classroom monitoring software. According to a 2022 survey by the Center for Democracy and Technology, 89% of teachers surveyed use some sort of monitoring software, like GoGuardian and LanSchool, which can be used by teachers to monitor student online activity. These tools often let teachers view student screens in real time or view a record of websites that have been viewed. I'd again caution you not to rely on this as a "gotcha" tool. There may be times when you need to use this to get evidence of what a student has done. But a 2022 study called Hidden Harms found that the use of these monitoring systems may do more harm than good at times. About half the students in that report said they agreed with the statement "I do not share my true thoughts or ideas because I know what I do online may be monitored." We want students to express themselves truthfully and authentically. One of the best uses of this software that I found is that they allow students to privately message their teachers and ask for help. This has been a huge positive benefit, especially for students who are shy about raising their hand and asking for help.

And number eight, if you're still worried about cheating in your classroom, consider rethinking your assessments. I found that it really helps to reduce the use of high stakes tests, and turn to more authentic assessments like presentations and projects. Not only are these harder to cheat on, but they're also much richer and more meaningful learning experiences. When students leave our classrooms, they'll probably not remember a test that we gave them, but they will almost always remember a rich, authentic learning experience, where they were asked to create something new. In review, these eight strategies that I've shared are good places to begin when trying to develop a classroom culture of academic integrity. I'm sure many of you listening have other strategies that you've tried as well. I encourage you to share those ideas and successes with your colleagues. We can learn a lot from each other. I'd also encourage you to focus on supporting students and teaching them the skills to own their own academic integrity, rather than creating those "gotcha" moments. Not only will you find this a much more positive experience,

but you will also be empowering students with lifelong skills that will benefit them for years to come.

To learn more about today's topic, and explore other free resources, visit avidopenaccess.org. I especially encourage you to check out the articles, "Maintain Academic Integrity" and "Approaches to Addressing ChatGPT and Academic Integrity." And of course, be sure to join Rena, Winston and me every Wednesday for our full-length podcast, Unpacking Education, where we are joined by exceptional guests and explore education topics that are important to you. Thanks so much for listening. Take care, and thanks for all you do. You make a difference.