



No More Excuses

An Approach to Combating Plagiarism

Presented to Grandview High School

By Michelle Perria

“Many teachers who work in “wired schools” are complaining that new technologies have made it all too easy for students to gather the ideas of others and present them as their own” (McKenzie, 1998).

No more excuses. Teachers complain and whine that their students don't do the work. It only takes a little more planning to prepare your students for the assignments and years ahead of them.

In the Field

- “Officials at [Virginia Tech] say that the number of cheating complaints has grown from 80 in 1995-96 to 280 [1997-98].” (Zack, 1998).
- “A poll conducted by US News and World Reports found that 90% of students believe that cheaters are either never caught or have never been appropriately disciplined.
- 58.3% of high school students let someone else copy their work in 1969, and 97.5% did so in 1989.” (“Plagiarism.org,” 2010)
- “A national survey published in Education Week found that 54% of students admitted to plagiarizing from the internet; 74% of students admitted that at least once during the past school year they had engaged in “serious” cheating; and 47% of students believe their teachers sometimes choose to ignore students who are cheating.” (“Plagiarism.org,” 2010)



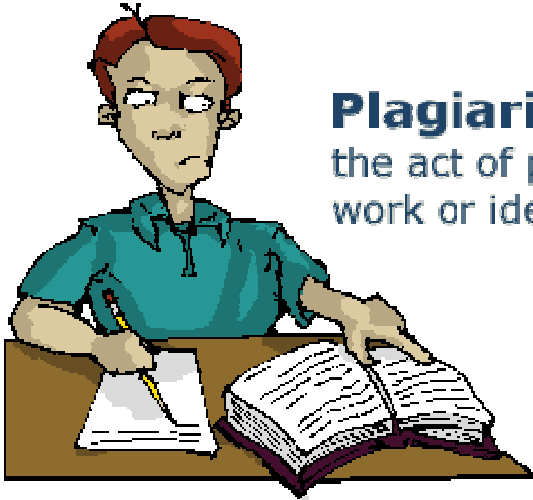
• In a class of 24 juniors I caught seven plagiarized papers for their final project.

- How many did you find or suspect in one class?
- Are they lazy? Clever? Uninformed?

There is clearly a growing problem in the United States, and in our building.

I wanted to know how to prevent plagiarism. I found many resources, and many contain similar solutions.

Plagiarism a Definition



Plagiarism:

the act of presenting another's work or ideas as your own.

Plagiarism:

“the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.”

(Dictionary.com)

<http://exiledonline.com/page/11/?s=Mark+Ames>

“plagiarism, a form of intellectual dishonesty, involves unintentionally using someone else's work without properly acknowledging where the ideas came from (the most common form of plagiarism) or intentionally copying someone else's work and passing it off as your own (the most serious form of plagiarism)’ (Palmquist, 2003, *The Bedford Researcher*, pp. 173-174)” (“Writing @ csu,” 2010).

Why Do Students Plagiarize?

Unintentional or Intentional reasons:

“ students might attempt to paraphrase to convey information obtained from research but fail to cite their sources. Or they might fail to identify passages as quotations when they are conducting research for a writing project and later treat the passage as though it were a paraphrase. In still other cases, students will knowingly attempt to pass off the work of other writers as their own” (“Writing @ csu,” 2010).

On Purpose:

“Students often feel the need to cheat or plagiarize when they don't understand an assignment or concept or when they don't have the time to adequately prepare for turning in an assignment’ (Dornan et al. 145).” (“Writing @ csu,” 2010).

In all of the above situations it is clear that the student lacks some knowledge that we expect them to have. So the first step in combating plagiarism is to go back to the lesson plans.

Preemptive Strategies

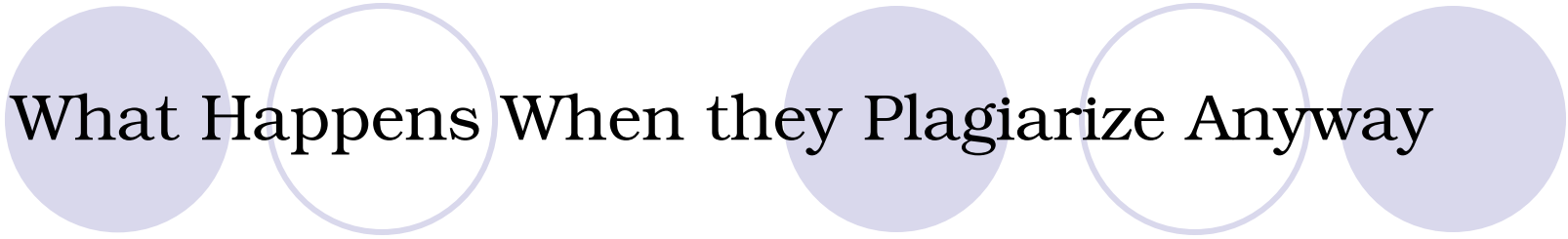
(Leland, 2002) and other sources agree

- Talk with your students about plagiarism. Teach them the concept. They just don't know. Show them the websites; now they know that you know.
- Model correct quoting, citation, paraphrase, etc...
- Teach them how to use the papers on the web as a source for their paper
- Make the assignment more specific; making plagiarism more difficult.
- Create writing assignments that will develop some interest in the subject. Just because every sophomore since the beginning of time has written about betrayal in *Julius Caesar* doesn't mean that they still should. Give them some choice and creativity to enjoy their writing.

Preemptive Strategies cont.

(Leland, 2002) and other sources agree

- Include specific instructions. Require them to use the required material as sources.
- Require specific components such as vocabulary
- Watch them write. Ask them to bring notes and drafts. Have multiple due dates. Break the assignments into smaller pieces.
- Require a reflection on the due date. What did you learn? What was interesting about your research? What is your favorite part of your paper? What did you find to be difficult? Etc...



What Happens When they Plagiarize Anyway

- Make sure the consequences are clear at the beginning of every assignment
- Follow through with the consequences every time
- Re-teach the skills and knowledge
- Conference with the student about what went wrong

Summary and Conclusion

“In my experience, other than the whole-paper or paragraph-after-paragraph type of plagiarism, much plagiarism occurs through the student’s lack of understanding about how to quote, paraphrase, and cite sources. Many students simply do not know what they are doing. Providing them with clear instruction about plagiarism and how to avoid it will help reduce the amount you see” (Harris, 2001).

The biggest battle is making sure the students understand what you want from them. Just because they are juniors, doesn’t mean they have automatic knowledge.

Remember what you taught them in 9th grade? 10th grade? They have never used these skills. Break it down, make it manageable. Most of the time students plagiarize because they panic; they don’t know how to do it.

Don’t take it personal, they are learning. Help them learn this skill before they go to college.

Just Teach It!

The following slides are resources you can explore. There are rich resources out there, take some time to explore.

Resources



Delisio, E.R. (2008). Saving kids from stress. NEA Today Magazine, Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/tools/EW-Saving%20Kids%20from%20Stress.htm>.

Epidemic of student cheating can be cured with changes in classroom goals. (2009, August 09). *Epidemic of student cheating can be cured with changes in classroom goals*, Retrieved from <http://esciencenews.com/articles/2009/08/09/epidemic.student.cheating.can.be.cured.with.changes.classroom.goals>

Gilmore, Barry. (2008). Plagiarism why it happens and how to prevent it. Heinemann Educational Books.

Gilmore, Barry. (2009). Plagiarism a how-not-to guide for students . Heinemann Educational Books.

Harris, Robert. (2001). The Plagiarism handbook. Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczak Pub.

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Resources pg 2



McKenzie, J. (1998, May). *From now On the educational technology journal*. Retrieved from <http://fno.org/may98/cov98may.html>.

Plagiarism.org. (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.plagiarism.org/>

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You cheat!. (2010). *NEA Today Magazine*, Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/36759.htm>

Zack, Ian. (1998, September 16). The Latest academic vice: computer-assisted cheating. *The New York Times on the Web*.