

**Plagiarism Exercise and Response**

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## Introduction

According to Jackson, Rogers, & Palmquist (2018) plagiarism means to use or pass off the ideas or writings of another as one's own, to appropriate for the use of one's own passages as ideas from another. Plagiarism is intellectual dishonesty and involves the use of someone else's work without properly acknowledging where the ideas came from. (Jackson et al., 2018) This is the most common form of plagiarism. According to Foltýnek, Meuschke, & Gipp (2020) plagiarism is rampant not only in universities but throughout academia where they argue that more than 10% of papers submitted to journals suffered from plagiarism. Academic dishonesty is such a large issue that colleges and universities have enacted strict policies to detect, enforce and provide strategies to curb cheating.

Jackson et al., (2018) postulate that instructors often suspect plagiarism when they note obvious changes in the quality of a student's work such as style, vocabulary, and content. Students may plagiarize intentionally or unintentionally. For example, they may paraphrase to convey information but fail to cite their source. (Jackson et al., 2018) Students may also plagiarize when they think it is easy and they think they will not get caught. (Jackson et al., 2018)

It is up to the instructor to do the detective work to detect plagiarism and have very specific policies in place on not only how to detect academic dishonesty but what happens if a student is confronted and found to have cheated. The most common tool available for the instructor is software such as SafeAssign and other Internet tools that can detect "cut-and-paste" style of writing.

The instructor should have in place a policy to discuss and deter plagiarism with their students. (Jackson et al., 2018) The instructor should follow established guidelines in regard to

style, like APA formatting, proper citation strategies, as well as create an environment that is conducive to learning and collaboration. The expectations should be clear at the outset of the course as to the ramifications or sanctions towards academic dishonesty and how the student will be held accountable.

### **Did the Student Plagiarize in the Writing Assignment?**

Upon review of the student's paper and in reading the sources that the student provided for the assignment it was determined that they plagiarized on two occasions. First, they copied a passage from one of their sources as a direct quote without any citation. Secondly, they did it again further in the paper when writing about the NBA and the shot clock. While this author could have easily had an Internet detection program in place through Blackboard or whatever tool that is used for the student to submit their paper to detect academic dishonesty just a cursory read over of the student's paper found the missed citations.

### **Confronting the Student**

If this author were to confront the student with the charge of plagiarism, the first step would be to schedule a conference. Since this course is conducted online, a video conference would be the best scenario. This author would ask the student to be prepared to provide complete sources and any rough drafts so that they can compare the two with the final paper submission. According to Jackson et al. (2018) this author would ask the student specific questions during the conference such as; "what did you mean by...?" or "in what sense are you using the phrase....?"

This author would then ask the student to describe how they researched and wrote the paper and what process did they use (ie. Where did you look for sources, which databases did you use?). (Jackson et al., 2018) Lastly, this author would ask about the context of the quotation the student used in the paper or was it the student's overall opinion. (Jackson et al., 2018) This

author would conduct this meeting in a non-aggressive way and allow the student room to tell the truth. (Jackson et al., 2018)

### **Recommendations to the Student**

It is always the responsibility of the student to make sure they are upholding the highest standard in regard to academic integrity. As Romans 14:23 (NIV) says, “But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.” This means simply, when in doubt do not do it. If this author was recommending a course of action based on the evidence that the student, in fact plagiarized the paper, the sanctions would depend on two factors:

1. The policy of the institution in regard to cheating and/or plagiarism and academic dishonesty.
2. The position that this author holds at the institution. Do I have tenure? Am I adjunct faculty with a dean or chairperson that I report to?

Upon having the conference, this author would inform the student of the ramifications of their academic dishonesty. If the student was attending Liberty University, they would receive an “F” for academic misconduct and the instance would be reflected in their academic record. This author would also inform the student of their right to appeal and what happens if it is denied.

This author would also attempt to counsel the student during the conference and hope that this discussion would dissuade any further attempts of academic dishonesty. This author would also offer a compassionate ear toward the student and let them know that this is not the end of their academic journey. All of us make mistakes and that they will be challenged far beyond their academic work. Learning goes far beyond textbooks and writing assignments. This author would attempt to instill in the student that college is about critical thinking and that one of the greatest

satisfactions in their college career will come from producing original ideas from their own work.

### **Conclusion**

Academic dishonesty in the form of plagiarism comes from many examples and is often the source of frustration for instructors of college level courses. It is their job to have the tools in place to encourage the student to submit original work. These instructors can do so, even in an online classroom environment by providing; clear expectations, trust in the classroom, fair and relevant forms of assessment, and reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty. (Jackson et al., 2018) If a student is suspected of plagiarism there should be clear and concise policies and procedures in place to not only protect the student but also the faculty and the university as well. With all of this in place it will ensure that the student understands and avoids plagiarism and appreciates that academic integrity is upheld to the highest standard at the university.

### References

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