UNIVERSITY WRITING PROGRAMS

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

October 4th, 2012

First-Thursday Faculty Development Workshop

Preventing Plagiarism through Process, not Policing

Workshop Facilitator:

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Workshop Schedule:

12:00 – 12:10
Introductions

12:10 – 12:20
What is plagiarism?
Why do students plagiarize?

12:20 – 12:50
Best Practices for Preventing Plagiarism:
Assignment Design & the Writing Process

12:50 – 1:00
Follow-up Questions
Sharing of War Stories

1:00
Part Ways

Thank you for attending! Please join us again November 1st for our next First-Thursday Workshop: "Winning the Paper Chase: Responding to Student Writing."

Some Reasons Students Plagiarize

LACK OF INTEREST
Students may believe an assignment to be busywork, or that the teacher does not read their essays carefully or with honest interest; they are therefore unwilling to work if their effort will not be recognized.

LACK OF INVESTMENT
Students may see some classes as more relevant to their education than others, or may not be fully invested in the ideal of intellectual inquiry. Students may not see the connection between the assignment and their learning or career goals.

FEAR OF FAILURE
Students may have strong pressures on them to earn high grades, especially those with scholarships that require maintaining a minimum GPA. Lack of confidence leads them to rely on others.

LACK OF ABILITIES
Students may be unprepared to tackle a given assignment but too embarrassed to seek help.

POOR TIME MANAGEMENT
Students may lack good study habits, or may not realize how long a project will take to complete, and therefore procrastinate ruinously. Rather than ask for an extension (or faced with a teacher who accepts no late papers), students opt to cheat.

NO FEAR OF CONSEQUENCES
Students may simply not care about getting caught, or in an amoral cost-benefit analysis, believe the benefits outweigh the risks. Some simply like beating the system.

Adapted from Michael Matto's, "Faculty Tips on Preventing Plagiarism."
http://academics.adelphi.edu/academicintegrity/pdfs/prevent_plagiarism.pdf

A Brief Word on Detection (and Turnitin)

Turnitin.com doesn't distinguish between cheating--intentionally cutting and pasting in elements from other electronic documents--from the inevitable mistakes in paraphrasing, summarizing, file management, note taking and so on. Cheating is wrong and should be punished. Mistakes in using and citing sources -- which can be technical, mechanical, rhetorical, and evaluative -- are in fact a necessary part of learning how to write with and from sources. To automatically and as default position equate these mistakes with fraud and cheating undermines learning. Novice writers need to be able to make and correct mistakes, in much the same way an athlete makes mistakes in practice, or in a game, and then practices some more to get it right. Turnitin.com doesn't convey any patience or make any distinctions in this regard. And thus it makes the challenging of addressing plagiarism harder. [...]

It assumes the worst about students and the worst about teachers. It assumes students have no honor and need always to be watched and followed electronically, a big brother welcome to academic traditions. It assumes teachers are too beleagured and inept to design classroom assignments and practices that teach students how to write responsibly. Much of what Turnitin.com proposes to detect can be avoided by careful assignment planning and teaching, by paying better attention early on to students and the work they do.

- Nick Carbone, "Turnitin.com, a Pedagogic Placebo for Plagiarism."
http://bedfordstmartins.com/technotes/techtiparchive/ttip060501.htm

Turnitin's "Plagiarism Statistics"
(Information from Plagiarism.org, the marketing arm of Turnitin)

According to surveys in U.S. News and World Report
1. 80% of "high-achieving" high school students admit to cheating.
2. 51% of high school students did not believe cheating was wrong.
3. 95% of cheating high school students said that they had not been detected.
4. 75% of college students admitted cheating, and 90% of college students didn't believe cheaters would be caught.
5. Almost 85% of college students said cheating was necessary to get ahead.

Professor Donald McCabe, leading expert in academic integrity, in a May 2001 study of over 4500 high school students, found the following:
1. 72% of students reported one or more instances of serious cheating on written work
2. 15% had submitted a paper obtained in large part from a term paper mill or website
3. 52% had copied a few sentences from a website w/o citing the source
4. over 45% admitted to collaborating inappropriately with others on assignments

In a sample of 1,800 students at nine state universities:
1. 70% of the students admitted to cheating on exams
2. 84% admitted to cheating on written assignments
3. 52% had copied a few sentences from a website w/o citing the source

Preventing Plagiarism:
Assignment Design & the Writing Process

PRE-DRAFTING	Proposals • Discourage last-minute topic changes? Annotated Bibliographies Notes • Teach students proper note-taking skills, such as the double-entry journal, "green ink," and citing sources as they collect data • Have students turn in notes? Photo-copying sources Informal writing & "explorations" Primary "field" sources (personal experience, interviews, surveys),
DRAFTING	Require one or more drafts (before the final draft) Pop quizzes on paper content Let students know about support services • Writing Center • Classroom-based Writing Mentors • Reference Librarians
REVISION	Revision Plans • Informal progress report • Plan-of-action memo • Research Story Feedback: • Peer review • Group workshops • One-on-One consultations • Writing Center Breaking the assignment into steps can lessen the likelihood of procrastination, which often leads to panic and plagiarism.
FINAL PRODUCT	Have students turn in all drafts, including those with any comments from you, other students, or writing mentors Turn in all other writing from the various stages (notes, annotated bibliography, informal writing, etc.) Reflection: • Cover letter • Reflective statement • "Meta-learning essays" Presentations – Formal or Informal
TAILORING THE ASSIGNMENT	Require up-to-date references Request copies of all sources Create Original Assignments Provide a list of specific topics Require specific components of the paper Require very current topics & events Write on local issues Provide models While tailored assignments can help prevent plagiarism, be careful not to preclude the students' ability to seek out, evaluate, and incorporate diverse sources in their research.

Additional Resources for Preventing Plagiarism

"Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices."
The Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA).
http://www.princeton.edu/writing/university/resources/WPAPlagiarism.pdf

"Strategies for a Writing Classroom." Colorado State University.
http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/plagiarism/classroom.cfm

McKenzie, Jamie. (May 1998). "The New Plagiarism: Seven Antidotes to Prevent Highway Robbery in an Electronic Age." *From Now On: The Educational Technology Journal, 7.8,* http://fno.org/may98/cov98may.html

Karon, Jeff. (Sept 2012) "A Positive Solution for Plagiarism." The Chronicle of Higher Education. http://chronicle.com/article/A-Positive-Solution-for/134498/