U Have Integrity: A Gamified Approach to Academic Integrity

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Abstract

In this article I discuss the development and initial implementation of a workshop using a gamified approach to academic integrity. The 50-minute workshop involved a scenario-based card came. The audience was university staff in Student and Enrolment Services, which included, but was not limited to the Registrar's Office, Student Services, and Student Wellness.

Keywords: academic integrity, game-based learning, game, gamification, workshop, values, Canada

A few weeks back ago our Vice-Provost, Student Experience, asked me if I would conduct a workshop on academic integrity as part of the professional development day for Student and Enrollment Services staff at the University of Calgary. I agreed immediately.

Session Description

As I thought about what to write up for the participants' program, my mind went back to the Good Practice Note championed by Tracey Bretag (TEQSA, 2017), which called for multi-stakeholder approaches to upholding integrity. Everyone at an educational institution plays a role in upholding integrity in some way. With that in mind, I composed this workshop description:

> When we hear "academic integrity" you might think of students or professors, but you play an important role in it, too! In this interactive session you will explore what integrity means in education broadly, at the University of Calgary and how you fit in. Join us for a thoughtful, strengths-based session on integrity. (Duration: 50 minutes).

A Eureka Moment

Then, I got stumped. I realized that I knew how to do workshops and sessions for faculty members, teaching assistants and even students, but I found myself perplexed about how to deliver this content for university staff who work in areas such as the Registrar's Office, Enrollment Services, Student Services, and Student Wellness. I recognized that these people may deal directly or indirectly with issues relating to academic integrity in their jobs, but the way in which they were involved differed from teaching staff.

With only a few days before the workshop, I still had nothing prepared. Then it hit me. I thought: What if I used a gamified approach?

I recalled workshops I had done with students in which I had introduced them the *Plagiarism Game: Goblin Threat* developed at Lycoming College (Broussard & Oberlin, n.d.), which is a free online game involving goblins who want to compromise academic integrity at the college. I found that the game not only offered students an opportunity to learn about academic integrity, it also created an environment in which students felt comfortable asking questions. I found playing the game kept the focus on learning in a way that was both productive and fun.

My mind was drawn back to various bits of knowledge I had about the gamifying education. I reflected on Jane McGonigal's (2010) TED talk about how games can make a better world. I rifled through my bookshelf to find my copy of *Gamestorming: A playbook for innovators, rulebreakers and changemakers* (Gray, Brown, & Macanufo, 2010) and started re-reading it.

Then, I began looking for gamified examples of academic integrity. I found the work of White (n.d., 2018) particularly helpful, as well as that of Gilliver-Brown and Ballinger (2017). I noted that these references were new, which indicated to me that there may be a growing interest in game-based approaches to teaching academic integrity. All of this was inspiring, although the irony was not lost on me that I was in the same situation as students who leave their assignments to the last minute because they feel overwhelmed or unsure of themselves. I had four days to pull together a workshop and I wanted it to be meaningful and engaging.

My mind wandered back to a workshop on gamification I took a few years ago offered by Dr. Beaumie Kim, a colleague at the University of Calgary. Kim has deep understanding of gamification that she has shared at numerous conferences and workshops over the years (Kim, 2014; Kim, Gupta, & Clyde, 2015; Marasco, Gatti Jr., Kim, Behjat, & Eggermont, 2017). In the workshop offered by Kim and her graduate students, we developed a simple game in an afternoon using cards and paper. The concepts could be applied to more sophisticated games, but one objective of the workshop was to teach us *about* game design through the *process* of game design. The result was a simple but effective card came. At the time, I thought it was interesting and engaging, but it was not until I had agreed to present this workshop for staff that I had an opportunity to revisit the concepts and principles of game-based learning.

A Gamified Approach

I used the Fundamental Values of Integrity (ICAI, 2014) as a launching point to develop the game. I started by introducing the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage to the participants. Then, we used the values to discuss a scenario involving a breach of integrity. Participants spoke to the scenario through the lens of a particular value,

based on a random card draw. From there, we used the cards to talk through a number of different scenarios, which were presented as "Enigma cards".

The entire game pack consisted of Fundamental Values of Integrity handout (ICAI, 2014); Values cards and Enigma cards. The Engima cards ended up having a fair amount of explanation written on the back, so instead of being actual cards, they ended up looking more like handouts.
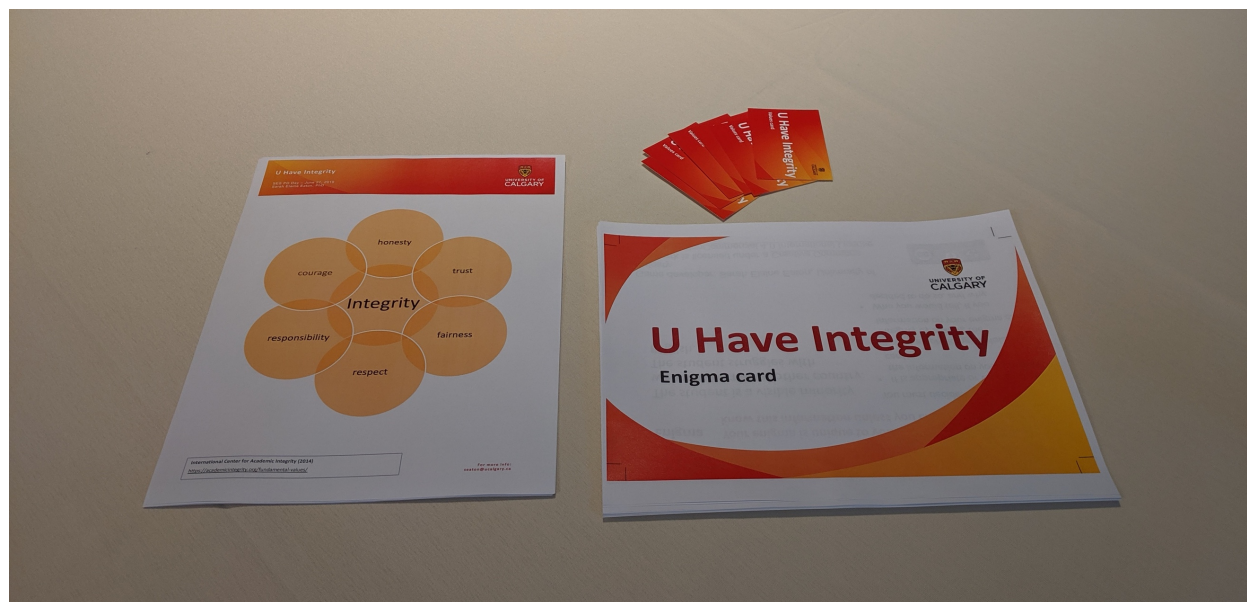

Figure 1. U Have Integrity game pack

We concluded the fifty-minute workshop with a discussion about how we, as members of the university community, enact the fundamental values of integrity in different ways in our work, and how sometimes the values can mean different things. For example, an individual who works as a psychologist at the Student Wellness Centre may have a responsibility to keep details about what is discussed at a counselling appointment with a student confidential. When the student is also a patient, the notion of responsibility manifests in a very different way for a health care provider than it does for a student or an educator. Every value can be interpreted and enacted in a multitude of ways.

We talked through some of these complexities during the game. The participants reached the conclusions that I had hoped they would reach. Firstly, integrity is not an absolute concept and secondly, the fundamental values of integrity can be enacted in different ways, depending on the role and circumstances of the individuals involved.

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Next Steps and Conclusions

As I reflect on this experience, I am glad I chose to try a gamified approach. Similar to using the *Plagiarism Game: Goblin Threat* (Broussard & Oberlin, n.d.) with students, I found using this simple game created an opportunity for participants to talk about academic integrity in a way that was engaging and fun, without being trite. It kept the atmosphere light, while giving participants a chance to reflect on the values, their role in the institution and how they can uphold and enact the values of integrity in their own day-to-day work.

I chose to document my experience with the game development and its first implementation here, but by no means do I feel that the game is perfect or even polished. I have another workshop coming up soon and I expect I will spend time tinkering with the game and changing it up for the next group, which happens to be a completely different audience: pre-service teachers taking their first introductory course in their Bachelor of Education program.

Even from this initial trial, I am inspired to continue exploring how to use game-based approaches to teach concepts and values related to academic integrity. I look forward to more opportunities to experiment with game design in the future.

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