



5. ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Classroom Code of Conduct

A big part of establishing a positive learning environment is to ensure that all members of a class are aware of boundaries, respectful rights and harassment-free discourse in the class discussions or activities. One way to sensitize students to the need for respectful discussions is to establish a classroom code of conduct. This can be generated by the class as a whole or in small groups within the seminar or lab. Students should come to consensus and record what behaviors and language will govern class activities. Try to encourage students to be as specific as possible. If, for example, students decide that one student shouldn't dominate the class discussions, ask the students to identify how this behaviour can be monitored in class. For example, "everyone speaks once before anyone speaks twice" is a possible "rule" to govern equitable class discussion. "Stories should specifically relate to the topic at hand" is another agreement that might govern how the discussion might proceed. It is helpful to record the classroom code of conduct and distribute a copy to each student. This document then serves as the "contract" by which the class can learn. For more information on codes of conduct, contact the CTLET .

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism Issues

Why Do Students Cheat?

According to Weimer (1991), students cheat for many reasons. For one thing, what faculty, TAs and lab assistants consider to be academic dishonesty is very different from what students consider to be dishonesty. Sometimes, students do not feel it matters how much they learn because what they are learning in class will not get them anywhere in the future. With the pressures of today's marketplace, they feel they must succeed at all costs: "They care more about financial security, power, and status and less about altruism, social concerns, and learning for the sake of learning." (p. 3). There is also the obvious reason that students cheat to improve their grades, whether it be to stay in their program, get into a competitive program or to get into a good graduate school. In many cases, students feeling under pressure might cheat only if the opportunity arises, such as when exams are not secured or proctored properly or when exams are repeatedly used and recycled. Lastly, students may cheat because there is little risk involved; they feel that students rarely get caught, and if caught, are not punished very severely.

What can you do as a TA or lab assistant? There are many things. Tell your students what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Suggest that other TAs and lab assistants in your course tell their students too so that if a cheating incident arises, students cannot claim ignorance. In order for students to believe in the value of the material you are presenting to them, try to make it relevant to their lives. Remind students that grades are not the only thing that matters: if they are applying to graduate school, there are many other things (such as good letters of reference, relevant work and school experience, personal interests, and good entrance exam marks) that may assist in their application to graduate school. If you are proctoring an exam, be constantly monitoring and walking around the room in order to minimize opportunities for cheating. Keep exams locked securely. Make the effort to review assignments and papers, even if you do not mark them yourself. If you do suspect plagiarism or cheating, make every effort to address the problem.

A Plagiarism Free Brock (Professor Jon Radue, Department of Computer Science)

Why is plagiarizing such a “big deal”?

- plagiarism undermines the value of other students’ work
- if a student can get through school plagiarising, the value of a Brock degree is minimized (i.e: your credibility will actually decrease from having students who are plagiarisers)
- plagiarism is illegal; anything you ever write down is considered copyright



degree is
students

PLAGIARISM

(<http://www.cosc.brocku.ca/faculty/radue/plagiarism/seminar.html>)

“Plagiarism is **stealing** a ride on someone else's **train of thought.**”
unknown

“You have a memory that would convict any author of plagiarism in any court of literature in the world.” *Haukesworth* of Samuel Johnson

“**Academic integrity** speaks to the heart of educational processes. Plagiarism undermines learning and the purposes of our academic institutions. At stake is honour of the school, faculty and students. Prospective students place a high value on their perception of the integrity and reputation of the institution of their choice.” From *Glatt's An Open Letter of Academic Faculty and Staff.*

“Plagiarism undermines the value of other students' work.” Jon Radue

want more?

- Contact Professor Jon Radue at ext 3513 or by e-mail to jradue@brocku.ca

Respectful Rights – Classroom Ethics

The following information has been provided by Brock’s Sexual Harassment Officer.

What is Sexual Harassment?

- any unwanted attention of a sexually-orientated or gender-orientated nature directed at an individual or group by another individual or group of the same or opposite sex who knows (or ought reasonably to now) that this attention is unwanted, or
- any implied or expressed promise of reward for complying with a sexually-orientated request or advance, or
- any implied or expressed threat of reprisal for refusing to comply with an implied or expressed sexually-orientated request, or
- any behaviour, verbal or physical, or a gender- or sexually-orientated nature that interferes with the academic or work environment of any individual or group or creates an intimidating or hostile atmosphere.

Note: The action need not be intended.

What is Included in Psychological or Physical Sexual Harassment?

- suggestive or demeaning remarks, jokes or other types of verbal abuse of a sexual or sexist nature directed at an individual or group, or
- engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcome, or
- graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body, or
- leering, or
- the display in the workplace of pornographic objects or pictures, or
- unnecessary touching and/or offensive gestures, or
- compromising invitations, or
- unwanted requests for sexual favours, or
- sexual assault (an offence under the Criminal Code).



When is Someone Not Being Sexually Harassed?

- a hug between friends
- jokes that are non-sexual
- compliments that are non-sexual
- materials that are sexually explicit that are approved in a course

Two Kinds of Sexual Harassment

The first type of sexual harassment is QUID PRO QUO. In this instance, an individual is either directly or indirectly made to believe if that she or he responds sexually, his or her academic or work situation will improve if she or he complies and will suffer if he or she does not. This is the most well defined, but the rarest form of sexual harassment. Make sure your students know that you will not tolerate sexual harassment.

Hostile environment is the second type of sexual harassment.

When an environment is offensive, intimidating or hostile and interferes with an individual's ability to work or a student's ability to learn or participate in campus life, this is a hostile environment and it may be considered sexual harassment. This is the majority of cases but it is also the most difficult to notice and the hardest to prove. If you feel uncomfortable in your environment, stand behind your gut feeling and say something. Tell your students to let you know if they ever feel the seminar is creating a hostile environment so that you can attempt to rectify the situation.

Characteristics and Facts of Sexual Harassment

1. Often involves a power difference.
2. The behaviour is definitely unwanted and unwelcome.
3. The behaviour is usually repeated.
4. The majority of harassment goes unreported.
5. As many as 30% of female undergraduate students are sexually harassed and as many as 23% of female professors are sexually harassed.
6. The majority of people who are sexually harassed merely want the behaviour to stop and not to bring about formal charges or want the harasser to be punished.

How to Avoid Harassing Others: Do's and Don'ts

- DO monitor your words and behaviour so they are not offensive to others
- DON'T make jokes that are sexist or homophobic
- DO respect the points of view and values of others
- DO consider how other cultures may interpret your actions differently

- DON'T use your position of power to make sexual requests (even subtly)
- DO make modifications to your attitudes and behaviour so they don't condone sexual harassment
- DO help others understand what sexual harassment is so that they can modify their behaviour
- DO be supportive when others have been sexually harassed
- DO listen when someone says 'no'!

want more?

- contact Brock's Sexual Harassment Office at ext. 4019