eBook

Academic integrity essentials

A free eBook from Turnitin

Contents

Glossary

- **Academic integrity**: A commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.[1]

- **Academic misconduct**: Attempted or executed action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community.[2]

- **Assessment**: The wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.

- **Assessment with integrity**: The act of ensuring fair and accurate measurement of student learning.

- **Collusion**: Unauthorized collaboration between students on work meant for individual assessment.

- **Contract cheating**: Engaging a third party— for free, for pay, or in-kind—to complete an assignment, which an individual then represents as their own work.

- **Formative assessment**: Assessment that provides feedback loops and transparency into student learning to help further opportunities for learning.

- **Honor code**: A set of rules or ethical principles governing an academic community based on ideals that define what constitutes honorable behavior within that community.

- **Impact Factor (IF)**: A calculated score given to journals and researchers based on citations to reflect influence.

- **Item analysis**: The act of analyzing individual student responses in order to evaluate the quality of exam questions as well as student learning. It can provide feedback to the instructor to inform future teaching and help uphold exam fairness.

- **Plagiarism**: When an individual attempts to pass off someone else's ideas or work as their own whether on purpose or unknowingly.

- **Summative assessment**: An evaluative exercise to measure progress and learning, often at the end of a unit or term.

- **Test bank**: A collection of questions, problems and quizzes, generally associated with a specific text.

[1]ICAI, The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity (2014). Retrieved August 19, 2022, from https://academicintegrity.org/resources/fundamental-values.
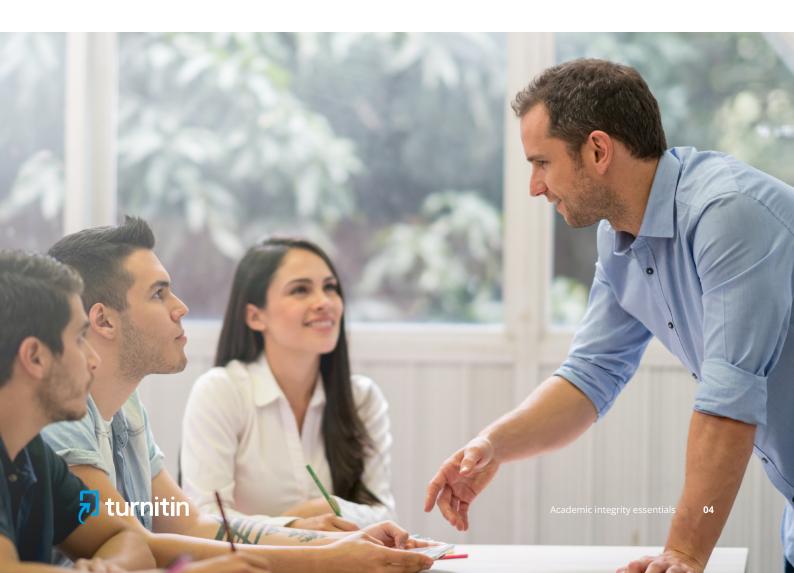[2]University of California Berkeley: Division of Student Affairs (2022). Retrieved on February 16, 2022 from https://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity/definition.

Introduction

At Turnitin, our solutions uphold assessment with integrity across all disciplines, with the goal of transforming plagiarism into teachable moments. As students and educators participate in a global classroom, with access to diverse tools, information, and technology worldwide, it is essential that academic integrity remains the common denominator. Academic integrity is an important component of an educational journey and we hope that this collection of best practices, thoughtful materials, and data-driven information serves as a resource to all.

"We can flip the narrative and become advocates for seeing students, helping them to successfully navigate issues of academic integrity. We can do this by making them aware of pitfalls and problems before they happen."

Drew Smith, Ph.D., Director of Online Learning, Walsh College, Michigan, USA

What is the difference between academic integrity and plagiarism?

Plagiarism is often discussed hand-in-hand with issues surrounding academic integrity. In many instances, they are used interchangeably.

And while plagiarism is indeed an act of academic dishonesty and academic misconduct, it isn't the entirety of academic integrity.

Academic integrity is the commitment to live by these values. **Plagiarism** is an aspect of academic integrity in that using another's ideas, words, theories, illustrations or graphics, opinions or facts without giving credit is dishonest.

Let's go deeper by examining and defining academic integrity as a whole.

The International Center for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as "a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: **honesty**, **trust**, **fairness**, **respect**, **responsibility**, and **courage**. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action"

Let's examine the five pillars of academic integrity:

Honesty

Trust

5
pillars of academic integrity

Respect

Fairness

Responsibility & Courage

The five pillars of academic integrity

1. **Honesty**: being truthful is a fundamental tenet of academic integrity—and in writing, this translates to giving credit to the owner of the work in the form of attribution. It is also about being objective; for educators, this means assessing student work without prejudice.

2. **Trust**: trusting in the reliability of student work is critical to academic integrity. In the classroom, this is demonstrated by setting clear expectations and upholding those expectations in assessments.

3. **Fairness**: avoiding favoritism is another aspect of academic integrity. This means applying rules consistently and taking responsibility for your own actions in the form of rubrics and other acts of educational fairness.

4. **Respect**: holding everyone in high esteem is part of academic integrity as well. Respect is shown in students taking assignments and learning seriously and receiving feedback. Educators in turn, too, ought to provide feedback and show empathy for students.

5. **Responsibility and Courage**: being reliable and trustworthy is fundamental to academic integrity. Students ought to stand up against wrongdoing while educators create and uphold classroom and school-wide policies. (ICAI, 2021)

According to research by Guerrero-Dib, Portales, and Heredia-Escorza, "Academic integrity is much more than avoiding dishonest practices such as copying during exams, plagiarizing or contract cheating; it implies an engagement with learning and work which is well done, complete, and focused on a good purpose—learning. It also involves using appropriate means, genuine effort and good skills. Mainly it implies diligently taking advantage of all learning experiences" (International Journal for Educational Integrity, 2020).

Academic dishonesty, or the violation of academic integrity principles as shown above, manifests in different ways and in different forms. You can see the various types on our Plagiarism Spectrum 2.0 infographic and on our blog posts, such as collusion, copying, usage of electronic cheating devices, utilizing online test banks, abuse of word spinners, self-plagiarism, and of course, plagiarism.

Plagiarism, or using the ideas or words of another and claiming them as one's own original idea, violates all the components of academic integrity. **Plagiarism, specifically, is a subset of academic dishonesty, and one way to violate academic integrity**.

It's easy to see how academic integrity and plagiarism are interchangeable, but it's also important to understand the difference between plagiarism and academic integrity as you navigate the student educational journey.

Why is academic integrity important to teaching and learning?

Every decision in life has a push and pull factor; from what are we moving away and towards what are we moving? When confronted with the choice to take a shortcut solution and engage in academic misconduct, struggling students may feel they are moving towards a better course grade and away from the stress of learning. They may weigh the options of "getting caught" and being punished, without the awareness of long-term learning outcomes.

 It's important to make clear to students the policies around a school's commitment to academic integrity to prevent instances of plagiarism, contract cheating, collusion, and other forms of academic dishonesty (Holden, Norris, & Kuhlmeier, 2021).

But if academic dishonesty is purely punitive, thus making misconduct solely something to avoid, students still won't understand why it is so important to foster original ideas, attribution, and other forms of academic integrity. Ensuring that students not only move away from academic dishonesty due to punishment but also towards academic integrity helps bolster life-long learning, and upholds the academic reputation of a school.

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Here's why academic integrity is important to teaching and learning:

- **Academic integrity supports learning opportunities**. Shortcut solutions like plagiarism, contract cheating, and test banks take away learning opportunities for students. When the work is not the student's own, they aren't putting their original thoughts on paper. Students then lose the opportunity to receive feedback that is accurate to their needs and the resulting support they may need to further their learning journey.

- **Accurate assessment of student learning is dependent on academic integrity**. When student answers aren't their own, it is impossible for educators to get an accurate assessment of learning and to provide feedback or make informed changes to a teaching curriculum.

- **Respect for learning starts with academic integrity**. Academic misconduct disrespects the academic work of others and breaks down trust. Respect is a qualitative factor that has long-term consequences in life-long learning. For both students and researchers, proper attribution is critical.

- **Academic integrity is an indicator of future workplace behavior**. According to multiple research endeavors, academic dishonesty in school leads to dishonesty in the workplace (Blankenship & Whitley 2000, Harding, et al. 2004, Lawson 2004, Nonis & Swift 2001, & Sims 1993). The academic integrity journey must be firmly established to ensure a lifetime of integrity.

- **Scandals can affect a school's academic reputation and erode the value of a degree**. If students are not learning course material, then their foundation of knowledge does not reflect a thorough education– in fields like nursing, that can have serious life and death consequences. In the field of research, scandals can stain reputations and Impact Factors and end an academic career.

Just as with learning as a whole, educators want to nurture self-directed learning; the same goes for academic integrity and ensuring that students understand not only how to avoid misconduct but also to work through the issues and emerge transformed for the better. While shortcut solutions belittle education, academic integrity takes advantage of and embraces every learning opportunity.

How do you establish a culture of academic integrity?

As an educator or school approaching the concept of academic integrity, it can be overwhelming when considering the many ways in which integrity can or should come into play.

After all, academic integrity is more than an honor code or school policy; successful schools around the world go beyond simply making a statement around ethical learning and instead create a robust atmosphere of honesty, respect, fairness, and trust. And the research of McCabe, Butterfield, and Treviño supports this notion, suggesting that a major factor determining whether a student will cheat or not is the academic culture of the specific school that he or she attends.

But on a very basic level, what does a culture of academic integrity look like? And how does one begin? Below are five key components of establishing a culture of academic integrity that every educator and administrator should consider:

- **Determine a shared definition of academic integrity**

- **Assess common pitfalls and challenges**

- **Establish a schoolwide policy**

- **Utilize technology and tools that support authentic work**

- **Teach, share, and model best practices early and often**

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Determine a shared definition of academic integrity

Does your school have an agreed-upon definition of academic integrity? Are the expectations around honesty, fairness, and original work understood by students, faculty, families, and administrators?

Before any meaningful steps can be taken, a foundational definition accepted by all needs to be confirmed. Work with colleagues, administrators, and even students to define academic integrity for yourselves. Download "The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity" booklet from the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI), which highlights the essentials in detail—a good starting point for any educator or school. Consider the context of this definition across grades, subject-areas, campus locations, as well as remote vs in-person learning, then put into writing how academic integrity is defined, valued, and approached by your learning community.

Assess common pitfalls and challenges

Academic integrity may seem simple as a concept, but can actually be quite challenging in practice. Before sharing your common definition of academic integrity with your learning community, assess all of the missteps that may befall an individual on their educational path. This is crucial because it gives you a sense of what behaviors or signs to look out for and how best to mitigate risks. And with many schools transitioning to online and remote learning, the temptation and opportunities to partake in academic dishonesty have dramatically increased.

Start with Turnitin's downloadable infographic, the Plagiarism Spectrum 2.0, which highlights twelve of the most common types of unoriginal work. This includes student collusion (when students work with others on an assignment meant for an individual) and contract cheating. Furthermore, take note of new and emerging trends in plagiarism that have only recently been gaining attention, including AI-based writing or source code plagiarism.

Revise your definition of academic integrity (if needed) to cover any aforementioned blindspots. After evaluating the many ways in which someone may take a wrong turn, whether inadvertently or on purpose, you'll find that your final academic integrity definition is more comprehensive.

Establish a schoolwide policy

You're now ready to establish a schoolwide policy that can be shared publicly, deliberately, and with confidence. This policy should include your school's definition of academic integrity, best practices in producing original, high-quality work (including resources for accurate citation and ethical research), as well as the varying levels of action taken when misconduct is suspected and/or confirmed.

Does your school have an established process for escalation? Does your school have an academic integrity board with both educators and students offering guidance? Have you updated your honor code to adhere to the new challenges and expectations of integrity in remote learning environments? If not, explore these options in an effort to strengthen and sustain your school-wide policy. McCabe, Butterfield, and Treviño emphasize that "an school's academic integrity programs and policies, such as honor codes, can have a significant influence on students' behavior." (2001, pg. 1).

And finally, work with colleagues to incorporate academic integrity into your school's strategic plan. This step goes beyond simply taking a stand against academic dishonesty and holistically integrates your school's fundamental value of ethical work into all that it does. Research has found that when students respect their instructor—and consequently, the school in which they are learning—they are less likely to cheat (Orosz, Tóth-Király, Böthe, Kusztor, Kovács, & Jánvári 2015).

Utilize technology and tools that support authentic work

There are a variety of tools at your disposal that will make your approach to academic integrity easier, tools that can facilitate reflective and analytical thinking regarding student integrity. And when students are empowered to take ownership of their own learning with the use of these tools, it leaves more time for instructors to hone in on issues and concerns that need educator expertise and attention.

Turnitin tools are highly effective and used globally by educators at nearly every level to ensure high-quality, original student work. Turnitin Originality, the new standard in academic integrity, goes beyond simply plagiarism checking and offers robust, detailed information on student work for educators and administrators in order to make data-driven decisions around authorship and conduct. Similarly, Draft Coach can foster an environment of integrity and authenticity in your classroom and can help make the feedback and revision processes easier for both you and your students. As an add-on in students' draft space, Draft Coach allows students to access Turnitin's trusted Similarity Report, as well as new citation checking technology, during the drafting process right where students may be doing their work.

Turnitin's Disrupting Plagiarism: Building a Culture of Academic Honesty resource pack is a high-caliber set of instructional resources from Turnitin's team of veteran educators, focused on formative interventions when academic integrity is in question. Offering over 20 student- and instructor-focused resources, teachers can use the set as a whole or pick and choose only those resources that fit most effectively into their curriculum.

Teach, share, and model best practices early and often

Along with your course or school's website, ensure your academic integrity policy is prominently featured on every class syllabus. The syllabus is an essential document that is given to all at the start of the term. It sets expectations, communicates pedagogy and course deadlines, and it is where teachers and students can begin the important conversation around academic integrity.

As an educator, make sure you point it out and discuss integrity explicitly with students and families—don't assume that they will simply read it and ingest the information meaningfully on their own. Often, conversations around plagiarism and misconduct are difficult and therefore avoided by learning communities and their support system, so it's up to you to lay the groundwork. McCabe, Butterfield, and Treviño talk about creating a positive campus ethos with their research on how students perceive the moral culture within their university.

Throughout the year, revisit the concept and cultivate an environment of ethical learning in meaningful ways, whether it's by encouraging integrity throughout the writing process, modeling successful and honest research techniques and citation processes, or offering additional support—in-person or online—as students approach exams and project deadlines. Tricia Bertram-Gallant points out that a teaching and learning approach "challenge[s] educators to situate integrity practices within the goal of improving student learning, in essence shifting the focus from how educators [can] stop students from cheating to how they [can] ensure students are learning (Bertram-Gallant, 2008).

These crucial steps, when taken earnestly and with care, can help to build a solid atmosphere of academic integrity on campus and online. By setting high standards for trust, respect, responsibility, and accountability on every level, a culture of academic integrity ensures that students are developing the professional knowledge and personal integrity that is deeply valued in the workplace.

What is an honor code and why is it important to academic integrity?

"I have neither given nor received assistance while completing this assignment. I pledge that it is my own work in its entirety."

An honor code, like the one above, is a promise that all work is the student's own, a concrete commitment to academic integrity. Students resort to academic dishonesty for various reasons, and the solution is both complex and simple: educators need to make academic integrity a core value in our classrooms and/or schools, beginning with a promise.

Many educators add an honor statement at the top of student assignments or exams as a visible reminder of the honor code. But what exactly does it mean, and how is this statement reflective of the adopted school values? A true honor code is more than a signature dashed off at the top of an assignment or a poster hanging in the classroom. Intended as an ever present reminder of academic integrity to students, does this statement, often present and often unexplored, really make an impact on students?

It's best to be proactive about establishing academic integrity within our classrooms. Without making an honor code a living, breathing part of the classroom—ideally within the whole school—educators and students find themselves in a vicious cycle of policing and punishing after the fact. **The honor code needs to exist in a formative space that nurtures awareness of academic integrity throughout the learning journey**.

An honor code is a fundamental step to establishing a culture of academic integrity. Ideally this occurs on the schoolwide level, but it is a must for our individual classrooms. The complex part is making that honor code a continued collaborative effort between the students, us as educators, and the assignments themselves. The honor code allows all stakeholders to know, understand, and participate in commonly held standards of academic integrity.

How does this happen? Do your due diligence. *Early and often. Purposefully. Collaboratively. Reflectively*. It is only through the steady infusion of these collaborative conversations that students and educators develop a strong understanding of academic integrity that can be put into practice.

What are steps towards establishing a formative space that integrate honor statements to the learning journey within our classrooms?

4 keys to a successful integration:

1. Establish a culture of integrity. Establishing a common understanding of academic integrity by drafting an honor code, and making it an integral part of the academic community, is a strong first step. Stakeholders such as students, parents, fellow educators, and administration can establish an honor code that is foundational to an educational community. It must then be implemented within individual classrooms with consistent, intentional steps such as explicit instruction and building an awareness of how and why academic integrity is important. This shared understanding between and among all levels of stakeholders helps us build a culture of academic integrity throughout the school and/or within the classroom.

What happens if your school or other educators don't institute an honor code? Can you still establish one in your own classroom? Absolutely yes! When educators begin with concrete steps such as creating a shared definition of academic integrity and what it looks like within a classroom, they establish clear understandings of how they can create a culture of academic integrity within their classrooms. The conversations and practices that educators establish collaboratively with students are a key factor in the success of the honor code moving forward. While it is an educator's responsibility to introduce these conversations, without student input the honor code will likely be reduced to that dusty old statement that only lives in the header of an assignment!

2. Center students. Centering students is critical to centering academic integrity in classroom practice. Best practice dictates not delivering the honor code in a neat little package with all the "right" answers already filled in for students, but encouraging students to contribute their knowledge. When teachers seek input from students about what academic integrity is and what it does—and does not—look like, students are more likely to understand the intent and come to a common understanding of what practicing it in the classroom looks like. Using collaborative activities to establish what the classroom values are, what it looks like (and does not look like) in the classroom, and how violations will be handled will lead to better student engagement and practice.

Educators build a commitment to academic integrity collaboratively by implementing carefully planned discussions and practices and using resources that will support our class's commitment to maintaining that honor code.

3. Model academic integrity. Modeling academic integrity must be an intrinsic part of classroom practice in ways both visible and subtle. Although many think academic integrity lives in the English classroom, academic dishonesty can manifest itself in every discipline, including examples such as code plagiarism, non-citation of sources, improper attribution, to name only a few ways that academic dishonesty typically appears in student work. Teachers should credit others in our classrooms and work to model the norm expected in student work. More than simply an act of attribution, instructors can offer up fair and inclusive assessments that challenge students to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that are fair and invite students' best efforts. By demonstrating explicitly how academic integrity lives in daily work and assignments, educators model how academic integrity is not just one more requirement to be addressed for the "big" project, but simply some deliberate steps as a regular part of the classroom.

4. Commit to working together. Committing to working together within this intentional and formative space is what will determine the role of academic integrity within the classroom or school. Commitment may look different from classroom to classroom, and that's perfectly all right. Commitment may take the form of a signed contract, or it may simply be the continuation of discussions regarding what academic integrity does and does not look like. Regardless, renewing that commitment and keeping it in the forefront of students' minds and work is the goal. And if it's not working as originally drafted? Then educators need to model how to revisit, reflect, and revise so that the honor code can reflect the growth and commitment to academic integrity that is shared with students.

Remember, do your due diligence. Early and often. Purposefully. Collaboratively. Reflectively. Because if the honor code is a dynamic, collaborative document, it can truly nurture a meaningful awareness of academic integrity throughout the learning journey.

What is contract cheating and what does it have to do with academic integrity?

What is contract cheating?

Contract cheating occurs when students engage a third party to complete an assignment, which they then represent as their own work (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016). It can occur when someone other than the student—whether an essay mill, friend, or even a family member—completes an assignment on their behalf. Downloading a paper from a "free" essay site is also contract cheating.

Contract cheating can be done as a "favor" with no exchange of money. Or it can involve trade-in-kind, like when a student swaps papers with another student.

Contract cheating is generally defined as a more purposeful act of academic misconduct, because, most egregiously, students can contact essay mills to write an essay on their behalf in exchange for money.

How does it manifest in student work?

Like many forms of academic misconduct, stressed students without a deep understanding of academic integrity are vulnerable to contract cheating. When students fall behind in school work, they may ask for help from a friend or family member who, with the intention of helping, may write the paper for the student. While powered by good intentions, this is a form of academic misconduct.

Essay mills market themselves to students on social media and other venues via "bots" by offering "help" at the eleventh hour. Essay mill marketing tactics leverage such ambiguity in ostentatious ways. "Our essays are plagiarism-free," they often tout. While technically true (they are, after all, often written from scratch and not plagiarized), the mills don't make clear that even if the

essay is void of plagiarism, contract cheating itself is academic dishonesty.

Essays written by essay mills likely do not "sound" like the student's work, or may show a marked difference in tone or voice. They may also contain florid language without much in the way of deep content or analysis. Additionally, they may not even answer the provided question or prompt.

How does it impact academic integrity?

When students aren't doing their own work and instead have someone else complete their assignments, they're not learning the material. Students who turn to contract cheating because they're struggling and stressed aren't closing learning gaps; in turn, educators aren't enabling accurate feedback loops to support learning outcomes.

Contract cheating is, simply put, a dismissal of the learning process. Not only does it undermine learning, contract cheating erodes learning environments, damages student-teacher relationships, jeopardizes the academic reputations of students, faculty, and schools, and indicates future workplace dishonesty (ICAI, 2021).

Ways to mitigate contract cheating

Schools and faculty can play a critical role in preventing contract cheating from occurring.

Build awareness and an understanding of contract cheating. When there is silence around contract cheating, the cost of contract cheating may appear low to students. Research has shown that "more than 50% of students would outsource their work if the reward, perhaps in the form of higher marks or passing an assessment they would otherwise have failed, was relatively high and the cost relatively low" (Lancaster, 2020).

Bottom line: building a deep understanding of academic integrity and helping students understand contract cheating as a form of dishonesty prevents future misconduct.

When students have a sophisticated understanding of academic integrity, plagiarism, and contract cheating and how they relate to each other, they are also less apt to fall prey to essay mills that normalize contract cheating and position their services as "help."

Assign formative low-stakes assessments and enable feedback loops, so students feel seen and supported throughout the learning process. In-class assignments provide a baseline assessment against which to compare future assessments. Additionally, making the writing process more transparent mitigates third-party interference—or makes it more obvious. Accelerate feedback loops with Feedback Studio and Gradescope to allow for more visibility and data insights throughout the student learning process.

"Gradescope really consolidates your workflow. It helps you maintain consistency when grading, and it gives you a way to give informative feedback to your students."

Dr. Jillian Cannons, Associate Professor,
Department of Mathematics and Statistics,
Cal Poly Pomona, USA

What about detection when prevention tactics fail? Turnitin Feedback Studio with Originality surfaces contract cheating insights and evidence for instructors and administrators. Forensics linguistics, too, can be utilized by individual instructors to check for contract cheating. "Training and decision support are key to determining contract cheating," according to Olumide Popoola in his International Center for Academic Integrity panel entitled *Detecting Contract Cheating Using Investigative Linguistics*.

Popoola showed that forensic linguistics can help identify contract cheating, but concluded by saying that **assessment design is the best way to mitigate contract cheating and enable later detection**. Assessments that focus on unique classroom discussion and course content deter contract cheating because third parties do not have access to that information.

Contract cheating is real and occurring throughout the world and in many classrooms of many schools; to that end, **countries are enacting legislation to ban essay mills and make contract cheating illegal.**

For instance, contract cheating scandalized sixteen Australian universities in 2014 when it became known that up to one thousand students utilized [MyMaster to ghostwrite essays](#). As a result, [Australia passed legislation to make contract cheating illegal in 2019](#). [Contract cheating in New Zealand is illegal](#), too.

After [more than 20,000 UK university students were found buying essays in 2017](#), the House of Lords called for a ban on contract cheating. [Essay mills are now outlawed in the UK](#).

The United States has yet to enact a federal law "[forbidding] the purchase or sale of academic papers," according to a [2019 New York Times article on contract cheating](#) that further states, "Contract cheating is illegal in 17 states."

There is a lot of work to be done and also being done—within classrooms and in government. The first step, as always, is building awareness.

What is authentic learning and why is it important?

Fostering self-directed learners with a long-term, deep understanding of concepts is a key goal for educators.

Authentic learning (or active learning) is, per [Steve Revington](#), "real life learning. It is a style of learning that encourages students to create a tangible, useful, quality product/outcome to be shared with their world."

Connecting what instructors teach to real-world issues and problems is at the core of authentic learning. In other words, **authentic learning requires students to engage in meaningful activities and actively think about what it is they are learning**. It is the opposite of the passive, teacher-led classroom in which students memorize and then regurgitate what they hear and see.

Authentic learning makes course concepts relevant to students so that they can retain the information at hand and pivot the knowledge to real-world situations. It involves centering students and their ideas while nurturing them along the educational journey through frequent, low-stakes assessments, constructive feedback, as well as assessment design that enables a student-instructor relationship.
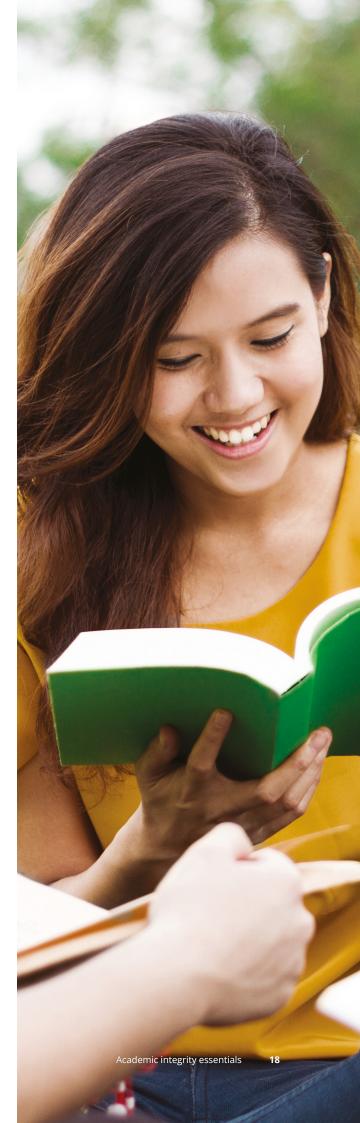
Why is authentic learning necessary?

Revington continues, "A student sitting at a desk, taking notes and regurgitating curriculum content uses a minute amount of their potential. In general, students learn to sit quietly, respond in turn, follow instructions and complete tests for a control teacher. Without relevance, personal connection, multisensory engagement and purpose, content driven curricula begins [sic] to evaporate once the test has been taken."

Such mimicry, while a longstanding pedagogical tradition, doesn't necessarily prepare students for a changing post-industrial world. In a 2018 Quartz article, Allison Schrager writes, "Factory owners required docile, agreeable workers who would show up on time and do what their managers told them. Sitting in a classroom all day with a teacher was good training for that. Early industrialists were instrumental, then, in creating and promoting universal education. Now that we are moving into a new, post-industrial era, it is worth reflecting on how our education evolved to suit factory work, and if this model still makes sense."

According to 2013 research, "The education landscape has been shifting towards a stronger emphasis on higher-order level of thinking such as creative thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving as research shows that current graduates lack transcending skills like communication skills and problem-solving skills, which are crucial in the industry. The most important skills employers look for when hiring new employees are teamwork, critical thinking, communication…or innovative thinking. However, in many universities, the mode of teaching is still conventional pedagogy and students tend to learn passively particularly when content is taught in a way that causes students to memorize without thinking critically about what they are memorizing.…**There is a call for more emphasis to be placed on authentic learning as it provides an environment that cultivates students who would be prepared for the complex working world**" (Ju, Mai, et al.).

Why is authentic learning important?

Education, according to Horace Mann, is the "great equalizer." Our world has changed—and it is safe to say a prepared student is one with the ability to communicate original ideas. "An important characteristic of authentic learning is that there are multiple possible outcomes or solutions to a problem rather than a single correct answer. This can encourage students [sic] ask questions and think outside the box" (Stenger, 2018).

Additionally, **authentic learning fosters intrinsic motivation**, which is to say behavior driven by internal rewards, because the nature of the work itself is satisfying. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, involves engagement based on external rewards or to avoid punishment. Among educators' goals is to foster a love of learning for its own merits—and authentic learning is critical to engendering such intrinsic motivation.

In The Hechinger Report, Tara García Mathewson states, "Inspiring students' intrinsic motivation to learn is a more effective strategy to get and keep students interested. And it's more than that. Students actually learn better when motivated this way. They put forth more effort, tackle more challenging tasks, and end up gaining a more profound understanding of the concepts they study." By learning through hands-on problem-solving, students "tackle open-ended assignments that require sustained effort; they get the power to choose what and how they learn; they finish projects with something to show for their learning in portfolios and concrete products; they set their own academic goals; they need never focus more on a grade than the process of learning."

What are ways instructors can foster authentic learning?

- **Act as a role model for students,** and demonstrate a passion for learning. Ask students to share information about themselves in class or in a letter to the instructor. In other words, [provide students with a sense of belonging](). Research has shown when [students feel seen in the classroom](), it can significantly improve student learning outcomes.

- Use examples so students know how the material can be of use. **Provide meaningful reasons for learning activities**.

- **Communicate clear expectations for each assignment**. Provide [rubrics]() and consider co-creating rubrics with students.

- **Provide [constructive feedback]()** early and often to help students understand next steps in their learning journey. Include [positive feedback]().

- **Offer [frequent, low-stakes assessments]()** so students can fail safely and learn from their mistakes.

- **Uphold fair assessment**. Avoid grading on a curve, so students feel they have the opportunity to achieve the highest standards.

- **Give students control over their learning**. Give them opportunities to [choose their own topics or reading lists]() and provide a [variety of assessment formats](), so they have control over how they demonstrate their understanding

Educators want the best outcomes for their students in an evolving world. If education is the foundation for positive change, then pedagogy, it goes to follow, has to model the world we all want to see. Authentic learning centers student needs and in doing so, fosters original thinking and original ideas, while supporting the entire educational journey.

Conclusion

Academic integrity isn't about merely avoiding misconduct; instead, it is the creation and fulfillment of best practices and pedagogy that cultivate the highest standard of students' original work on their learning journey. Here at Turnitin, we strive to support schools in upholding end-to-end assessment with integrity and enable educators to connect teaching and learning. Explicit instruction on academic integrity, collaborative tools that honor the student, and ongoing awareness and education are just a few ways we can all work to keep integrity at the core of what we do.

"Think how much positive conversation could be generated, and how much transfer of knowledge we could achieve, if we addressed academic integrity issues before they arose. It not only humanizes you as the instructor, but also creates an atmosphere where talking about these issues becomes more accepted and comfortable."

Drew Smith, Ph.D., Director of Online Learning, Walsh College, Michigan, USA

The information from this eBook was adapted from the following blog posts and websites:

- Why academic integrity is important to teaching and learning (Christine Lee, 2022)
- Starting the year: How to establish a culture of academic integrity (Audrey Campbell, 2021)
- What is the difference between academic integrity and plagiarism? (Christine Lee, 2021)
- What is an honor code and why is it important to academic integrity? (Karen Smith, 2021)
- What is contract cheating? What does it have to do with academic integrity? (Christine Lee, 2021)
- Authentic learning: What is it, and why is it important? (Christine Lee, 2021)

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