

Eleven Course Design Practices for Reducing Academic Integrity Problems

1. **BEGIN:** Set clear expectations early. Ask students to sign (voluntarily) integrity “pre-commitment” statements (many samples available online). Actively demonstrate that you are aware of term paper websites and services. Demonstrate TurnItIn if you plan to use it.
2. **STAGING:** Stage assignments so that you have the opportunity to examine and give feedback on intermediate work products. Use annotated bibliographies, outlines, starter paragraphs, and preliminary drafts to ensure that students spend time developing sources and working through the challenges that a complex or difficult assignment presents.
3. **CHANGE-UP:** Make subtle changes to assignments in each new semester when a class is offered to prevent “recycling.” If you provide file templates to help student structure their assignments, change the metadata each semester to ensure that you can verify students’ use of the most up-to-date materials.
4. **GROUPS:** For group assignments, invest upfront in clear definitions and expectations. Craft guidelines for the assignment that indicate which modes of collaboration are acceptable and which submission elements must be developed individually,
5. **RELEVANCE:** Connect assignments to contemporary issues. This provides a double benefit of ensuring the relevance of the assignment and making it more difficult to locate previously developed materials that can be cut and pasted into a student’s submission.
6. **VOICE:** Build voice and audience into your assignments such that uniqueness and originality are the only viable options for creating the assignment. Students complete these assignments by describing verifiable personal experience or by addressing their writing to a particular person or group.
7. **ALT-MEDIA:** Build assignments that incorporate alternative media. Handwritten and hand drawn materials can encourage creativity and make plagiarism more time intensive. Photographs or videos that depict the student can help to ensure that field or lab work is fully documented.
8. **NO PAGE COUNT:** Avoid declaring minimum page lengths on written assignments. Minimum page lengths and page ranges encourage students to think of papers as busywork – a box to be loaded with junk until it is full. Instead, discuss your expectations for brevity, clarity, detail, and argumentation – illustrate these expectations with concrete examples.
9. **FACE TIME:** Use class time and office hours for required one on one or small group meetings with students. Students generally appreciate individualized attention. Use these meetings to give specific feedback and coaching on formative versions of assignments.
10. **SOURCES:** Provide coaching, guidance, and tools that support students’ efforts to use proper citation and referencing practices. Contemporary, free tools such as Mendeley can streamline literature search, reference gathering, and citation processes. Introducing such tools can also provide an opportunity to reiterate best practices and to emphasize expectations for assignments.
11. **MODEL:** Ensure that your own materials for the class provide a model of impeccable citation and reference practices. Highlight your own personal efforts in areas such as providing photo credits, using royalty-free graphics, footnotes with website references, etc. so that students understand your high level of commitment to academic integrity.