



# Academic Integrity in the Online Environment

## Teaching Beyond the Podium Podcast

### 00:06 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Hello, my name is Alexandra Bitton-Bailey and welcome to the teaching beyond the podium podcast series. This podcast is hosted by the Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Florida. Our guests share their best tips, strategies, innovations and stories about teaching. Today's episode is on academic integrity in online courses, we sat down with Dr. Oliver Grundmann as our guest to discuss academic integrity. Dr. Grundmann came to the University of Florida from Germany where he fortuitously met a faculty member from UF who shared a common interest in natural products research. She invited all of her to work in her brand new lab and complete this graduate studies. His experience at UF was especially positive because he was able to take quality online courses, which he discovered he really enjoyed.

### 00:56 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

During my PhD research, I learned about Dr. Tebbetts, Dr. Ian Tebbetts work in the field of online graduate studies. And so I took a number of courses. And I was just fascinated because it kind of met very well my needs in terms of flexibility. So that was a great help for me.

### 01:19 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Oliver found that online courses offer students flexibility and a high quality learning environment, he's really passionate about online education, because it allows students who otherwise would not be able to complete traditional in person programs to finish their degrees.

### 01:34 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

I think that it is a format that speaks to working professionals in particular, that got their undergraduate degree from an institution and then go into their work environment, they settle down kind of they have their family, and they don't really have the capabilities necessarily to go back to a mortar and brick institution, potentially relocate, suspend

kind of their work. That's why I feel quite passionate about it, because it provides also avenues for those who might otherwise not have the capabilities to advance their education to actually do so. And that is why we have a higher percentage of, of underrepresented minorities in our programs, who actually can finish the program because they can balance their work their life, their families.

## 02:34 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

In his ongoing pursuit of online teaching excellence, Oliver discovered that students who were flagged for academic integrity issues generally gave one of two primary reasons.

## 02:46 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

The concept that learners had in their mind about what constitutes academic integrity, and what kind of submissions count for their own individual work. For example, when we talk about the online environment, and submitting an assignment that is written in their own words, was not well aligned with academic integrity statements or plagiarism statements or like, there were misconceptions. One certainly is, I need to get this submitted before the deadline by any means possible. And then I kind of do the copy and paste and hope it flies under the radar. The other one is English is not my first language and I fear that I cannot express myself appropriately in scientific terms in particular, and I kind of need to copy and paste from other resources in order to make it sound like it is professionally written, and we use turn it in, like many others do, and it catches these things relatively easily. And then they got flagged, and at that point, it is kind of too late on the graduate level, we do not really allow resubmissions unless they are circumstances that the student can explain.

## 04:11 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Lots of students may not actually clearly understand what constitutes cheating in a course. Oliver then provides the students with that information upfront by using the University of Florida academic integrity module which helps students to better understand the expectation for his course.

## 04:29 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

So basically, the University of Florida has an academic integrity module available that takes students step by step through a number of scenarios where they are demonstrated, how they can either use information that is provided to them. So for

example, one scenario is in one course, they have written an essay assignment or a term paper. And then in another course, they might be having the idea of utilizing part of that information in another term paper. And then there are a number of options of what could be done in order to resolve this conflict of reutilizing part of that information, because it's their own term paper that they have written, but they would actually be self plagiarizing. Right, they would be plagiarizing from their own work in this scenario. And the solution here is talk to the instructor about how to reutilize that if it is allowed, what can be done about it, and how it can be reworked? To what degree can you reutilize that information. So communication is a very important concept here. At the end of that academic integrity module, there are, I believe, 10 questions, all of these questions need to be answered correctly before the student or learner can progress. And then they are given a certificate of completion. And that certificate of completion, once they have completed that this is passed on to Canvas. And only then can they actually move forward in the course.

### 06:21 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Most of his students find the module very helpful, but some may need a little additional clarification.

### 06:27 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

For majority of folks, that works very well. For some folks, they need a couple of reminders of how to best do that. But specifically for international learners, I understand the balancing act between English is not their first language, and in feeling insecure sometimes about it. And I always offer to everyone to reach out to me and ask if they need clarification. I always have office hours, so zoom office hours, where they can sign up one on one. I've seen those increase over the past year. And then I also offer one on one, just getting together underneath the week, if that's necessary, outside the virtual office hours, using my calendly scheduler where they can sign up if need be.

### 07:23 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Academic Integrity extends well beyond the classroom. It speaks to who you are, and the values you bring to the work you do.

### 07:31 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

Academic integrity really means to me that you are able to be the expert who can speak to their peers who can break it also down a very complicated scientific concept. So that

you can explain it to a patient in the setting that you can explain it to a lay person who is not knowledgeable in that area. And that is a skill that folks sometimes need to learn over time. Once they graduate from the program and they go out there in the real world, they have to realize that they will be held responsible for what they are submitting. Within our realm, it's important that they understand we will be evaluating their knowledge base not only based on the essay assignments, but also that it's an ethical and moral issue in terms of what you submit, that is a reflection of your standards as a person when you submit these assignments.

## 08:34 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Any University of Florida instructor can import the academic integrity module into their course and it is really effective. Not only does it provide students with an explanation of what's expected of them in a course, but it also offers some scenarios that help students decide how they should approach any assignment or assessment in a specific situation. Oliver does not limit the support he offers students to the online learning module. Rather, he believes that the module is only one facet. Open communication is really the key to creating successful online learning environments that promote, even ensure academic integrity.

## 09:14 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

Really making clear that communication is the secret to success. It's the pathway to success. Make yourself available as an instructor. I realize that sometimes we all have tons of things going on but making yourself available to students, getting back to them if they have questions can be so rewarding. Sometimes, if you see like certain things popping up all over the place, obviously it's worth posting that to the discussion board for everybody to get that experience. Virtual office hours, I host them on zoom once a week is a great way to kind of take the pulse take the temperature but also to be available to students and aside from that, anything that's asynchronous, if you don't have synchronous lectures or synchronous sessions definitely make your students and your learners aware that they need to reach out to you.

## 10:12 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Oliver reminds us that students have much to contribute to the class, giving them the space and time to contribute their knowledge and expertise, while acknowledging that as instructors, we do not always have all the answers is a great way to humanize your course. And it can transform the culture in your class.

## 10:31 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

Humanize yourself sometimes. I think that was important for me, that I said, I don't have all the knowledge. Sometimes, it might be that you ask the learner, especially on the graduate level with working professionals, you're working with folks that have years of experience working in the field. So I asked them often to share their knowledge to share their experiences on the discussion board. And it generates such great communication, where I'm just standing back and letting them communicate their knowledge. And so I learn almost every semester from our learners as well. And I think that's a great, it just creates a great knowledge community, which is always a great experience for me as an instructor, to then take with me, and just chip in sometimes and say, this is awesome, folks, just keep it going. Because that is what we can all learn from building that knowledge community.

## 11:33 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Many of Oliver's former students often reach out to express their gratitude.

## 11:38 Dr. Oliver Grundmann

We have folks who are working in poison control centers in the clinical toxicology program, who reached out to me after graduating, who say that they can better communicate with other stakeholders after graduating from the program. These are registered nurses. These are clinical pharmacists who work in emergency departments. And they can directly take this knowledge into their practice setting. The breadth of you know, personal stories and personal journeys is just that makes it just so much so so rewarding and then sometimes years later, you hear back from somebody who is has really gone on and done wonderful things. And many of them stay in their career paths, develop drugs, you know, and contribute to the development of drugs. And I feel very privileged to see them succeed and just it's an amazing journey.

## 12:43 Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey

Thank you for listening to this episode of the teaching beyond the podium podcast series. For more helpful resources developed by the Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Florida, visit our website [teach.ufl.edu](http://teach.ufl.edu). We're so happy you joined us and we hope to see you next time for more tips, strategies and ideas on teaching and learning at the University of Florida.