Writing Across the Disciplines: Plagiarism Workshop

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How Bad is the Problem?

- **Roughly 1 out of 6 research papers in a college course on information security was plagiarized (Ryan n. pag.).**

- **1999 poll indicates 80% of *high-achieving* students admit they have cheated, and 95% of them claim never to have been caught ("Exclusive" n. pag.)**

- **Half of those who cheated say cheating is not necessarily wrong ("Exclusive" n. pag.)**

- **Duke's Center for Academic Integrity reports 75% of college students admit to cheating ("Exclusive" n. pag.)**

Students Have Always Cheated . . .

but "[w]hat's changed, experts maintain, is the scope of the problem: the technology that opens new avenues to cheat, students' boldness in using it, and the erosion of conscience at every level of education" (Kleiner and Lord qtd. in "Exclusive" n. pag.).

Why Students Plagiarize

They are lost.

"I don't know where to begin, and I don't want the teacher to know I'm lost."

Why Students Plagiarize

They lack confidence.

"I don't know the topic well enough to put it in my own words and be sure that it will still make sense."

Why Students Plagiarize

They don't think plagiarism matters in this assignment.

"It's not a term paper, so it's all right to copy word for word."

Why Students Plagiarize

They plead academic privilege.

"In *our* field, we use information this way, and it's not considered unethical."

Why Students Plagiarize

They don't know what is and is not plagiarism.

"But my high school teacher said if I change the words, I don't have to document."

Why Students Plagiarize

They are looking for ways to save time and effort.

"All the information I needed was found in this single source, and it was so well written there was nothing I wanted to change."

Why Students Plagiarize

They "edit in" plagiarism.

"I changed the words, but when I edited, I changed them back without realizing it."

Why Students Plagiarize

They don't see the purpose of the assignment.

"I think this is a stupid class and a stupid assignment; the teacher is probably stupid, too, so I can copy straight from the textbook."

Why Students Plagiarize

They have a precedent of successful cheating.

"I've always gotten away with it before."

Why Students Plagiarize

They want to.

"Why not?"

Plagiarism Defined

- ***Intentional:*** **Knowingly and willfully presenting another person's work as your own**

- ***Unintentional:*** **Failing to accurately and adequately identify and document material paraphrased, summarized, or quoted from a source**

Plagiarism Defined

Both intentional and unintentional plagiarism are unethical and illegal.

What Students May Do*

- **Purchase a paper from a paper mill**
- **Obtain a free paper from a paper mill**
- **Cut and paste from an electronic source (web site, article in online database)**
- **Copy passages from various types of sources**

(*Source: Downer's Grove North High School Library, "Educate yourself about plagiarism," www.csd99.k12.il.us/north/library/plagiarism.htm)

What Students May Do*

- **Use work from a student who has already taken the class**

- **Get another student to do the paper**

- **Create a bogus citation or source**

- **Fail to quote exact words**

- **Fail to cite paraphrased or summarized information**

Paper Mills*

Free Papers

[BigNerds.com](#)

[ChuckIII's College Resources](#)

[Classic Notes by GradeSaver](#)

[Cyber Essays](#)

[The Evil House of Cheat](#)

[Planet Papers](#)

Paper Mills*

Purchased Papers

[A-1 Termpapers](#)

[Buy Papers.com](#)

[Collegiate Care Research Assistance](#)

[Genius Papers](#)

[Research Papers On-Line](#)

Locating Paper Mills

- **Search for "term papers" using Google or Yahoo (Adams 2)**

- **See "Internet Paper Mills" at**

  http://www.coastal.edu/library/mills2.htm (Harris n. pag.)

Tips for Detecting Plagiarism*

- **Know the signs**
- **Know the sources**
- **Let students know you know**
- **Search for sources online**

- **Search for sources using fee-based search services**
- **Ask questions**

(*Source: Robert Harris. "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." <u>Virtual Salt</u> 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Know the Signs*

- **Mixed documentation styles**
- **Detailed or sophisticated information lacking documentation**
- **Unusual formatting**
- **Paper is off topic**

(*Source: Robert Harris. "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." Virtual Salt 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Know the Signs

- **Information is dated***

- **Anachronisms***

- **Mixed levels of diction***

- **Mixed writing styles***

- **Context change (Ryan n. pag.)**

- **Suspicious "experts," institutions, publications (Ryan n. pag.)**

(*Source: Robert Harris, "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." Virtual Salt 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Know the Signs*

- **"Smoking Guns"**
  - **URL of paper mill at bottom of page**
  - **Title page has student name, header has different student name**
  - **Whiteout over previous author's name**

(*Source: Robert Harris, "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." Virtual Salt 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Know the Sources

- **Paper mills**
- **ORU subscription databases**
- **Web sites**
- **Previous students' papers**

Search Online*

- **Do a string search with AltaVista and/or Google**

- **Search databases on the Web**

- **Search ORU's subscription databases (EBSCO Host and others)**

(*Source: Robert Harris, "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." Virtual Salt 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Use Fee-based Search Service*

- Turnitin.com
- Plagiarism.org
- Wordcheck
- [Eve](Eve)

(*Source: Robert Harris, "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." Virtual Salt 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Ask Questions*

- **"This information sounds very sophisticated. Did you consult a source for this passage?"**

- **"I'm a little perplexed as to why your writing style is so good in one paragraph and not in the next. Do you have an explanation?"**

Prevention Rather Than Cure

"No one wants to deal with plagiarism after it happens. . . . Not the faculty, not the student discipline committee. The only viable way to deal with plagiarism is to stop it before it happens" (Stoyan qtd. in Adams 1).

Building Plagiarism-resistant Assignments*

- **Define plagiarism for the students**
- **Clarify assignment's purpose**
- **Avoid general topics**
- **Require specific types and numbers of sources**

(*Source: Robert Harris, "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers."
Virtual Salt 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Building Plagiarism-resistant Assignments

- **Require photocopy of each source cited in the paper**
- **Avoid "fact-gathering" assignments**
- **Assign projects and papers requiring thinking skills difficult to plagiarize-- synthesis, problem-solving, personal response, etc.**

Building Plagiarism-resistant Assignments*

- **Make the assignment a process and assess student progress throughout it**
  - **research diary**
  - **annotated bibliography**
  - **informal, personal response to sources**
  - **oral report**
  - **research paper conference with you**

(*Source: Robert Harris, "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." Virtual Salt 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Building Plagiarism-resistant Assignments*

- **Have a clearly defined policy about penalties for plagiarism and give it to students in writing**

- **Model ethical behavior**

- **Motivate students toward ethical behavior**
  - **stress fairness**
  - **stress benefits of learning through engaging sources**

(*Source: Robert Harris, "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." Virtual Salt 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Recommended Web Resources

- **"Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." http://www.virtualsalt.com/ antiplag.htm**

- **"Cut-and-Paste Plagiarism: Preventing, Detecting and Tracking Online Plagiarism." http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~janicke/ plagiary.htm**

Recommended Web Resources

- **"Plagiarism" (Southwest Missouri State University site) http://www.smsu.edu/ contrib/library/resource/cheat.html**

- **"Plagiarism Prevention." (University of Wisconsin-Plattville site) http://www.uwplatt.edu/~library/reference/ plagiarism.htmlx**

Recommended Web Resources

- **"Plagiarism Stoppers: A Teacher's Guide."**
  http://www.ncusd203.org/central/html/where/plagiarism_stoppers.html

Works Cited

Adams, Mignon. "Plagiarism: Finding it and Stopping it." Library Issues 22.10 (2002): 1-4.

Downers Grove North High School Library. "Plagiarism." <http://www.csd00.k12.il.us/north/library/ plagiarism.htm> (19 Aug. 2002).

"Exclusive Poll: Cheaters Win." U. S. News & World Report 13 Nov. 1999: n. pag. <http://www.usnews.com/ usnews/misc/press/cheating.htm> (25 Aug. 2002).

Works Cited

Harris, Robert. "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." <u>Virtual Salt</u> 7 March 2002 <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>(3 Sept. 2002).

Ryan, Julie J. C. H. "Student Plagiarism in an Online World." <u>Prism</u> Dec. 1998: n. pag. <http://www.asee.org/prism/december/html/ student_plagiarism_in_an_onlin.htm> (14 Aug. 2002).

Southwest Missouri State University. "Plagiarism." 14 Aug. 2002 <http://www.smsu.edu/contrib/library/ resource/cheat.html> (14 Aug. 2002).