Transcription for

**THE KEY WITH INSIDE HIGHER ED**

EP. 38: COMBATING CHEATING IN THE COVID ERA

DOUG LEDERMAN

BRADLEY DAVIS

DAVID RETTINGER

KATE MCCONNELL

FEBRUARY 2021

PROVIDED BY

CAPTION ACCESS

contact@captionaccess

www.captionaccess.com

APRIL 28, 2021

THE KEY INSIDE HIGHER ED

EP. 38: COMBATING CHEATING IN THE COVID ERA

February 16, 2021

DOUG LEDERMAN

BRADLEY DAVIS

DAVID RETTINGER

KATE MCCONNELL

44:51

====

[MUSIC]

DOUG LEDERMAN: Hello, I'm Doug Lederman, editor and cofounder of Inside Higher Ed, host of The Key, our podcast for higher education news and analysis. In this episode, we'll dig into one of the underexplored side effects of the pivot to mostly online instruction last year, reports of significantly increased student cheating and other forms of academic misconduct. Numerous colleges and universities experienced rising numbers of cheating cases, often involving sharing of answers to exams or other assessments on homework help sites. We'll explore now one university, North Carolina State, responded to a roughly three-fold increase in academic misconduct cases through a mix of prevention measures, change in teaching practice, and education of key groups, including with an unusual email to the parents of its students. As Bradley Davis, Associate Director of NC State's Office of Student Conduct explained...

BRADLEY DAVIS: I think students are talking about when there are lots of cases, about how can we shift that conversation to think about, okay, how am I going to do the work that I'm doing with the utmost integrity, and promoting that even more.

DOUG LEDERMAN: We'll then get some national context from two experts on academic integrity and

student learning, to talk about how colleges and universalities can both prevent cheating and build a culture of academic integrity, not just by employing proctoring and other technology tools, but by encouraging new approaches to teaching and learning. Here's one example that David Rettinger from the University of Mary Washington offered.

DAVID RETTINGER: So if you're going to give a 50-question multiple choice text, that's pretty much the most cheatable possible assignment online. Even if you just change to 10 five multiple- choice quizzes, you've made it less likely that students will cheat, because you reduced the stakes, the pressure, and increase the ability for them to feel they can actually do the work. Their self-efficacy will grow.

DOUG LEDERMAN: On to today's program...

To walk us through the situation at North Carolina State and the University's response is Bradley Davis, associate director of the University's office of student conduct. Bradley, welcome to The Key.

BRADLEY DAVIS: Awesome. Thank you for having me.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So North Carolina State is among the colleges and universities that have experienced a lot more reporting of academic misconduct to the student conduct office where you work. Can you describe for our listeners what's unfolded there since the onset of COVID there last spring?

BRADLEY DAVIS: Certainly. With academic misconduct, to be frank, we simply saw a significant increase in the number of reports we were seeing. And when we compared our numbers from the past few academic years, those numbers were staggering. So, for example, the academic year of 2018 to 2019 we saw a little less than 300 academic integrity cases. In the academic year of 2019 to 2020, which incorporates some of this pandemic time, we saw about less than 700. And then when we look at, thinking about academic year 2020 to 2021, and we just look at that time from March 2020 to the end of 2020, the majority of cases that we've seen over the past four years in were in that concentrated period of time, roughly around 900 cases.

And so when we look at our numbers and we say, okay, we're getting all these reports in, certainly there is a natural reaction to that to figure out what's going on, what's happening, what's causing, but also what can we do as an office, what can we do as a university to address what may be happening and how

we can support our students and our faculty members.

DOUG LEDERMAN: That's perfect. So let's put for a second the conversation about the response. Let's talk a little bit sort of the causes as best as you can gauge them. And so one question is your sense that there is actually just more academic misconduct by students, more identification of misconduct by professors, partly because they may be paying more attention, some combination... What's your sense of sort of the breakdown there or how that plays out?

BRADLEY DAVIS: I think it's a combination, I really do. I think that when we have a scenario or a situation where a large number of cases come from one incident, and there's a lot of attention put on that, there's a lot of attention from the university, from the student newspaper, and say, wow, we had this incident with X number of students who were referred to your office.

I do think that opens up for faculty members to say, okay, is this happening in my class? I think that certainly opens up the possibility of looking and wanting to know more. But I also do think that the impacts of being in this pandemic, students being at home, students not being in the classroom, has increased that opportunity to engage in some type of academic misconduct.

DOUG LEDERMAN: Briefly described, you did have an incident in which I guess it was a couple of hundred students in one class back in the spring were identified has having used the same homework help or content help on one of the platforms. Is that right?

BRADLEY DAVIS: Yes, so, you know, a homework help site provided a faculty member with the data of removing the content and who may have posted certain information and who was revealing certain information. And when that data came back, there were a large number of students who had been identified as being able to view answers and view solutions.

DOUG LEDERMAN: Got it.

BRADLEY DAVIS: And the faculty member moved forward with reporting all of those instances to our office. And that led to a spike, but then that also I think opened up how many other forces or faculty was thinking, is my material, my coursework, my exams, are they also being uploaded to these various sites? And when that happens and there's a, oh, my work is on these sites, then it opens up that, okay, I need

to report. And then we get the number of reports that we've received.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So it's also possible that faculty members may be aware, not that they're probably ever able to forget that students might be cheating, but the increased awareness among faculty members may result in them going looking for it more, being aware of it a little more, and that could be contributing to the increased numbers.

And then the other thing you mentioned in terms of the potential causes, obviously there's a lot of discussion about whether students have more opportunity and more flexibility maybe to engage in academic misconduct in a virtual setting or a remote setting, than in an in-person setting. We also probably have to account at least partially for the possibility that additional pressure on students, additional strain on students may cause them to maybe behave a little differently from how we might ideally want them to. Do you have any sense that that's factoring in as well there?

BRADLEY DAVIS: Absolutely. So we think about services we provide on campus, proctoring for example. We have a testing center that does a phenomenal job of offering proctoring for students. And that is readily not available. The number of exams that our testing center is administering is significantly lower now. And so if I'm a class, the likelihood if I'm in a classroom, I'm going to search for an answer or I'm going to post a question and then wait for the answer back, students are not doing that. And the opportunity to do that is there when you are in a space where it's just you. Or you have a large window of time that you can complete an exam, that opportunity may be there. If you think about the pressure of I want to make sure I get into my major, and I need this class, so I need to do well in this class. Or, I can't fail this class because that's going to be an additional cost. And my parent or my guardian just lost their job due to the pandemic.

So the anxiety of continuing to do well, the anxiety and stress of you're in a residence hall and all of a sudden I got to move out, because I can't be on campus or I have to move home, or what have you, certainly those pressures, those stressors have been heightened during this time, which ha, again, I think, had an impact on our students.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So in terms of how NC State has responded, there are a bunch of different tools and approaches that might be available to you. The one that captured our attention and that was why I reached out to you was because you sent an email to parents, which struck me as unusual. You said you hadn't done it before. So there's sort of an education piece that that's a part of that also includes presumably reaching out to faculty members and doing education of faculty members and students.

There's a prevention piece that involves proctoring and other tools potentially. And then presumably there's also a change in approach getting faulty members to think a little differently about how they assess students, etc. So talk about all of those or whichever of those NC State has used. And, again, it's obviously not just your office, it's people in the provost office and other parts of the institution. But what's your sense of sort of the various fronts on which NC State has approached this?

BRADLEY DAVIS: Absolutely. I think that taking what I had said a three-pronged approach of what are student support, what are faculty support, and what are some programming outreach things from our office that we can do? From a student perspective, you know, at the beginning, we first transitioned that we're all going to be online. We're not coming back to early in the spring 2020 semester.

We presented and created some like guides for faculty members, in adjusting, and things to think about in adjusting their content. We created a guide for students in taking exams online. We, as a university, created what we call our Keep Learning website, which provides step-by-step help topics. They talk about resources for online learning. It provides success strategies. It promotes our Academic Success Center and its virtual tutoring that could be available. For our faculty, programs or software, proctoring software, those things were made available as well.

We have ongoing conversations with specific academic departments who may be experiencing maybe more of this misconduct. We've met with our associate deans. I talk to faculty all the time and I appreciate that they feel comfortable and want our support in the work that they are doing, how we can support them when these things come up.

We've met with our faculty senate. We are programming and planning an academic integrity week, which will be starting February 22nd. And then we worked with our marketing department, which put out the email and the letter we sent to parents. We also sent a very similar one to students as well. And we're also going to try to engage more on social media activity.

We want to bring more awareness as to what could constitute these things, but not just a prevention of don't do this, but here's how you can be successful as a student. Here are other ways to think about how to ask for help if you need it. Or how to approach your faculty or your TA when you can't just go up to them after class. And so it's not just about we want you to not do this, but how can we also support you and how can we help you be successful during this time. As well as once this period is over, and we get back to whatever normalcy we get back to.

DOUG LEDERMAN: What about the prevention from a technology standpoint and proctoring? There's a lot of discussion and controversy and pushback against proctoring tools in certain realms because of fears of invasion of privacy of students and having cameras in their homes. How has that played out at NC state?

BRADLEY DAVIS: I think the use of a program like Respondus, we put that out. As far as before COVID, we had rolled it out Turn It In. It's not a plagiarism checker, but, you know, a software for writing assignments. And so I think the University has done a good job of offering it, providing the tools. It also falls on the faculty members if they're going to use these and then to follow through with it. And so other faculty members have, I'll say, made their own proctoring ways without using those particular programs.

However, I do think students have brought those concerns. We've done a lot of outreach and class presentations. Students have asked us questions about privacy and those sorts of those. And so we have to listen and try to adjust. And when they have used them, I think they have found them to be useful.

However, I don't want to say everyone is using them. We get a lot of reports from them, but it certainly is another tool that we have in helping in this prevention effort. And so we want faculty to use these things. They are at their disposal. But at the same time, it's important that we understand it is not just going to be one thing that's going to solve, it's going to be a combination of a lot of things.

DOUG LEDERMAN: You're listening to The Key and we're talking with Bradley Davis, Associate Director of the Office of Student Conduct at North Carolina State University.

What's your sense of how welcoming faculty have been to the idea that assessment, pedagogy, teaching practices, that this period might call for different approaches to some of those things than they have been accustomed to in the past. First of all, is that a message that your colleagues are the University have been delivering to instructors, and how amenable have faculty members been to that idea?

BRADLEY DAVIS: Certainly that's a part of our push and when we're offering support and we're offering these materials and resources online. To say to think about how you're providing assessment and how you are going about the pedagogy in your course, I think our faculty, at least the ones that we have

interacted with the most through our conduct process have made those adjustments and have tried to make that academic integrity piece even more of a focus in doing these things, whether it's adding our pact-pledge to assignments for students to sign, whether it's providing an AI short quick before staring an exam, to changing from these high-stakes exams to many low-stakes assessments, lots of quizzes, more practice opportunities.

And that's part of our encouragement information of how can we get students to get to a place where they're demonstrating their mastery of the knowledge, of how they can apply the knowledge that they're learning versus completing a 60-minute exam online. But how can they demonstrate that they have synthesized the information and can apply that information, that takes time. That takes a lot of effort. And if you're one of those faculty members where maybe your work has been posted to one of the these help sites, and you have to go back and create new material, new exams. And so I don't want to mess over the amount of time and effort it does and it has taken in making those adjustments, but certainly I've been amenable to doing that in this effort and how we prevent academic misconduct and dishonesty.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So I wanted to ask a little bit more about the outreach to the parents, because that, again, struck me as unusual. And there's probably a tendency of folks like me to think, oh, that's just catering to the helicopter parenting of my generation of parents and going forward. But it also makes a lot of sense, given that the education of students is happening in an unusual way, much more literally in front of them and in their own home. So talk just a little bit about what the thinking was in terms of reaching out to parents, in terms of making them allies maybe in this effort to raise awareness about the issue.

BRADLEY DAVIS: Yeah, I think that's a key word--allyship, partnering. This is not intended or the purpose was not to say your student is doing the wrong thing. But also just to bring awareness that this is what we are experiencing in our community. You are a key stakeholder in our community as well. And so we want you to aware this is what's going on. This is what we have seen with such a dramatic increase with students being at home that it would be a good opportunity to garner some support. And just having those conversations and awareness. It was not intended for parents to start reporting and that sort of thing. But it was mainly to say, how can you support your student as well. This is another way of supporting your student and promoting academic integrity.

And that has opened to inquiries from parents of how can we be supportive? And having some dialog about that. Obviously, I can't talk about specific cases, but there have been parents that have called and asked questions about our process, about how we do the work that we do, because they want to

understand too. And so again, this opens up that opportunity to do so, and, again, we hope that it sparks that conversation.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So thinking about this spike in the incidents of academic misconduct and North Carolina State's response, is there a potential for good things to come out of it?

BRADLEY DAVIS: Absolutely. One, we are providing education. We are providing awareness so that thousands and thousands of students are on campus, but also to say that because of this increase we are now putting this in the forefront even more. And it's not just something we can bypass on the assumption that everyone's doing this, but to say, absolutely, this is what academic integrity means a NC State. This is how you can do your part. This is the decisions that you can make in promoting that. And also just creating culture around that and having students talk about it. I think students are talking about when there are lots of cases, but how can we shift that conversation to think about, okay, how I am going to do the work that I'm doing with the utmost integrity. And promoting that even more.

I think our response to this--all the programming we're going to do, all the programming that this is going to lead to in the future, all the collaboration that this could open up--certainly, I think it can be very positive and will be very positive for our campus and our community, and for our students and our faculty, and how we continue to promote academic integrity here at NC State.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So it's turning a potentially negative or divisive conversation about cheating into a healthier and more positive conversation about a culture of academic integrity.

BRADLEY DAVIS: Absolutely. And I think an office like mine, we can easily sit back. People have this perception that, well, this is just the principal's office, right? But we see us more than that. They see us more that this is just, you know, this is the place where you have to go when you're being held accountable. But they see us as an important place on campus, and this is what we are promoting and this is what we are about. And certainly that accountability piece is a part of what we do. But the education that we do for our broader campus community is also very important and valuable to the success of our students. And I truly believe that's one of the passions of why I do the work that I do on student conduct is the transformative power of the work that we do. And I think promoting academic integrity, to continue to do that is only going to bring positive awareness and positive outcomes for our kids.

DOUG LEDERMAN: Bradley, thanks a lot for being here. I appreciate the time.

BRADLEY DAVIS: Thank you.

[MUSIC]

DOUG LEDERMAN: You're listening to The Key at Inside Higher Ed. Be sure to subscribe to this free podcast on your favorite platform, including iTunes, Stitcher, and Google Podcast.

To provide some national context to wrap around the discussion we just had about north Carolina State we're welcoming to the program two leading experts on academic integrity and student learning. David Rettinger is professor of psychological science and Director of Academic Integrity Programs at the University of Mary Washington in Virginia. He's also President emeritus of the International Center for Academic Integrity, which is dedicated to combating cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty in higher education, and at the same time promoting academic integrity. Kate McConnell is Assistant Vice President for Research and Assessment, and Director of the Value Institute at the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Kate and David, welcome to The Key.

DAVID RETTINGER: Thanks for having us, Doug.

KATE McCONNELL: Thank you. I'm excited to be here.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So Bradley Davis just described the significant increase that North Carolina State saw last spring and fall in the number of faculty reports of academic violations by students. David, starting with you as the resident expert on academic misconduct, what do we know so far about how typical the NC State situation is?

DAVID RETTINGER: Well, we don't have systematic data yet, although we're definitely working on it. But I'd say, less systematically, everything I've heard is that case numbers are going up. So there's more reporting of academic misconduct by faculty nationally, as best I can tell, and probably internationally as well. What we don't know, though, I think, is whether that represents an increase in misconduct by

students or an increase in reporting. Based on my views of this and based from my perspective, it probably is a combination of both. But there is definitely more sensitivity by faculty, and that online misconduct is often easier to spot than in-person misconduct. So we're seeing an increase from that side. But I also think that circumstances over the last year are probably putting some stresses and pressures on students that are leading them to change their behavior somewhat as well.

DOUG LEDERMAN: NC State that most of the reports related to use of some of these platforms. It was set off there by an incident in which I think it was about 200 students had shared some information on Chegg. And a bunch of the students said they didn't know that that was a violation, etc., etc. So it does seem that that sort of put it on the radar screen. Is that often how it unfolds, is that sort of something sets it off at a place and makes people realize that it's a problem maybe that they didn't know about before?

DAVID RETTINGER: I think so. I've seen at least three cases that have literally that exact same structure, often using the very same platforms. And that's what I was alluding to when I said that I think that online misconduct is often easier to spot in the old days, by which I mean two or three years ago. Students might have shared this material physically in person or on paper or in a private chat. And so you'd have groups of students working with similar materials, but you wouldn't necessarily have 50, 100, 200 students using exactly that same materials. Once that starts to happen because of this use of this broadly available internet access, then suddenly it's really not that hard to notice that you're getting the same answer 50, 100, 200 times, especially when that answer's wrong. So is the behavior changing that much? Well, a little bit. But is it changing dramatically? It's a lot harder to answer that question.

DOUG LEDERMAN: Can we figure that out? What would it take to figure out whether it's actually more cheating or just more awareness and identification of it?

DAVID RETTINGER: It's an incredibly difficult thing to do, because with any social science research, asking people about socially undesirable behavior leads to less than honest responding. So the obvious answer would be just ask them, ask students whether they're doing it. The problem, of course, is that there's going to be underreporting. The hope is that we can find as we start to do our survey work, we've collected some data last March, which is fantastically fortunate timing, and we're going to be collecting starting almost any day now. We'd like to see if there's difference in the self-report of misconduct. Of course, there's going to be underreporting in both cases, but we hope that it's a similar amount of underreporting so we can get at least an apples-to-apples, if not a literally accurate count of misconduct. I suspect we're going to see an increase.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So you mentioned that some of the changes in the behavior, or if there's an increased incidence of cheating possibly being driven by the situation students are in. And, Kate, I want to bring you into the conversation. Thinking about the sort reasons why we might be seeing more cheating, if we are, how would you as somebody who's sort of an expert on learning, what is it about the COVID era that may have students cheating more, if that's what's happening?

KATE McCONNELL: Sure. So I think for some of the structural changes that you're talking about that David delineated with the switch to online learning, there's that ease of access and that sort of thing. So, you know, I'm sure there's a component of that, but more broadly speaking, to borrow a phrase from another colleague at AAC&U, Cia Verschelden, it's this notion of cognitive bandwidth and what you have less of these days. I think it would be a mistake for us to discount or underestimate the social-emotional-financial pressures that some of our students may be feeling around some of these things. That, essentially, is some ways will short-circuit decision-making processes. So maybe a student who wouldn't before have considered, contemplated committing an academic integrity offense, there's a different calculus right now.

But the other piece I will say is also is that I think our faculty's cognitive bandwidth has been stressed and strained as we move forward with this, and there just may be in terms of how some have been able to translate and shift into the online modality, you know, there's a continuum of pedagogical success, let's call it that, that are some who've hit the ground running and had some good basic teaching and learning skills that they could draw upon for this. And others for whom, you know, the translation of a lecture into test and a final, moving that into something like Zoom, I'll be perfectly blunt, I think it's kind of a recipe for disaster for both the faculty member and the students.

A bit of a soapbox moment pedagogically, but I do think that there's the structural change, the logistical change. But then on top of that is really this heightened level of stress that may or may not be playing into student's decision-making processes around this.

DOUG LEDERMAN: So, David, let's shift for a moment to one of the potential answers. And we see sort of I think it seems to fall into several buckets. We see certainly more attempts at prevention through proctoring and lockdown browsers and all sorts of things that are designed to sort of stop it from happening. We see I guess also in these trying to stop it from happening category education of students, of faculty members. In the NC State situation, we saw North Carolina State send an email to parents, which was new for them, and I think a little unusual. And then the last is maybe some of the pedagogical change in how faculty members teach. What things institutions are doing, which things they're prioritizing, pros and cons of those?

DAVID RETTINGER: Well, the short answer's yes. All of that stuff is really coming up in the conversation. And as Kate indicated, I think it's fantastic that we are using the negative of this crisis as an opportunity to ask some fundamental questions. And I tend to be of the big structural change school myself, but I think people say to me rightfully, so wait a minute, you're suggesting changes to the building code while my house is on fire. It's not helpful. And I think they have a point.

So moving to ask that question, I think there are some very definite short-term practical solutions that fit into all the categories you described. So, for example, I'm not going to suggest to a faculty member who is in the middle of a semester or is rebuilding a course on the fly for remote instruction that they completely rethink their pedagogical philosophy. But there are some very boring structural techniques that you can use in setting up a course that make cheating less likely, and, by the way, actually improve learning.

So almost the entirety of James Lang's book "Cheating Lessons" is devoted to that topic. It's a book about teaching that is disguised as a book on cheating. It's great for that reason. And there's some of the stuff in there is huge structural change, but some of it's smaller. So if you're going to give a 50-question multiple- choice test, that's pretty much the most cheatable possible assignment online. Even if you just change that to 10 five-question multiple-choice quizzes, you've made it less likely that students will cheat, because you've reduced the stakes, the pressure, and increased the ability for them to feel like they can actually do the work. Their self-efficacy will grow. So something really small pedagogically can make a big difference in terms of cheating rates. And there's no cost to that. And I don't think any faculty member can say the rigor is lost for shifting the date upon which you give the exact same test questions.

So there's a handful of things you can do, stepping away from published test banks, changing the testing schedule, things like that, making more clear what the learning objectives of your assignments are. These are little things that you can do that don't require a huge change pedagogically. And that's going to have a pretty substantial effect on cheating.

Then long term the sorts of things that Kate talks about with the value rubric and the value principles that will improve student learning are also exactly the same things that will reduce academic misconduct. But the take a lot longer to change. So that's the sort of stuff we could talk about over time.

Then there are the policy and practice changes that you alluded to with respect to things like, I call them the surveillance technology. I'm a little less bothered by the asynchronous surveillance, so by which I mean the search engines that are used to detect similarity in student papers. There are some reasons to be concerned about those, but they are not I think as problematic right now as the technology that basically forcing its way into students' homes.

So there may be some benefits to that. I saw a presentation about some research recently that showed substantially lower grades for students in a video proctor context than on students in the same class who were not in a video monitor context. The inference tends to be, oh wow, when they're being video-monitored, they are not able to cheat as much and so their grades are lower. I might argue that putting a camera on somebody... There's actually great psychological evidence from science and beyond that putting a camera on somebody is going to lead to worse performance due to self-monitoring, and the anxiety that goes along with that. So people are very quick to say, oh yeah, if we monitor students, they do worse, therefore we're taking away their cheating opportunity. But there's another and much more unpleasant alternative to that explanation for that result that you have to worry about if you are an instructor looking to make sure that your classes are equitable and ethical treatment of your students.

DOUG LEDERMAN: Let alone raising the privacy concerns that the....

DAVID RETTINGER: Yeah.

DOUG LEDERMAN: ...the proctoring exams.

DAVID RETTINGER: That's maybe the biggest part of it, right? You're forcing a video camera into someone's home.

DOUG LEDERMAN: Right. So what's your sense of the, and I guess I was calling it the education piece. But again NC State is one example, is talking to faculty members, presenting to them about what to be looking for, reminding students about their obligations, again, in this situation encouraging parents, especially because I think more than was true in the past, they have their students literally doing their education in their homes. What's your sense of whether talking about academic integrity works in

reducing it?

KATE McCONNELL: I think there's a difference between talking about academic integrity, and we honestly I think take a really punitive vocabulary approach to it, where we're like don't do it, without actually talking about what it is. It's baking it more into the DNA, not just, if you get caught this will happen, a transactional approach, but actually embedding it into your curricula in more meaningful ways. Librarians as partners are fantastic in that approach. I actually think, you know, long term, centers for teaching and learning, every CTL I know did amazing work pivoting to help support faculty in the transition to online. A lot of times certainly necessarily focused on technology, translating assignments. This is a bigger piece that I hope, you know, this I what I go back to when I think long term, is that some of the solutions we come up with in this moment of real and perceived crises around some of these issues actually become part of how we teach when we quote-unquote "go back to normal" or something more normal.

I go back to very old school. There's a fabulous article from Change magazine in 2003, Halpern and Hakel, where they posit, basically, it's a synthesis of everything they knew at the time from popular psych to learning sciences, and what the meant for a college classroom when you're teaching, kind of a Dave Letterman do's and don'ts pedagogically.

But the premise they start off with the article is what is the purpose of college teaching. And their answer to that question is, the purpose of college teaching is long-term retention, that students learn something for the long haul beyond the class, and actually then can pull it out accurately later on, and transfer, you know, the Holy Grail of education, that they use it in a situation that we as faculty may not even been conceiving right now. Instead of a high-stake tests that students feel like they need to learn for the moment and forget the next day, spread it out over the semester. I'll be perfectly honest. I'm actually a huge fan of open book assessments in the sense where I'm actually asking students to apply and synthesize versus regurgitate. That's not to say there's not a place for knowledge comprehension and multiple choice, but maybe that's not the only thing you're offered.

DAVID RETTINGER: Yeah, I would also agree. I did a workshop just this week at the AAC&U Learning Assessment Conference. And we took a look at a syllabus from a really talented instructor. And we looked at her academic integrity policy, and it was list of things you're not allowed to do. And what she said after the workshop as we were working on it is, where's the instructions on what you are supposed to do?

KATE McCONNELL: Yeah.

DAVID RETTINGER: And that was exactly the idea, right? So don't say to a student, don't use Chegg, or don't do this, don't wait to the last minute, say, here's a schedule for getting started. Here are some on-campus or virtual resources we provide. Giving students the tools to succeed and pointing them towards them is both teaching and also academic integrity building, and cheating prevention. The most important thing people take away from this is academic integrity is not the absence of cheating. It's something much bigger than. It the pervades the culture of an institution. And what it is at the end of the day, the opposite of cheating is authentic learning.

KATE McCONNELL: Absolutely.

DOUG LEDERMAN: You're listening to The Key and we're talking today with Kate McConnell of the American Association of Colleges and University and David Rettinger of the University of Mary Washington and the International Center for Academic Integrity.

So I'm thinking, and, again, we have a mix of people listening to this, but I'm particularly interested or concerned about those faculty members. So maybe let's save a second the discussion, some suggestions for the policy makers, the administrators and others, but I'm thinking of those faculty members who are, David, as you describe, sort of feeling like their house is burning. What are the things that they should be thinking about in terms of high stakes versus not assessment, versus, again, most of them aren't going to be deciding necessarily whether they offer courses pass-fail or have more flexibility built it, but what are some of the things for the instructors? Maybe start with you, David, and then Kate.

DAVID RETTINGER: Well, let me shamelessly plug academicintegrity.org, which has a number of resources on this topic. But I'd say, reducing the stakes of any given assignment, moving more towards projects and student-driven work as opposed to standardized exams is always a good way to go. Giving students more control, giving them more flexibility, reducing the rigidity with which their work is being assigned will cause them to feel like they are empowered to do the work.

Similarly, and for very little effort, explain to them what the learning objectives are in plain and clear terms, and help them know what this should be intrinsically motivating to them. Help give them the opportunity to make meaning of the work for themselves.

Where this becomes most challenging is in classes where the work that needs to be done is very much algorithmic, math, chemistry, physics. I get that it's really challenging to come up with projects for how to do, say, integral calculus, right? To some extent it's much more routine or rote, and they have to get practice. There I recommend reframing your course as a coaching opportunity. Help your students who are musicians or athletes build a metaphor of we're working together in practice to get your game ready. And then game-ready is some external validation that you're going to give them, which is an exam or something to that effect. But helping reframe it as meaningful practice and become their coach and their ally as opposed to their gatekeeper will dramatically change their relationship to the material.

Now this stuff sometimes sounds like of fluffy and it sounds like we're reducing rigor. But I actually mean the opposite. Give them more problems to do, give them more challenging work in these contexts, and you'd be amazed at their ability to rise to the occasion. Be mindful of how much more work you're giving them, though, because if we all do that, it becomes a bandwidth problem like Kate said.

KATE McCONNELL: One thing that I love is something I discovered a few years after I was out of the classroom and was kind of kicking myself wishing I had seen it earlier, is something called an interactive coversheets, where a student was turning in a written piece of paper. And what they had to do before they turned it in was actually do some self-assessment, what they thought they did well in the paper, what they were looking for feedback on specifically, etc. So just a quick note written to the faculty member or the person who was grading it. So this actually helped with grading, because you look at it and you immediately have some things to focus in on with that particular student, with the idea that maybe if you can help tailor some feedback. You know, one of our big issues is students using feedback and knowing what to do with it. They've already highlighted some things, and you as a faculty member can say, you know, I think you're right, absolutely. I'm confirming for you did this really well. You seem to think you did this well, but let me tell you where I see improvement, etc. And then it becomes a dialog and so there's metacognition involved in this activity where a student is actually not just turning something in for the grade, but doing some self-evaluation that can lead to hopefully self-regulation, improved performance, but then you're also getting an authentic student voice there and a quick snippet really. It's not taking a huge amount of time from either person.

The other thing is I think that we don't do a great job of pedagogically is just sharing with students our concrete expectations for their performance. So when there's a black box of like how I'll be evaluated or what counts, you know, I think students are kind of left to their own devices in that way. And again, shameless plug, that's where I think a rubric, a value rubric or another rubric where faculty have taken the tacit expectations that they have in their head as they're designing the instructions for the assignment, but they have to concretely spell out what they want to see from students.

That's my one fantasy coming out of all of this is that what we have learned in this emergency moment actually improves teaching and learning overall, because we'll take it with us. You know, I'm on Twitter a lot with academic Twitter and think, I forget who said, but someone I follow, it actually may have been Jose Bowen, who's written a lot about teaching, just saying, you know, it's amazing how many of the emergency solutions for this unique global pandemic are just good solid teaching and learning strategies.

DOUG LEDERMAN: Picture yourself, before we close, being an administrator at a college, university, seeing or being worried about increased incidents of cheating like we've seen some places. The natural tendency might be, okay, what other technology can we throw at it? But recognizing, just based on what you're saying, that the answer may be better faculty support and professional development on learning how to teach remotely or in a blended format, or whatever. You said many of the things are things individuals can do, but what are the things that institutional leaders might be thinking about in terms of supporting that work and their faculty members' ability to do this? Kate, and then David...

KATE McCONNELL: My senior year in college was the first time I got on the internet. That dates me. I think we have so many more resources and it's so much easier and broader, and so many more opportunities for making a misstep in that space that I don't think I'm a fan of that notion of a process that's 100 percent punitive and doesn't involve education. So I guess my pitch would be that, as with most other things, there's a developmental education piece that goes with even the violation process. And so I'll just say that globally and let Dave, who knows more specifically what he's seen, what policies look like, but I think we have to start thinking in those terms if places aren't already.

DAVID RETTINGER: Well, thank you for saying that, Kate, because I was going to get into the weeds right away. And I think starting with we're educators, and so everything we do, including our academic integrity policy, should be looked at through the lens of how are we educating our students.

More specifically, if you are an administrator listening to this I would ask the question, who is responsible for academic integrity and the integrity culture on your campus. A lot of campuses, or a lot of institutions I should say, don't have a particular person or a particular committee who has that charge. I am not a big fan of the term best practices, but it's hard to imagine a scenario where an institution could really be doing an effective job of academic integrity without someone who takes that as their job and mission. Everyone has to be part of it but someone needs to be building that.

Ask your students, survey them, check out academicintegrity.org/survey to find out more about what we are doing. But focus groups, any conversation you have with students about what's going on is going to be to your advantage. They are ones who are living this experience and you should respect their wisdom on this regard.

DOUG LEDERMAN: We've been talking with David Rettinger of the University of Mary Washington and Kate McConnell of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Thanks to you both.

KATE McCONNELL: Thank you so much. It's been a pleasure.

DAVID RETTINGER: You're welcome, and thank you, Doug.

[MUSIC]

DOUG LEDERMAN: Don't forget to subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast platform like iTunes and Google Podcast. Leave a reading and review. See you on our next episode.