



Pedagoggles: Exploring Teaching Practice - Vol. 3 No. 7 Preventing Plagiarism

For all Pedagoggles: <http://staff.georgianc.on.ca/ctl/pub/pedagoggles.htm>

Lens on Learning Theory

Research tells us that students plagiarize because they often feel overwhelmed by their task load and have poor time management skills. Many do not understand what plagiarism means. External pressures to succeed and worries that they cannot achieve can lead to plagiarism. Lack of motivation, seeking only a pass for example, lead many students to feel that plagiarism is OK. Seeing others plagiarize successfully sets a bad example.

The Georgian College Academic Policies (2008) states: "Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic work. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified and properly cited in the text or as noted in Cites and Sources, Georgian College's guide to the APA style of documentation".

Reflection on Practice

1. How can we help students understand the definition and implications of plagiarism?
2. How can we design assignments that deter plagiarism?

Expanding Your Teaching Toolkit To Prevent Plagiarism

1. Talk with your students in class

Define plagiarism clearly

Many students plagiarize because *they do not understand the concept*; others do it to achieve better grades or meet deadlines. Reduce plagiarism in your class by devoting time to clarifying the definition. Review related topics such as copyright and intellectual property. Provide concrete examples that relate to your course and discipline (handouts or post to Blackboard). Develop an exercise that sensitizes students to the fact that plagiarism is not only a copy & paste function, but can be as simple as stating the ideas of others as your own.

Explain the consequences

Georgian spells out the steps in dealing with plagiarism in its academic misconduct policy. Help your students understand that the College treats plagiarism very seriously with prescribed steps when it is detected and disciplinary action when proven.

Help students learn how to properly cite materials

Introduce your students to *Cites & Sources* (Georgian College's guide to the APA style of documentation, available at the College Bookstore). Many students may need help to differentiate between various sources (e.g. Web, journals, books and magazines).

Act as a role model

Take the time to cite your own sources properly when providing course handouts and PowerPoint presentations.

2. Create Assignments that do not invite plagiarism

Be extremely clear - Specify not just length, but also the types of sources you expect, how they should be documented, how they should be used to address the topic, how they should be integrated with student's own analysis, types of conclusions to be reached or recommendations to be made, and how they are to be supported. Provide sample papers.

Require personal reasoned responses - Asking for detached analysis of a topic invites plagiarism. Design assignments that link a general idea to be researched but then require that it be examined in the context of a specific situation or organization the student is personally familiar with (Edmundson, 2003).

Require analysis, evaluation, and synthesis - "The more analytical and creative the task, the less likely it already exists" (Carroll & Appleton, 2001, p. 9). Assign a topic that integrates 2 ideas. Example: Analyze how a particular economic theory contrasts with the actual response of country X to World Bank requirements.

Require multiple annotated sources – Students must submit a list of sources from both print and internet and include annotations on the value of each towards the development of a completed assignment.

Set up milestones - Structure the research assignment so that intermediate parts of it (topic, early research, prospectus, outline, list of web sites, annotated bibliography, draft, final version) are due at regular intervals. (Harris, 2002, p. 5)

Insist on current sources – Purchased papers often have older sources, ask that 50% of sources be less than 2 years old (Harris, 2002, p. 5)

Assign a stakeholder point of view – Have students write a report and recommendations from one or more specific points of view, for example (a) an entrepreneur, (b) an investor, (c) a consumer, (d) a regulatory official, (e) a local resident.

Require oral reports of papers – At the end of the oral report students must answer questions about their research and writing process.

Require interviews as part of a report - Interviews personalize research, involve students in real-world issues; also, authenticity of interviews can be verified if necessary. Assign a research question that students must pose in interviews with experts or professionals as the first step in the research process.

Use Turnitin.com - Georgian's (2008) academic policies and procedures item 7.2.4 states that "Faculty members have the right to submit a student's work for electronic detection of plagiarism or to require that the student submits his or her own work for detection of same". Turnitin.com is a web based tool that assists students as they develop effective reference skills. For assistance with Turnitin.com contact Jean Payne at ext. 1631.

More Information on Plagiarism

Examples of Plagiarism (n.d.). *Academic Integrity at Princeton*. Retrieved February 6, 2008 from <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/plagiarism.html>

Georgian College Academic Policies and Procedures (2008). Retrieved February 5, 2008, from http://www.georgianc.on.ca/academics/policies/index.php?policy_main=8

Harris, R. (2002, March 7). Anti-plagiarism strategies for research papers. Retrieved February 6, 2008, from <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>

Plagiarized.com <http://www.plagiarized.com/> See the section "Dead Giveaways" for a list of tips on how to spot plagiarism.

Procter, Margaret (2007). How Not To Plagiarize. Retrieved February 5, 2008, from Writing at the University of Toronto Web site: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>

Procter, Margaret (2007). Deterring Plagiarism: Some Strategies. Retrieved February 12, 2008, from Writing at the University of Toronto Web site: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagiarism.html>

Smith, Bonnie (2008). Dealing With Plagiarism. Retrieved February 5, 2008, from Integrating Writing Into Your Course Web site: http://mendota.english.wisc.edu/~WAC/page.jsp?id=106&c_type=category&c_id=44