

Recommendations for Creating a Community of Integrity in an Online Course (the Virtue Approach)

1. Incorporate critical thinking discussions in all online classes where students contribute their experiences, successes, and problems pertaining to the topic being discussed.
2. Have assignments and activities in which appropriate sharing and collaboration is essential to successful completion. Foster a community of integrity by choosing authentic learning tasks that require group cohesiveness and effort.
3. Pose authentic questions for students. Capture their interests and curiosity to explore the issue, rather than focusing on grades. Focus assignments on distinctive, individual, and non-duplicative tasks or on what individual students self-identify as their personal learning needs.
4. Provide rubrics, or detailed grading criteria, for all assignments at the beginning of the course so that learners can know and understand how they will be scored.
5. Clearly state your expectations for the students as well as what they should expect from you.
6. Include a statement in the syllabus encouraging honest work, so that students can contribute their own unique perspective to the class. This allows students to understand that differing points of view enhance the learning experience for everyone.
7. Develop and ask students to commit to a class honor code.
8. Provide a definition of academic integrity and cheating. Clearly explain what is considered dishonest and unacceptable behavior.
9. State the academic honesty policy within the online learning environment and discuss it in the early stages of the course. Provide a link to the campus website on academic integrity.
10. Create an environment where all opinions are valued and grading is unbiased. Establish ground rules that all opinions are welcome as long as they are not denigrating. Welcome all ideas and dispel fears of giving a wrong answer.
11. Ask students for their input on how to create a community of integrity at the start of the course. This establishes the students as stakeholders in the community and the process of its formation.
12. Require students to acknowledge and further each other's work. By respecting the work of others and actively working to help others grow, students develop a sense of team and ownership.