

November 12/14

Plagiarism workshop

Paraphrasing checklist:

Did you use the same words as the originals? Did you use the same sentence structure? Did you use the same ordering or arguments?

Consequences range along a continuum from failing the assignment or the course to suspension to expulsion. Mitigating circumstances may be taken into consideration.

Detecting plagiarism

1. Paper far above the students usual level of ability
2. Change in vocabulary or tone
3. Specialized vocabulary the student is unlikely to know
4. Inconsistencies in style, research methods, findings, organization
5. Stale research (old--nothing after 1992)
6. Give aways ("our researchers found..." Or "I discussed..." Or "see Figure 12 on p. 104")
7. Recognizing the source (e.g., the text)

Possibly also inconsistent format (font, layout, references, nettle page, page numbers); embedded links or page numbers, and page breaks; unlikely bibliography (way too many sources); URLs and so forth embedded in header

Might want to insist on an electronic copy (can check for plagiarism or check if it's really within the page limit, and so forth)

Try using the library, google advanced, Invisible web.com, CompletePlanet (databases not indexed by regular search engines) and Usenet groups and list serves.

Papermills exist and the papers available through them often plagiarism. The most popular papermill in Alberta is MyTermPaper.com.

One plagiarized source often leads to others

Check the bibliography

Follow in-text links

Teaching strategies to prevent plagiarism

Define plagiarism clearly and in writing

Discuss the challenges and offer strategies. Discuss the moral and ethical issues (trust, fairness) and the importance of academic integrity in scholarship

Provide resources (writing support, library, online) as well as policies and procedures, including penalties

Build awareness

Might want to include an in-class writing assignment early in the term. Provides some measure of ability, useful if later plagiarism is suspected, reminds students that you can tell if their style/level changes markedly. Doesn't have to be graded.

If possible, use class time to practice skills (paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting); citation workshop, share research topics and approaches (to discuss originality) and enable peer review

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Consider breaking the assignment into multiple small assignments such as research question, thesis statement or topic proposal, outline, annotated bibliography, response to an article, first draft of paper.

Issues for instructors

1. Grading time
2. Compliance by the students

A model that may work is the "portfolio" model where the student submits all the earlier pieces of a larger product but they're not marked.

Other suggestions

Avoid open-ended topics

Create original assignments (things they're not going to find online)

Use unusual combinations of terminology or texts

Clarify the extent to which collaboration is permitted

Post the Writing Support Centre workshops on d2l

Insist that academic sources be found in the library

Use class discussion or project work as a source

Ask for photocopies of sources (or library links)

Ask for drafts and notes

Select permitted resources/source restrictions

Provide a clear style sheet

Get the students to submit a project log or portfolio

Get the student to present to the class how their research process is going

Require a postscript--what problems did they face in writing the paper? Their solutions? What they learned? What was the most difficult section to write? What do they feel is the strongest aspect of the paper? Etc.