

Plagiarism

Temptations for Students

Tactics for Teachers

Adapted with permission from the PowerPoint presented
by Lisa Stroschine at the
Technology and Education Workshop, June 2005.



A Few Stats

- # 80% of college students admit to cheating at least once
 - # 90% of students believe that cheaters are either never caught or have never been properly punished
 - # 54% of students admitted plagiarizing from the internet
-

A Sad Fact

- # Study done by Donald McCabe, a professor at the Faculty of Management at Duke University:
 - 90% of the faculty surveyed indicated they were aware of an incident of cheating in their classroom in the last two years
 - 32% reported they did nothing in response
 - Why?
-

Mini-Survey

- # Who has dealt with a case of plagiarism?
 - # How many cases were intentional?
 - # Who has policies other than Simpson's in place?
 - # Of those, how many of the policies accurately address the situation?
 - # Who has used an online detection service?
-

What are our students thinking?

- # Some students go to college to get a credential
 - # Some view a course not directly related to their major as a waste of time
 - # Some will cheat or plagiarize to maintain a GPA
 - # Some are overloaded with work, school, family demands
 - # Some think everything on the internet is PUBLIC Domain
 - # Some don't know what constitutes plagiarism
-

What to do?

- # Don't be a detective
- # Think in terms of educate/prevent
- # Focus on the principles and not the technology: copying is still copying...
- # cheating is still cheating



Strategies for Education/Prevention

Define what plagiarism is and isn't.

- Make students aware of what constitutes plagiarism and how you handle it.
 - Let students know that you know about term paper mills.
 - Approach as an issue of fair use and intellectual property.
 - Talk about how to document web pages, how to document materials from online databases and the differences between web pages and online databases.
-

Preventing

- # Give specific assignments
 - # Specific instructions about bibliographies – consider making one source from required readings
 - # Require other specific components, such as theoretical, professional, or disciplinary vocabulary or an interview with experts
 - # Have drafts/notes in class, have short conferences about the writing assignment
 - # Use peer groups for comments on drafts
-

Preventing

Have students turn in any or all of the following over the course of a semester:

- # A thesis statement/abstract
 - # Written proposal for paper
 - # Working or annotated bibliography
 - # Rough draft or working notes
 - # Outlines
 - # All working drafts turned in with the final paper
-

More Tactics for Preventing

- # Writing assignments that have students analyze classroom discussions in light of the text
 - # Use local issues as topics
 - # Ask students to include a section in their term paper that discusses their topic in light of what was covered in class
 - # On the final exam, ask students to summarize the main points of their research paper
-

Detecting plagiarized papers

- # Writing style, tone, vocabulary, etc. are above or below what student usually produces
 - # Sections of sentences do not relate to other content of the paper
 - # Pronouns do not agree with the gender of the writer
 - # Strange text (like a URL) in header or footer
-

More on Detecting

- # Gray letters in text: indicates colored text on a web screen
 - # Strange or poor layout
 - # References to graphs or charts that aren't there
 - # Quotes in the paper do not have citations
 - # Citations in the paper are not included in the works cited
 - # Websites listed in citations are inactive
-

Tracking Down Plagiarized Papers

- # Identify a unique string of words in the paper and plug into a variety of search engines (“Google it”)
 - # Search for the title, using quotes " ".
 - # Search full-text databases, such as the EBSCOhost database or LexisNexis Academic to look for papers plagiarized from published articles.
 - # Utilize a plagiarism detection site, most of these sites charge some sort of fee.
-