Plagiarism
What can we do to prevent it?

A faculty development event brought to you by RHCHP Distance Education

Your presenter:

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Plagiarism: Was it on purpose or accidental?

Good question. Certainly there is a mix of both. I truly believe that some students just don’t know how to cite resources or to paraphrase properly. Even though we tell them to do it and maybe even point them to some resources on how to do it, it may still happen. Is it possible that they have ‘gotten away’ with it in other courses before yours? What is the culture on our campus with regards to academic honesty?

Plagiarism: What is it?

In general, plagiarism is passing off someone else’s work as one’s own.

What might it look like?

- It might be a situation where a student copies and pastes text from an article or book for example, and doesn’t credit the original author.

- A student purchases a pre-written paper from someone or somewhere. (very easy to do online) Some of these papers may not even be detected with plagiarism software or Google checks.

- A student has a buddy that took the same course in a previous term, and because the content or activities (case studies etc) have not changed, the student can very likely get away with turning in a previous student’s work as their own.

- A student might create phony citations.

- Failure to quote an author.

- A student with good intentions but poor paraphrasing skills might attempt to paraphrase an author but the text is practically the same.

- Go to Plagiarism.org http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/types_of_plagiarism.html for more examples of types of Plagiarism.
So what can we do to prevent this or reduce the likelihood that it will occur?

1. EDUCATE yourself AND your students about plagiarism.

2. Recognize it; acknowledge that it may happen in your course; and get tough! Your attitude as an instructor may make a big difference.

3. Take a look at your course and the tips to reduce plagiarism and consider making some adjustments. Think about the reasons why a student might plagiarize in your course. Take this online quiz to determine the ‘cheatability’ of your course. http://learningfield.org/cheat/

4. Try to rotate quiz/exam questions each term; Rotate paper topics; Change case studies each year or term; You may even consider changing discussion questions slightly as well, from term to term.

Plagiarism.org suggests these guidelines for educators in preventing Plagiarism

http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/preventing_guidlines.html

1. Explain to your students what plagiarism means

2. Explain what is wrong about plagiarism

3. Make consequences clear

4. Start your course with clear expectations

5. Assign specific questions or topics; the more particular the questions or topics the less likely the students will find papers already written on them.

6. Require students to submit thesis statements, introductions, outlines, drafts and resources (during the process of the assignment)

7. Have students annotate their bibliography; but let them know that it should be in their own words and NOT the abstract they may find with the source.

8. Ask your students to describe the process of researching and developing their ideas.

9. Require recent sources;

10. Encourage Concision;
Tips for students

Plagiarism.org suggests these tips for students to prevent plagiarism when writing:
http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/preventing_writing.html

1. **Consult with your instructor** if you have questions or need help

2. **Plan your paper**; write an outline; decide how you will use your sources

3. **Take effective notes** when you are researching and using your sources. Get in the habit of jotting down page numbers and paraphrasing properly in your notes.

4. When in doubt while you are writing your paper, **cite your sources**.

5. **Make it clear WHO said WHAT**.
   Even if you cite sources, ambiguity in your phrasing can often disguise the real source of any given idea, causing inadvertent plagiarism. Make sure when you mix your own ideas with those of your sources that you always clearly distinguish them. If you are discussing the ideas of more than one person, watch out for confusing pronouns. For example, imagine you are talking about Harold Bloom's discussion of James Joyce's opinion of Shakespeare, and you write: "He brilliantly portrayed the situation of a writer in society at that time." Who is the "He" in this sentence? Bloom, Joyce, or Shakespeare? Who is the "writer": Joyce, Shakespeare, or one of their characters? Always make sure to distinguish who said what, and give credit to the right person.

6. **Know how to paraphrase**. Check out the following URLs for tips and examples:
   http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/paraphrase.html

   And also http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/
Excellent resources and articles on Plagiarism

- **AWP: The Association of Writers & Writing Programs**
  The Writer’s Chronicle: September 2000
  “Busting the New Breed of Plagiarist” by Michael Bugeja
  [http://www.awpwriter.org/magazine/writers/mbugeja01.htm](http://www.awpwriter.org/magazine/writers/mbugeja01.htm)

- **“Cheating in Online Student Assessment: Beyond Plagiarism”**
  [http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer72/rowe72.html](http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer72/rowe72.html)

- **“Actions Do Speak Louder Than Words: Deterring Plagiarism with the Use of Plagiarism Detection Software”**
  Author: Bear F. Braumoeller, Brian J. Gaines
  Journal: *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Issue: December 2001
  [http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=105525](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=105525)

- **“Understanding Student cheating and what educators can do about it”** by P.A. Hutton
  College Teaching, vol. 54, no.1, 2006

- **Honesty in Online Education** by Virgil E. Varvel Jr.
  Point & Clickers, Vol.6(1) 2005

- **“Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for research papers”** by R.Harris, 2004
  [http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm](http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm)

- Try the ‘cheatability’ test to see how your course measures up; [http://learningfield.org/cheat/](http://learningfield.org/cheat/)

**Share the following sites with your students!**

- [http://www.plagiarism.org/](http://www.plagiarism.org/) This site has been designed to help educators and students understand plagiarism and how to avoid it. There is an excellent practice activity that teaches students how to paraphrase.

- [https://plagiarism.duke.edu/](https://plagiarism.duke.edu/) I like this site because it defines plagiarism (intentional and unintentional) and lists ways to avoid it.

- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/) OWL at Purdue is an excellent resource for students who need help with writing. This link offers tips on how to paraphrase properly.