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Special Issue on Academic Honesty

Since the first organizational meetings of the *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics,* various chartered members have expressed an interest in the development of special issues. This was during the days prior to having a publisher! During that time, ideas for special issues that bounced around included ethical topics related to technology, disabilities, rural practice, research, and academic honesty. Flyers were mailed by U.S. post and listservs to every accredited social work program. These same flyers were distributed at various conferences – particularly the APM, BPD, and a few chapters of NASW. Few expressed an interest.

I had almost given up on the idea of including special issues, but decided to employ informal channels of distribution. Instead of using the U.S. mail and various listservs, I decided to use "word of mouth." When I attended a particularly good presentation at a conference, I began to ask the authors their interest in conducting a special issue. This explains how I came in contact with Peggy Pittman-Munke and Mike Berghoef – the guest editors of this issue. I was really impressed with their presentation on plagiarism.   Both of them immediately loved the idea of editing a special issue. Me too! I am very much impressed with their work and believe that this issue will be frequently cited by many in and outside of social work.

THANKS Peggy and Mike!

Steve

Stephen M. Marson, Senior Editor, *JSWVE*

Editorial: Social Work's Role in Promoting Academic Honesty

For social work students and educators, plagiarism is a more serious issue, because it is an ethical issue reflecting on fitness for the profession. However, many students do not view plagiarism as a serious issue related to professional ethics. Many social work faculty members are hesitant to make a serious issue of plagiarism or to relate it to professional ethics. They often cite the fact that "it would be a shame to ruin a promising career" for what "after all has little to do directly with social work practice." Further, many social work students do not understand exactly what constitutes plagiarism. Sadly, educators often do not agree on what constitutes plagiarism, and this makes it difficult to hold students accountable.

Social work educators must understand clearly what constitutes plagiarism and develop policies that are clear and unambiguous to deal with the issue. These policies must clearly link plagiarism to the *Code of Ethics* and must be transmitted to students in a way that removes ambiguity about the results of plagiarism. Departments must apply plagiarism policies consistently. In other words, students must be educated about what constitutes plagiarism and why plagiarism truly is an ethical violation. Faculty also need to understand the various types of plagiarism if they are going to combat plagiarism among students effectively. Helping students understand the relationship of plagiarism to ethical practice is particularly important when dealing with social work students.

It is also important that social work educators do not assume that material on plagiarism is taught in other classes in the college or university. Often, students transfer from other schools, and professors come and go. It is difficult to be sure exactly what students understand about plagiarism without inquiring in each class. It is also helpful to post guidelines about what constitutes plagiarism in the student program handbook and revisit these guidelines in each class.

Social work educators must work to develop assignments that are comparatively hard to plagiarize. This means changing assignments from semester to semester, so students cannot easily use the work of another student and so that students will have difficulty finding a suitable product to carry out the requirements of the assignment on the Internet. Further, educators much oversee the progress of the assignment so that the educator is aware of the steps the student follows to carry out the assignment. Although it takes far more grading time to grade the individual parts of the assignment, this makes it possible for the instructor to have a good understanding of the student's understanding of the assignment. Often, a simple requirement that an outline and sources be submitted to be cleared by the instructor before work on the major assignment gives the professor a clear sense of the student's capabilities and honesty.

Plagiarism is an ethical issue for social work education that moves beyond university and scholarly requirements. For this reason, social work educators carry more responsibility to teach about plagiarism and other issues of academic honesty than do other educators. The process of teaching students about academic honesty can be used as a way to role model for students methods of working with clients to incorporate in their own professional practice.

Plagiarism is a growing problem, partially because of the ease of obtaining material from the Internet. A combination of methods is needed to deal with this important issue. ***Lead Us***

Into Temptation explores the world of cyber-cheating. The author points out that cyber-cheating is big business and links the explosion of cyber-cheating to the explosion of cheating generally in colleges and universities. This article raises issues of the impact of distance learning across cultures and points out that many cultures have not yet recognized much of what is commonly considered to be plagiarism in the United States' educational establishment. **The Fair Use Rule** explores issues of intellectual property violations and copyright infringement. **An Interdisciplinary Approach to Preventing Plagiarism** looks at the advantages of closer collaborations between librarians and social work educators to emphasize a prevention approach. **Tackling Plagiarism** describes the issue of plagiarism and multiple ways to view and approach student plagiarism. One of the difficulties with the issue of plagiarism is that many students do not see plagiarism as an ethical issue. This article also presents the Internet as a player in making plagiarism easier for the student and harder for the faculty member to detect. Further, strategies to prevent plagiarism are presented briefly, as well as a typology of plagiarists and a description of common faculty responses to plagiarism.   A need for a common department policy is presented along with some elements of a proposed policy. Two reviews of author Robert A Harris' books on plagiarism and a Webography of useful sites are also included.

Teaching techniques to help students avoid plagiarism are included, as well as methods for both discovering plagiarism and dealing with plagiarism when discovered. The editors hope that the contents of this issue will help social work educators reconsider their own roles, foster new ways to think about plagiarism and reconceptualize the importance of all the issues relating to fostering academic honesty in the social work profession.

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Tackling Plagiarism: Linking Hi-Tech, Low-Tech & No Tech Methods for Detection

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Abstract

Plagiarism is a growing problem, partially because of the ease of obtaining material from the Internet. A combination of methods is needed to deal with this important issue. This paper focuses on hi-tech/low-tech/no-tech methods for prevention, detection, and eradication of plagiarism and presents a typology of student plagiarism. Common faculty responses to plagiarism are also discussed along with strategies to prevent plagiarism.

Keywords

plagiarism, plagiarism detection, ethical issues in teaching, plagiarism prevention, technology in plagiarism detection

1. Introduction: The evolution of plagiarism

The origins of plagiarism are rooted deeply in history. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED, 1982, p. 932) informs us that the term likely originated sometime in the 1600s. The term originally referred to kidnapping children or slaves. This usage transformed over time into a metaphor for stealing "intellectual children." In more recent times, the metaphor of a viral plague has been employed to capture the ease and self replicating nature of plagiarism coupled with advances in information technology, notably word processing and the Internet. Legal and popular conceptions of what constitutes plagiarism also have changed greatly over time.

Whereas the idea that plagiarism is stealing has remained constant over time, several questions about the concept of plagiarism and its evolution over time are important for us

to consider as we frame this discussion. The first question asks, "Can plagiarism, to some extent, be unconscious?" The corollary to this question asks, "If plagiarism is not consciously intended, is it still stealing?" The next question asks, "If plagiarism is unconscious, is it still unethical?" These questions offer the beginning of a more sophisticated analysis of the issue and one more relevant to teaching social work values and ethics than is usually offered.

The profession of social work has a unique set of tools that can be brought to bear on the issue of academic honesty generally and plagiarism specifically. When we consider the Person in the Environment Approach, the Strengths Perspective, Developmental Thinking, Systems Perspective, the Advocacy Role, and our highly developed *Code of Ethics*, we realize that we are more equipped than most to address issues of academic honesty. In fact, social work may be in a unique position to develop highly effective prevention strategies for academic dishonesty by creating a professional culture where root causes are differentiated and dealt with successfully.

One example from the mid-seventies that many may remember involved the highly publicized case of musician George Harrison defending himself with an unconscious plagiarism defense. The gravity of this case indicated that the courts at that time took a dim view of plagiarism, whether conscious or unconscious. George Harrison was successfully sued by the publisher of the Chiffons 1962 hit "He's So Fine," which was claimed to the basis of Harrison's hit "My Sweet Lord" (Bright Tunes Music v. Harrisongs Music, 1976). The case turned on fairly technical musical analysis of the distinctive "grace notes" contained in the song. A strong case was made that if plagiarism occurred, it was the unconscious result of his listening to music rather than a deliberate attempt to copy it (DeCurtis, Henke, & George-Warren, 1992; Miller, J., 1980). The key question raised by this case was, "Can someone plagiarize someone else's work without being aware that this is happening?" The judge's decision was clear. Plagiarism, even if unconscious, is still plagiarism. This case also underscored that plagiarism can be criminally connected to copyright infringement and intellectual property laws.

Since that time, the practice of sampled music, sometimes parody, sometimes homage, has blurred the lines both legally and ethically (Bridgeport Music/Southfield Music v. Dimension Films/No Limit Films, 2004; Campbell v. Acuff-Rose, 1994). The rise of peer-to-peer networking has further changed the climate of copyright violation for what might be called the Napster generation. The social environment surrounding plagiarism and copyright is further complicated by the creation of hundreds, by some estimates thousands, of term paper mills furnishing generic term papers for free and customized papers for a fee (Kimbel Library, 2006).

As technology becomes more available and more powerful, the ease of committing plagiarism has increased, and as a result, more plagiarism routinely appears in student assignments as well as in scholarly writing and other media. For many, the attitudes around these ethical issues become a bit hazier. However, for the most part, today we see a change in degree of plagiarism, not a change in type of plagiarism.

2. The Proliferation of Plagiarism

The evolution of plagiarism is fueled by one aspect of modern technology, the copy and paste option. This option makes plagiarism far easier and less time consuming than

before. However, earlier generations of students also had versions of copy and paste, involving scissors, correction fluid and tape, or extensive retyping, a less sophisticated version of copy and paste. A variety of sources report exponential growth in plagiarism (Szabo & Underwood, 2004). However, this raises questions about how much plagiarism has truly grown, how much awareness has grown, and how much have anti-plagiarism software tools improved the chances of detection. Although the Internet makes plagiarism easier and less complicated, the Internet also provides tools for easier detection of some types of plagiarism.

Let us consider the following "varieties of plagiaristic experience" that are familiar to all of us who teach:

- A student purchases a paper from a site such as www.cheathouse.com, a popular source for acquiring papers, and turns it in exactly as purchased.
- A student "tweaks" the purchased paper to make it less detectable.
- A student copies and pastes from a variety of sources and weaves an "original" collection.
- The student says, "I don't know why you are so upset with me. I've always done it this way!"

3. A Typology of Plagiarists

Clearly, from the few preceding examples, there is a range of plagiarism from which one can develop typologies of plagiarists. Many authors have attempted to analyze what motivates plagiarism and distill a universal typology (Baggaley & Spencer, 2005).

One possible typology of plagiarists might include the following:

- The Unconscious Plagiarist

Thought Process: "I didn't remember that I read it somewhere."

Thought Process: "Isn't this all just common knowledge?"

- The Ignorant Plagiarist

Thought Process: "I changed some words [the "and"s and "the"s]"

Thought Process: "I put the citation in the reference list at the end."

Thought Process: "I didn't know."

Thought Process: "I didn't know that I couldn't quote from myself without attribution."

These first examples of plagiarists are difficult for most professors. If the student is genuinely ignorant or unconsciously plagiarizing, the professor often asks, "Does this justify heavy penalties that are often mandated by departments or universities?" and can be torn about how to best handle the situation.

The next group of examples generally produces less angst in faculty and often produces anger and frustration in students.

- The Con Artist as Plagiarist

Thought Process: "I can change the paper enough that no one will figure out the source." This manifestation and subsequent detection of the "Con Artist" generally produces no angst in faculty.

Thought Process: "I suckered someone else into writing my paper, my parent, significant other, or friend, by telling them if they don't help me out, I'll fail the class, flunk out, or won't get into an MSW program"

- Subcategory: The Con Artist Enabler

This subcategory raises for faculty the issue of how to handle the fellow student enabler. In other words, should the fellow student suffer the same penalty as the "Con Artist," especially when it is clear to the faculty member that there is a power imbalance or the "Con Artist" preyed on someone vulnerable and may even have framed this in a way that presented the failure to help a classmate as a violation of collegiality?

- The Thoughtful Thief

Thought Process: "I knew they wouldn't mind if I used their paper." Usually the original author was not asked for permission.

Thought Process: "Oh, I would not have used it without permission if I knew it mattered that much." In this case, the original author is usually asked for permission, and if the original author does not bluntly deny the right to use the paper, the "Good Thief" assumes permission.

- The Big Spender

Thought Process: "I bought it; it is my property." This student has no apparent guilty conscience over the plagiarism.

Thought Process: "I can't believe you don't believe I wrote this." This student attempts to place the faculty member in a defensive position by attacking. Some students add tears to the attack, while others threaten to complain about the faculty member to the administration, hoping to trump the situation by adding anxiety.

- The Opportunistic Plagiarist

Thought Process: "My organization has files of papers… it would be a shame not to use them." Sometimes this thought process is supplemented with the thought "If I don't make a good grade on this paper and in this course, I will pull down the GPA of my organization," or "I am just using the papers to get some ideas."

Thought Process: "After al,l this is a free paper site on the Web…why not."

- Other Plagiarist Enablers.

There are a number of types of enablers. Faculty, administration, and fellow students can all appear in this category. Students in this category are generally not identified by faculty, either because they are not detected or because they deny complicity, so one half of the plagiarism often is undetected or unproven. Plagiarist enablers can appear in several subcategories, the "See No Evil" enabler, and the "Let's not Make A Hassle Over Nothing" enabler.

The first subcategory, the "See No Evil" enabler, includes the following two enablers: the peer who says, "Go ahead, use my work, no one will ever know," and the professor who says, "I know that this is not something you would do knowingly." These two examples of

enablers generally are not consciously complicit in encouraging plagiarism. Both are likely to see this as an exceptional circumstance calling for mercy, rather than an acceptance that plagiarism should be challenged or ignored.

A second subcategory, the "Let's Not Make Cause a Hassle Over Nothing" enabler, includes the following situations: The professor who turns a blind eye to work that does not fit with the student who turns it in, and the administrator who says, "Let's not make such a fuss over this." or "Aren't you overreacting?" Other versions of this category may include faculty members who say to colleagues who detect plagiarism: "Don't you think you are being too hard on the student?" or "Do you know what that student is experiencing in his/her life?" or "I don't think this is a big enough problem to jeopardize his/her standing in the program, or mar a perfect GPA, or delay graduation," or "Are you sure you were clear in your assignment?" This second subcategory is the more pernicious of the two categories. In these examples, the enabler is likely aware at some level that s/he is complicit in the plagiarism. Faculty and administrators who are unwilling to deal forthrightly with the problem promote an atmosphere in which plagiarism becomes the norm rather than isolated instances.

Other common errors made by students may include:

- Only citing sources used at the end of the paper
- Not citing on PowerPoint slides
- Changing a few words and not attributing the source as an "almost" quote
- Giving the source as a Web site rather than the specific part of the Web site used
- Giving a primary source obtained from a secondary source without crediting the primary source (as: as cited in)
- Not citing pictures and graphics
- Not citing conversations, classes, and so forth that contribute heavily to the ideas developed by the student
- Not citing from previous work done by the student
- Turning in a paper written for another class without instructor permission
- Copying and pasting and dropping the source as the material is transferred into the new document
- Not So Unintentional (i.e., buying a paper from a Web source)
- These sources vary: papers written to order, purchasing a prewritten paper on a topic
- Copying a friend's paper, with or without the friend's permission
- Copying a paper in an organization's files (fraternities and sororities are notorious for paper files)
- Getting substantial help from a friend or another instructor on the paper
- Copying a published paper
- Our favorite: getting parents to write the paper but not removing telltale comments, such as, "Hope this helps you get a better grade. Be sure to bring your laundry home this weekend."
- Submitting work done as a team/group for another class as one's own work and without permission of the team/group

Faculty responses to this increase in plagiarism can be seen to form a continuum, ranging from plausible denial to career cynicism. Many faculty who have not yet detected much plagiarism ask, "Is it really that big of a problem?" Other jaded faculty will reply, "They all do it, and you can't catch them, so why bother trying?" But what is the proper response to waking up during an avalanche? And more to the point, what is the unique social work educator response?

4. Examples of Anti-Plagiarism Software

Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com) is perhaps the most well known brand of anti-plagiarism software and seems to have the greatest market share at this point in time.

Other companies that offer this service include Ithenticate (www.ithenticate.com/) and WCopyfind (www.plagiarism.phys.virginia.edu/Wsoftware.html). In most of these services, an account is created that allows a professor (and in some cases a student) to submit a paper for review. An "originality report" is generated consisting of a graphic summary of the percentage of the paper that was found in other sources from the company's database. In the case of Turnitin.com, this database includes not only scholarly works, but also an archived record of all previously submitted student papers.

Some faculty liken using anti-plagiarism software to testing for illegal drug use. The drug testing analogy is interesting in that many testers, like many employers, find themselves surprised by the results, exclaiming, "That's not who I expected to or meant to catch!" The advantage to using software to identify plagiarized papers is that it provides a fast technological solution to the technological aspects of plagiarism by screening for content that has been copied from the Internet or previously published papers. It quantifies how much content came from specific sites. Ideally, it allows for a reasonably objective confrontation when a student has copied and pasted from uncited sources, such as, "This report demonstrates that 75% of your paper came from the following five Internet sites."

However, there are disadvantages to using anti-plagiarism software. For example, in these originality reports, proper citations are also highlighted, so faculty will still need to determine which quotations are valid and which are not properly cited. Anti-plagiarism software also misses a lot of territory in the literature, for instance, gray literature. For example, government produced brochures, are often not included in the database against which papers are checked. This means that material copied and pasted from a source like this will not be detected by anti-plagiarism software.

As with any new technology, there is an investment of time, a learning curve for faculty and students to use a particular product, the time involved in submitting and waiting for results, the cost of purchasing or licensing such software, legal issues related to intellectual

property, and informed consent concerns. All the issues are considerations for adoption of a particular technology. To avoid some of these issues, some faculty use lower tech methods, such as using free search engines to take a suspected piece of text and seeing if a simple Internet search detects uncited material (McCullough & Holmberg, 2005). Others use anti-plagiarism software preventatively by allowing students to submit assignments for analysis before submitting them for grading, using the software to check for missed citations or excessive quotations. Some universities are turning away from services such as Turnitin.com because of legal challenges and are now using alternative proprietary software such as SafeAssign (www.SafeAssign.com), which only adds student papers to its database if the student gives explicit permission to do so.

Another concern raised with these high-tech strategies for detection is that surveillance technology is being substituted for relationships. Rather than a professor knowing a student and his or her work, faculty rely on ever more sophisticated technologies to catch the ever increasingly sophisticated plagiarist, creating an escalating "arms race" of detection and evasion techniques (Szabo & Underwood, 2004). There are also concerns about retention of student papers and the potential violation of intellectual property rights. All of these factors combine to create a process that feels more like surveillance and policing of students, rather than a respectful academic dialogue.

What then are faculty to do with such limited and potentially problematic tools? At this point, we may need to just accept them for what they are and what they can, and cannot, do and begin dealing with the thornier aspects of this issue. Proactively, we can identify and differentiate patterns of plagiarism as well as develop effective policies and differentiated responses as well as maintain an awareness of possible unintended consequences of our use of new technologies to identify academic dishonesty. It is also important to realize that detection is only the beginning. As is often the case with whistleblowing, no good deed goes unpunished. Once plagiarism is detected, and especially when multiple cases are detected, a response is required. This can range from turning a blind eye to expulsion from the university.

5. The Social Work Response

This leaves us with the rather daunting question: What is the best response, and indeed what is the unique social work educator's response, to this rise in academic dishonesty, specifically plagiarism? This will surely need to include the type of reflection in all directions we ask of our students – the best contextualization that we can muster. It will include an analysis of the person in the environment. It will include systems analysis. And it will include wrestling with and adhering to the social work code of ethics. It is crucial in this evolving discussion that wide ranging discussions from the social work community inform our collective practice in this area to answer these larger questions. To what extent is cheating in general, plagiarism in particular, and our response to it, an artifact of large classroom size, generic assignments, and a loss of knowledge of our students? To what

extent is this larger cultural issue, a relationship issue, an ethical issue? We will likely find that this is a much larger issue than just a few bad apples in the social work classroom.

However, there are some techniques that we have found helpful. To some extent, we need to become better at differentiating types and motivations for plagiarizing just as we would look at making such differentiations in our practice. If we start where the client/student is, we need to remember that all students who plagiarize do not consciously intend to cheat and that there are students who really do not understand that what they are doing is plagiarism. These are the relatively easy situations. We also need to examine our professional obligation in dealing with the more brazen versions of plagiarism and take the steps necessary to adequately address them. These can be far more challenging for most faculty.

6. Avoiding Plagiarism: Prevention

One step that can be taken is to teach about plagiarism before there is a problem. For this purpose the syllabus can be used as a teaching moment. Sharing with students the definition of plagiarism and being clear about your classroom policies can head off many potential plagiarism situations. This is also an opportune time to reference college and university policies that deal with academic dishonesty generally and plagiarism specifically. This should include policy statements notifying students of the use of anti-plagiarism software usage and possibly may include an informed consent component (University of Windsor, 2005). Finally, tying in the social work code of ethics is an important aspect of teaching about expectations of professional integrity. These may go beyond university expectations for academic honesty and professional conduct and are an important element in acculturation to the profession.

Large class size can work against professors truly knowing their students. But there is only so far that relying on high tech methods of detection will carry us. We need to know our students well enough to be able to detect whether or not the work turned in belongs to the student who turned it in. A comparison of submissions with earlier writing can help detect unoriginal work. A student who writes in one style usually does not alter style drastically in subsequent sections of a paper. A student who usually writes with grammatical errors and slang generally does not abruptly change this behavior. A student who cannot organize thoughts easily usually does not suddenly produce a well organized paper

Some practical ways to accomplish plagiarism prevention include assigning many different kinds of written assignments, such as creative free writing assignments, journals turned in regularly, and essay exams and requiring the rationale for selecting topic, notes, outline, and annotated bibliography from which the paper developed. Generally, written assignments that do not just deal with reporting facts but take higher order thinking skills

are more difficult to plagiarize. Creating a unique, more involved step-by-step process of building an assignment can also aid in prevention. This may include requiring an application or an explanatory piece that is unique to the class.

Some faculty require student/professor conferences around written work, creating a dynamic in which sharing the process of creation with a professor makes it harder to take credit for work that is not one's own. This individualized attention allows for faculty to frame the assignment in such a way that it would be far difficult to turn in someone else's work or a prewritten paper.

Well thought out assignment creation often also serves to thwart academic dishonesty. In general, it is advisable to avoid using the same assignments year to year. Careful explanation of the specifics of what is required in the work to be submitted and linkage back to the required content for the class for which it is to be submitted also helps discourage cheating. Generic assignments that broadly cover a topic can be an invitation to plagiarize, whereas idiosyncratic ones tend to prevent it.

Students who know that anti-plagiarism will be employed may also be less inclined to use another's work. Again, some faculty have found great success with the creative and effective proactive use of anti-plagiarism software. In this strategy, students must be given access to the service in order to check themselves against the originality report to evaluate how well they have done in regard to proper citation before final submission of an assignment.

7. Consequences of Plagiarism: Treatment

Clear consequences can also act as a deterrent to plagiarism. Intentional plagiarism can be considered to be a violation of the *Code of Ethics.* Potential consequences can include redoing the assignment; failing the assignment; failing the class; referral to the program, college, or university disciplinary committee; dismissal from the program; or dismissal from the university. Consequences should be consistent across situations and across faculty. The consequences of plagiarism should appear in student manuals and other program documents and should not be a surprise to any student. Student advisors can play a key role as a central person to monitor overall reports of plagiarism across courses and semesters. If a faculty member discovers that clear written policies are lacking at any of these levels, it is important to quickly initiate a process of review and policy development.

Wrestling through the consequences of a discovered plagiarism situation can be a painful experience. For this reason, faculty sometimes avoid dealing with it in a head-on

straightforward manner. Remember, if the paper seems too good to be true, then it probably is not the student's work and it is best to follow up quickly with either a low tech check of references or a high tech utilization of anti-plagiarism software. As in many situations in life it is helpful to have a plan and follow the plan. This should include involving academic and program advisors in the determination, evaluation, and response to the plagiarism situation (Barnes, 2004).

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems prudent for social work faculty to invest in prevention. It also seems that social work faculty should be on the forefront of developing fair, consistent, and effective policies to treat the problems of academic dishonesty. It is essential for social work educators to join the discussion and work toward more effective practice in the prevention and treatment of this social problem. More discipline specific studies need to be conducted to evaluate specific strengths s as well as potential vulnerabilities to plagiarism within the social work community (Marsden, Carroll & Neill, 2005; Collins & Amodeo, 2005; Lambert & Hogan, 2004; Culwin, 2006). Careful evaluation should be conducted before adoption of any high tech solutions, such as anti-plagiarism software   (Evans, 2006; Macdonald & Carroll, 2006; McKeever, 2006). We must also attempt to develop a holistic approach that embraces the tools with which we hope to equip our students to cultivate a culture of honesty, in academia and in practice settings. (Leask, 2006). In an era that emphasizes and even glamorizes the distorted narrative of the rugged independent individual researcher going it alone, our students need the social work reframe that the process of knowledge building is really building on the work of those who came before, and giving them proper acknowledgement.

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Lead Us into Temptation: The Big Business of Cyber-Cheating

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Key words: cyber-cheating, plagiarism

Abstract

Cheating in academic settings has always been a temptation practiced by some students for many reasons. With the advent of technology and the Internet, the ease and access of cheating opportunities have increased; in particular, ready-made and customized academic papers are offered for a price by an increasing number of online companies. This article presents the problem and provides advice to minimize, and ideally, eliminate cheating.

1. Introduction

No surprise. The temptation to cheat or cyber-cheat is a classroom given, and acts of plagiarism are not the exception, but the expected writing strategy for a growing number of students. And what is Internet or cyber-plagiarism? It's that text-based and media-based underworld in which original author anonymity meets amorally-rich resources. Too many term paper and research writing assignments are kidnapped by the students' rationale of time-saving, grade competition, poor English writing skills and everybody-else-does-it attitudes. These reasons help fuel the problem. Furthermore, nefarious online prewritten

and customized academic paper businesses fan the flame. They tempt, and then assist, cheaters to cheat.

2. Proliferation of cyber-cheating

To illustrate the proliferation of cyber-cheating opportunities, I Googled "term paper mills" and within 15 seconds, 14,600,000 sites were at my fingertips. ("Term paper mills." Retrieved from Google.com. 22 July 2007.) Online businesses provide a market for students to instantly buy or borrow customized or off-the-shelf papers. I found sponsored links that promote ads for "custom-written $9.95 per page. 10% off. Guaranteed A grade. Free revision." (www.Custom-Essays-Lab.com.) Another ad touts free offerings "1000s of term papers, book reports and essays are ready now." (www.Papers-on.com.) Hard to resist offers for some students.

Try some investigative research yourself. Click to see what's being promoted, for example, on www.EssayGalaxy.com. You'll discover that free papers are not really free. Remember, it's big business, so someone is paying somewhere. In this case, a membership fee is required, not per paper but per month, at $19.95. Or a student can opt for a six-month plan at $69.95 that will give access to "over 50,000 papers that you can review, download or print …from high school to college level." To make the process simpler, online options for payment are provided: credit card, online check, or PayPal.

Doesn't this cyber-cheating big business make you wonder: If plagiarism is defined as copying someone else's work without their permission and offering it as one's own, then how do big cyber-cheating businesses legally exist? Simple. On the business Web site, sometimes seemingly hidden in very small print or sometimes offered as direct advice, are warnings that papers should be used for reference, models, or examples only. Granted, a logical rationale, but how many papers are used and referenced rather than misused and submitted as the student's originals?

3. Cultural Complexities

To make the problem yet more complex, "moral relativity" advocacy among students, and some educators, is gaining popularity. Moral relativity is the perspective that views academic integrity and honesty as flexible, depending upon the situation and circumstances (Gibson, 2004). In other words, students believe that cheating and plagiarizing can be, at times, acceptable behaviors.

Now add the fact that distance education commonly uses technology to connect students between cultures. However, the proliferation of plagiarism is not the fault of the advancement of communication technology itself. Unfortunately, traditional cheating and plagiarism methods are being simplified by and into the digital world of computers and high-tech devices The Internet is a prime example: Web sites proliferate with both treasure and trash, simultaneously, opening cyber-library doors to research opportunities and closing minds to honest writing efforts.

Like any man-made machines, their valuable uses, or misuses, depend upon individuals in cultural contexts. So while expanding educational access by crossing time zones can be easy, crossing cultures can be more complex. Making generalized assumptions about any student's skills, knowledge, and behaviors can create problems. Remember, some global settings don't recognize plagiarism as a problem. The common concept of copyright may not be taught in other educational systems. Students are simply expected to "locate and produce answers"—not create a "piece of independent writing in any language, let alone in English" (Carroll, 2004).

But a diverse cultural educational standard alone is not responsible for plagiarism misunderstandings. Also realize that some students who are identified with special education needs, such as Dyslexia, may not be cognitively able to paraphrase, but rather need to cut and paste writing assignments (Carroll, 2004).

Then again, be alert: plagiarism practices don't fall only on special needs abilities or cultural misunderstandings. In a recent study of 145,000 college students, respondents "reported that while 60% of their peers 'sometimes' cut and pasted unidentified Internet sources, twenty-seven percent did so 'often' or 'very often'" (Kuh, 2003). Charles Gibson, the narrator of a television program entitled *Caught Cheating*, revealed the alarming number of cheating cases, including plagiarism, occurring in both high school and college settings (29 April 2004). Students, many interviewed anonymously, provided testimonials exposing common attitudes and aptitudes for cheating. In addition, students explained how traditional cheating is enhanced and expanded through high technology "gadgets" and hand-held communication devices.

One last complexity to the plagiarism plague: Still too many educators and educational school policy makers are clueless as to the cyber-signs of the times. Fortunately, however, more educators and policymakers are now realizing that they need to become more proactive, not just reactive, in minimizing Internet plagiarism. And being proactive goes beyond building awareness: it's creating the curriculum designs and policies that educate the students on plagiarism. It's making students realize that they're cheating themselves. Inquiry learning, intellectual stimulation, and creative new solutions, presentations, or interpretations of the world around them are ignored. As educators, you know that learning is an exploratory process that is recognized far beyond just correctly completing those bubbled answers on timed tests.

4. Solutions

So, what can be done to minimize, and ideally, both eliminate Internet plagiarism and reduce the inappropriate use of cyber-cheating big business?

- First, acknowledge that Internet plagiarism does exist and that this problem is growing.

- Second, explore the term paper mills that exist and be aware of the tempting offerings. Know what many of your students already know, and let them know that you know. A particularly helpful place to start is one of the Kimball Library presentations: Cheating 101: Internet Paper Mills. Over 300 paper mill sites are listed. (http://www.coastal.edu/library/presentations/mills2.html)

- Third, get involved. Be proactive, rather than reactive. Have an anti-plagiarism policy and set of procedures in place; however, at this point in time, there might not be one in your educational setting. So, take the initiative and help to create one. Besides colleagues, you might want to invite concerned students to join your endeavor. Remember that your committee and you will need to know not only how to identify, discover, and discourage plagiarism, but also, how to keep yourself safe from unfair accusations. Whichever approach you take, proactive or reactive, be certain to address the insidious nature of Internet plagiarism.

- Fourth, as a caveat: Remember also to be careful not to unjustly accuse a student of plagiarism. If there is no policy in place, the student might accuse you of discrimination. While "academic freedom" is a worthy decision-making stance for your own classroom, please be advised: a school approved policy and procedure is wiser.   Of course, it's next to impossible to police educational morality; but you can certainly model educational morality and enforce academic integrity guidelines, particularly in your own educational setting.

- Last, remember the essential element: learn the educator's role and role model it. Granted, you already have too much to do in too little time, so you must use your time efficiently and effectively. Yes, there are too many Web sites to explore. But start with a few. Perhaps plan a professional development time to partner or small group research and share, with a bigger audience of colleagues, what's been found.

5. Conclusions

Cyber-cheating is big business. Know what those temptations for students are. Realize that plagiarism opportunities abound from pre-written papers to cut-and-paste techniques masquerading as original work. Above all, be sure—never assume—that your students know that plagiarism is literary theft; that it's a form of cheating commonly recognized as the use of another's idea or text, without attribution, without giving credit to the authentic author with no resource citation or reference noted. Plagiarism is common-practice copying, possibly violating copyright law. "In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward" (www.plagiarism.org).

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The Fair Use Rule: When Copying Is Not Cheating

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Abstract

When one pretends that another's work is one's own we call it plagiarism. Other types of intellectual property violations include copyright infringement and abuse of the Fair Use Rule. This article raises some key questions that can be used when considering both legal and ethical standards surrounding the use of another writer's work.

Keywords

Ethics, Fair use, Plagiarism, Copyright infringement, intellectual property, informed consent

1. Introduction

Intellectual property violations of all kinds have been made easier by technology. With a few strokes of a mouse, anyone can copy and paste entire sections from nearly a limitless supply of documents on the Internet and claim it as his or her own work. Or, documents can be uploaded in their entirety to blogs and discussion groups without the author's knowledge or permission. When one pretends that another's work is one's own, we call it plagiarism, a form of cheating. Plagiarism is stealing the intellectual property of another and claiming it as one's own. To combat this form of cheating, many colleges have employed the use of sophisticated software to help in identifying plagiarism (www.plagiarism.org). But, there are more types of intellectual property violations than strictly defined plagiarism.

We were all taught as students to cite our sources. We need to quote and give credit when we report on the works of another author. But, quoting too much, **even if you give credit** to the original author, can be just as much of a problem when we reproduce and disseminate the work to a mass audience without permission. That is called a copyright violation. If plagiarism is stealing another's work, failure to ask for permission when lawfully required to is like taking someone's property without permission, a car for example, and using it for personal gain.

Many articles that are published in electronic form now contain an additional warning or clarification about the usual copyright notice "©" — explaining that the article can be shared among individuals but not reproduced in any medium without the permission from authors and publishers. To reproduce copyrighted works on a large scale, whether for profit or otherwise, without permission is a copyright violation and a violation of law. Nonetheless, the reproduction of copyrighted works is becoming a common everyday occurrence. Social work students, as well as seasoned social workers, even those with academic credentials, do not seem to be immune from intellectual property and copyright violations.

Go to any freestanding Internet discussion group for professional social workers or other mental health professionals, and on any given day one can find complete texts of news articles from major news sources and journals reproduced in their entirety. Rarely does one see evidence that permission from the author or publisher has been obtained.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* is clear about plagiarism. Section 4.08 on Acknowledging Credit states, "a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed and b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others" (NASW, 1999).

Nearly all works of creative expression are copyrighted, and in order to use substantial portions of copyrighted work (more than a small amount), permission is required even if credit is given. It is more than good manners; it is required by law. While the NASW *Code of Ethics* does not overtly mention copyright infringements, a powerful argument can be made that failure to obtain permission to use another's work when lawfully required is dishonest. Fredric G. Reamer (personal email communication, February 14, 2007) suggests that copyright infringements can be covered by The NASW *Code of Ethics* Section 4.04, Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception, which states that "Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception" (NASW, 1999).

Many Internet discussion groups are freestanding in that they are not under the auspice of a professional organization, accrediting body, publisher, or some monitoring organization. There are usually no standards of professional conduct, other than some general notion of "Netiquette," a loose variation on the concept of etiquette, which is often vaguely defined, arbitrarily interpreted, and sporadically and selectively enforced. Servers that host such groups do have "Terms of Use" policies that include adhering to laws including copyright laws, but due to the sheer number of discussion groups and volume of posts, there is little monitoring. Rarely do you see on these groups' pages a copyright © symbol, the year published, and the name of the publisher or copyright holder with the statement that "This work was reprinted by permission." This is because permission from the author or copyright holder is rarely, if ever, obtained on many Internet discussion groups and e-mail lists. Often the posters of such content are professionals and/or academics, some of whom have their own copyrighted publications. As a result, they may feel they understand copyright requirements but are often misinformed or unaware of how laws apply to posting information on the Internet. Even if social workers have an awareness of the concept of intellectual property laws, few seem to understand its relevance today—what it means to adhere to these laws and the ramifications on the profession if such laws are disregarded.

2. Are there times when one can legally and legitimately reuse or copy copyrighted content without permission?

Yes, there are a couple of situations in which this is permissible on a limited basis. For example:

In non-profit academic institutions, teachers may use copyrighted works as "hand-outs" for classroom instruction on a limited basis without necessarily obtaining permission from the copyright holder if the use can be considered "fair" under the Fair Use doctrine, section 107 of Title 17 of U.S. copyright law. This exception, however, was written before the use of

technologies and the Internet, which allow for the ease of transmitting and broadcasting works. In 2002, Congress enacted the "Technology, Education and Copyright Harmonization Act," commonly known as the "TEACH Act," in an attempt to extend such privileges to distance education (National Education Association-Hot Issues). However, this exception, as it was written, applies to educational institutions only, and includes a number of requirements that the institutions must first meet before the exception can be utilized. While faculty involved in distance learning may include copyrighted materials, it is limited to portions and under strict conditions. "Stated more bluntly, this law is not intended to permit scanning and uploading of full or lengthy works, stored on a Web site, for students (or anyone) to access throughout the semester—even for private study in connection with a formal course" (Crews, 2003). Therefore, freestanding discussion group Web sites and blogs are not covered by the TEACH Act.

The Fair Use exception doesn't just apply to the limited use of copyrighted works by educational institutions. One can lawfully and ethically reproduce copyrighted material without permission if such reproduction meets with the Fair Use standards. However, these standards are unfortunately often misinterpreted and misunderstood (Nolo, 2007). In essence "Fair Use" permits instances when one can legally and ethically use portions of a copyrighted work without permission from the copyright holder and disseminate or use it for one's own purposes, such as criticism or parody. However, it is important to note that these situations are very limited and the formula can be tricky to interpret. Contrary to what students and social workers may be observing, especially on the Internet, fair use does *not* include copying entire articles to Web sites, blogs, or Internet discussion groups with little or no commentary. Simply claiming that you took a copyrighted work as fair use does not make it so.

3. When is copying without permission both legal and acceptable?

There is no simple answer. Copyright law is among the more complicated aspects of law. However, there are some basic questions that can guide students, faculty, and social work practitioners in addressing some of the issues. The courts considered a number of factors when adjudicating copyright infringement cases, and no one factor carries more weigh than the other. These factors include: 1) the purpose and character of the use - is it for educational purposes or criticism, or for profit and entertainment? Is a new work being created or is it merely a reproduction of the original? 2) the nature of the work being used: is the original a highly creative work or a factual document? 3) the amount and substantiality of the portion being used: is it a small amount? Would that portion be considered the "heart of the work"? 4) the market effect of the new work being created: what will be the impact on the market? Is the work in direct competition with the original?

Each of these factors is discussed in more detail below.

3.1 What is the purpose of this new work? Is something new being created?

It is permissible under Fair Use to take portions, and sometimes liberal portions, of a copyrighted work if it is interspersed with specific commentary or rebuttal of points. This is criticism or commentary made throughout the text in a manner that adds value or interpretation and creates a new work that references the original. It is not a direct copy-paste job of the full text. For example, say you are a member of one of these Internet discussion groups. You see an article in *The New York Times* or a major news source about some presidential candidate's proposal for universal health care. You can, under Fair Use rules, quote portions of the article—perhaps even fairly substantial portions of the article—as long as you also provide enough original commentary of your own in either criticism or support. This means in essence that you have used the article to create a new work of your own, and the excerpts you took were merely augmenting or referencing your ideas and were necessary to make your point. This is the same standard that is expected of students when writing papers.

You *cannot* claim as Fair Use, copying the entire article from *The New York Times* or any other copyrighted source without copious comment. You are not permitted to copy or upload the article with no comment, or such sparse comments as, "This is an interesting article" or "I am for it" or "against it" and leave it at that. This does not meet the Fair Use rule.

In this situation, in which you merely wish to share the article, the appropriate legal and ethical behavior would be to give a short excerpt, usually no more than 25 words, and the link or URL. Anyone interested in reading further is free to go the original source to read further. The claim often mentioned, that it is too inconvenient, or that the original source Web site may clutter their version with unwanted advertisements, is hardly a justification. The source, whether it is a news source or professional journal, derives its income from those "pesky" ads, without which they might not have been able to publish in the first place. Even though copyright law is not necessarily intended to protect the publishers' rights to make money from ads, it does protect the rights of the copyright owner to reproduce, distribute, perform, and otherwise use their work in a manner they choose (Brigham Young University, 2006). It's simple really. Ask yourself, would you want someone using, distributing, or otherwise reproducing your work without your permission?

3.2 Competition with the source.

Many social workers and other health professionals who use Internet discussion groups and e-mail lists interpret the concept of competing as meaning that they are competing financially. Since most people who upload copyrighted material are not doing so for money and may genuinely want to share information, they believe they are safe on this issue. Not necessarily so, according to John Gile of the National Writers Union. One can violate another's copyright if you impair or ruin the market for their work, even if you yourself are not competing with them for actual profits. Gile suggests that posting an article to the Internet can interfere with the author's intent to market the work in other venues. If it's posted on the Internet, it becomes used in a sense, or old news, thereby diminishing its value. He goes on to say that the author's work could also be misinterpreted and/or be used to convey something other than the author's intent. So, it is not just when it is sold for profit that competition with the source may be an issue (Riolo, 2006c). For example, someone may have written an Op Ed piece for a major newspaper, but they may also plan on using their research for a related but different article in another venue, such as a journal article. Non-authorized publications from the Op Ed piece could reduce the value or timeliness of the journal article. This is certainly true when unpublished manuscripts or manuscripts under submission to journals find their way to the Internet without the author's permission. Most journals expect new and un-published works and may not accept an already posted article (Riolo, 2006b). If reproducing another's work diminishes its value to the author or copyright holder, it is not likely to be considered Fair Use.

3.3 The amount of material used.

The more material from copyrighted work you use, the less likely it will be considered Fair Use. It's one thing to take a brief excerpt, cite the source, and provide the reference or link. It's quite another matter to cut and paste large excerpts or the full article. There is no specific limit, and each case would need to be evaluated separately, but cutting and pasting an entire article and attaching a statement that it is copied as Fair Use, as can be sometimes seen on Internet discussion groups, is in no way providing protection to the poster. In fact, claiming something is Fair Use when clearly it is not could be used to demonstrate that the copier understands the work is copyrighted and is aware of the concept of Fair Use and disregarded it (Ed Colburn, publisher of Harvard Press, personal e-mail communication, October 31, 2006).

3.4 The significance of the material used.

Sometimes even reproducing a small portion of a copyrighted work can create a problem.

The more important the material is to the original work, the less likely its use without permission will be considered a Fair Use. The example often cited by many sources is the use of relatively small portions of former President Gerald Ford's book. The magazine, *The Nation*, obtained a copy of Gerald Ford's memoirs, *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford* (1979). While *The Nation* only published about 300 words dealing with the pardon of President Nixon, it was enough to violate Ford's copyright, since that was a centerpiece or "heart" of the book (NOLO, 2007).

4. Fair Use and giving credit are different concepts.

A common misconception is that it's okay to copy the entire work as long as credit is given, such as mentioning the author's name or listing the original source or URL where the work can be found. Giving credit and Fair Use are completely separate concepts. "Either you have the right to use another author's material under the Fair Use rule or you don't. The fact that you attribute the material to the other author doesn't change that" (NOLO, 2007).

This is perhaps one of the more difficult concepts to understand. Giving credit is a matter of honesty and integrity. It is ingrained in our education, and it is also specified in Section 4.08 of the NASW *Code of Ethics* (NASW, 1999). Fair Use has to do with permission and the law, while giving credit is an ethical issue.

5. When do we need permission to use another's work? This is the question answered by a Fair Use analysis.

If you use someone's intellectual property, giving them credit may not matter much to them, or the law, unless you had the legal right for the use in the first place. Using copyrighted work without permission will not always lead to prosecution or legal difficulties, since authors and publishers rarely take legal action. The reasons vary why this is, which may include that they may be unaware that their intellectual property has been taken. Or, even if aware, because of the sheer volume and frequency of copyright violations, they can only take action in the most egregious of cases. However, from an ethical view point, does it matter whether or not the rightful owner takes legal action? Can social workers justify their actions based on the fact that the chances of getting caught and suffering consequences are small?

Perhaps one way of understanding the importance of respecting intellectual property is to make the conceptual connection to informed consent. Informed consent is ingrained in us as social workers. Before we disseminate information about our clients, we obtain their consent to do so, after they have been informed of the benefits and risks. There may be exceptions, but those exceptions are usually rare, and there are overriding compelling reasons to do so. Obtaining the client's permission, however, is the default option (NASW *Code of Ethics*, Section 1.03, 1999).

When disseminating the copyrighted works of others, copyright laws basically require that we obtain the informed consent of the author or copyright holder. This default position is a matter of law, not just an ethical issue. Fair Use addresses those limited exceptions in which obtaining the informed consent of authors is not required, but it should NOT be viewed as the default position.

Few, if any, social workers would argue that informed consent is optional or that there only is a problem if the clients can demonstrate harm by our failure to obtain their consent. Informed consent, we argue, is necessary to protect the client's self determination. However, if informed consent and self determination are important for clients, should we not offer the same respect for others we deal with including colleagues, peers, and even those we may not know personally?

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can claim Fair Use if one is engaged in scholarship, criticism, comment, parody, or in news reporting. In essence, it means that you are engaging in creating a new work entirely different from the original source. Copying entire articles is not Fair Use and is a copyright violation. Giving credit or citing the source is not the salient issue, but rather whether or not one has the legal right to use the material. Anything else is as problematic as outright plagiarism and cheating.

Unfortunately, the technology that has enabled both plagiarism and copyright violations to occur with great frequency is moving faster than our ability to develop standards to keep up. Monitoring the sheer volume of content on the Internet is an almost impossible task. Virtually all Internet hosts have clear policies prohibiting copyright infringements; however, enforcement has been difficult. Publishers and copyright holders are being selective in how they pursue copyright infringements. Only the most egregious or frequent copyright

violators are being investigated and the number of actions (i.e., users whose accounts are suspended or content removed) is not easily known or not made public. This tends to give a false impression that one can upload all kinds of content and there will be no consequences.

This may not be the case at all. Ed Coburn, Publishing Director of the Health Publications division of Harvard Medical School cautions that "I think the 'wild west' (of the Internet) days are drawing to a close and there will be more and more enforcement. The record and movie businesses already spend a lot of money on awareness-building and enforcement. Technology is making it possible to track sources of postings and track pass-along readers" (Riolo, 2006a).

Whether or not we see stricter enforcement of copyright laws in the future, it is important for our profession to take a stand just as strongly as we would against plagiarism and cheating for a number of reasons including:

If social workers, through the acts of a few, earn a reputation for having no regard for copyright laws as important and fundamental, it will not speak well of us as a profession.

If we selectively obey some laws and not others, for no other reason than convenience or low possibility of facing consequences, what impact will this have on our profession?

If we refuse to obtain permission of authors to use their hard work, which is protected by law, how will our prospective clients really be sure we will obtain their permission or informed consent before disseminating their personal information to others?

As a profession do we really have a choice but to examine these issues more closely and do a better job of educating ourselves and others?

Additional Resources

United States Copyright Law - Title 17

http://www.copyright.gov/title17/

Copyright Management Center at Indiana University-Purdue University

http://www.copyright.iupui.edu/index.htm

Fair Use checklist from the University of Louisville & Copyright Management Center

http://www.iecc.edu/occ/lrc/copycklst.htm

Copyright & Fair Use Overview, Chapter 9: Fair Use Stanford University Libraries

http://fairuse.stanford.edu/Copyright_and_Fair_Use_Overview/chapter9/index.html

TEACH toolkit from North Carolina State University Libraries

http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/scc/legislative/teachkit/overview.html

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An Interdisciplinary Approach to Preventing Plagiarism: A Librarian - Social Work Educator Collaboration

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Key Words: Plagiarism, Prevention, *Code of Ethics*, Academic Honesty

Abstract

Preventing plagiarism is congruent with the social work view that prevention of a problem is a better option than intervention. Social work educators can learn a great deal from librarians since librarians often present much of the education for prevention of plagiarism as part of instruction on how to use the library and the Internet to best advantage. Collaboration between library professionals and social work educators is a logical collaboration and models interdisciplinary cooperation for social work students, as well as presenting a strong model for teaching about the prevention of plagiarism. Linking instruction about prevention of plagiarism to the *Code of Ethics* makes this material more relevant to social work students.

1. Introduction

Parts of the NASW *Code of Ethics* relate directly to issues of plagiarism. Appropriating the work of others without adequate credit is certainly a violation of section two of the Code: *Ethical Responsibility toward Colleagues* Section 2.01 Respect. Section four: *Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professional*, section 4.04 Private Conduct:"Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud or deception" also relates directly to plagiarism.

The *Code of Ethics* also discusses interdisciplinary collaboration in Section 2.03.

Social workers are encouraged to collaborate with other disciplines in a way that respects what social work brings to the table but also acknowledges the expertise of other disciplines to best serve the client. In social work education, the student can be seen as the client, and the teaching of ethical research and writing skills can be viewed as the work of an interdisciplinary team, including writing instructors and librarians, as well as social work educators. This paper will discuss the advantages of a partnership between librarians and social work educators in educating students in a way that plagiarism can be prevented.

Librarians in colleges and universities understand the risks of plagiarism when students are required to produce creative work or research papers as part of the work toward the degree. In order to build barriers to plagiarism, college librarians have incorporated the preventive instruction in writing and avoiding plagiarism developed by middle school and high school librarians. The concept of preventive instruction, transferred from middle school and high school librarians to higher education, brings practical solutions that may ease frustrations over plagiarism. Social work educators can either partner with librarian colleagues to present material designed to prevent plagiarism through appropriate education, or can borrow from the experience of librarians in educating to prevent plagiarism.

2. A librarian's approach

Middle school and high school librarians have developed three action steps appropriated by college and university librarians that are designed to support creative ideas and avoid plagiarism:

1. Teach students what constitutes plagiarism.

2. Teach research skills enriched with note-taking and writing practices. This step is critical since, with the use of word processing programs and the ability to copy and paste, many college students bypass note taking for a pastiche of copy and paste in which the original source often is dropped.

3.   Through instruction support, present established consequences for cheating. This content helps enhance the value of the instruction, and the established consequences underscore the importance of this content.

These steps seem simple and obvious; however, many social work students, when confronted with suspicion of plagiarism, indicate that freshman composition classes did not teach these skills or spend time discussing plagiarism avoidance.   Further, students comment that other classes in which library research was required also did not teach plagiarism recognition and avoidance.

3. The need for prevention

In reality, the practice of unchecked plagiarism threatens the credibility of higher education. The Center for Academic Integrity found that 75 percent of students cheat (Jackson, 2006). There may possibly be learning in copying another's work. Doing so and representing it to be original work is the problem. When this is undetected, the professor is unaware that the student has not mastered the material required by the assignment. Further, there is the element of cheating by stealing the work of another.   For social work students, plagiarism goes beyond an academic violation; it is a professional violation of the *Code of Ethics* and must be framed in this way.

Librarians are aware of the ease with which students photocopy written materials and hand copy sentences from library resources. In colleges and universities, the use of the Internet exacerbates this problem, as does a fairly sophisticated understanding of how to manipulate word processing programs. Social work educators can talk with the librarians about this issue and learn a great deal about the way in which many college students approach both print sources and Internet sources. If social work students are learning about plagiarism from a librarian, then the social work educator can follow up in class with a discussion of professional as distinct from academic ethics related to plagiarism.

Social work educators can also learn from librarians how to approach the teaching of material to prevent plagiarism. An important tool for librarians in teaching about plagiarism is the establishment of ground rules. In many instances, it is the librarians who "take charge of the ethical education" (Johnson, 2004). Early in the lessons presented by librarians, a distinction is made between confusing terms. Librarians often introduce material on copyright before discussing plagiarism when teaching library research skills. Presenting copyright law is a way to give the plagiarism issue a broader context related to the theft of ideas. Copyright has the purpose of controlling the distribution of a work and is often confused with plagiarism. Discussion of copyright law also emphasizes the illegality of photocopying a work instead of purchasing a copy. The heart of the lesson stresses the lie in academic dishonesty when portions of another's creativity are stolen. This information sets up a natural transition to plagiarism.

4. Action steps

This first action step teaches what plagiarism and cheating are through delivering definitions and explanations. Examples often break the ice and help students to a beginning understanding of the issue.   Simply putting a statement not to plagiarize or inserting an academic honesty policy on a syllabus is inadequate. However, this is the practice of many colleges and universities. Social work programs often think that this is sufficient and surely students understand what constitutes plagiarism. Further, the statement on the syllabus rarely links to the *Code of Ethics.* Other explanation and education on the issue of plagiarism beyond the syllabus statement is not given, yet students are held responsible.

When librarians teach about plagiarism and related academic dishonesty, often an example of academic dishonesty is presented to the students, followed by an explanation of how the example is plagiarism, as well as reflection on the meaning of plagiarism and elements that constitute plagiarism. The librarian often continues by helping the student understand that creating original work yields a sense of pride. The individual student's own work is discussed as a means by which to proudly showcase acquired knowledge and skills, not skills in deceit. Repeating this lesson annually is encouraged.   Social work educators could follow up by reiterating this lesson or by structuring presentations on plagiarism in a similar way.

Even for professional educators, recalling the detail of the structure of citations once, perhaps twice a year, is a substantial effort. Most keep a manual at hand or bookmark appropriate Web sites. Helping students understand the need to either have the appropriate style manual or sites bookmarked is useful in helping students avoid plagiarism. Often plagiarism is not intentional, is due to laziness, nor is due to computer issues involving dropped citations when material is copied and pasted from one paper to another. Lack of knowledge in the preparation of citations is often the reason for some of what presents as plagiarism.

5. Changing expectations and behaviors

Plagiarism is not limited to the academic world. The news and professional literature are filled with reports of people in the real world who are guilty of plagiarizing (Willis, 2001). The persuasion to clip another's work is a temptation for professional writers, also (Cosgrove, 2005). The frequency with which this takes place also lends credence to the theory that many college graduates have not been sufficiently educated about plagiarism.

It is also important to acknowledge that college testing in many classes is not conducive to teaching students to avoid academic dishonesty. Many professors reward direct regurgitation of lecture material from class and direct copying from the text under the guise

of passing an examination. No wonder college students who have spent most of their educational careers repeating from textbooks to answer test questions have difficulty with the concept of plagiarism. Further, many college students do not have experience with any exams or tests other than objective tests. In short, often, prior to writing a research paper, no higher order or critical thinking has been asked of students, and direct copying of the ideas of others has been rewarded.

In teaching the lessons on developing a research paper and on plagiarism, the librarian can almost hear the wheels turning in students' minds as they pose the silent question, "You want me to do what? Students just take tests." The transition to producing one's very own work is broaching creativity, a wide-open empty space. Some fear of creativity may exist because the mental space where it occurs is an equivalent to the unknown. That is until the often invigorating and magical thing identified as creativity begins.   Often teaching faculty are unaware of the fear of creating original work. Social work faculty in particular, because of the mandate posed by accreditation standards to teach students to think critically, may be unaware of how many students may never have written a paper in other college classes. Often students complain about the amount of writing that is required in social work education compared with other majors.

Social work students may conceive of the act of producing a research paper with terror, believing that they cannot write a paper of any value. Further, many social work students have no idea of how to construct a research paper.   In a time when many students transfer from one or more institutions before arriving in the social work program, social work professors can no longer assume that all students received this education in earlier classes, even if other classes at the institution offer this.

In the next section of the training offered by librarians, students are taught how to begin creativity through the use of research materials supportive of their own ideas. In this case, the ideas are to be expressed in writing. In this training, from middle school through college, careful instruction in accessing print and electronic resources, of necessity, is complimented by introducing a professional set of rules for citations (Dames, 2006). College and university professors often assume that students already know this material. However, many students have not had the advantage of depth of instruction in research from the perspective of the librarian.   It is interesting to note that generally librarians find when teaching the preparation of bibliographies and reference lists for the paper that plagiarism is not nearly as likely to be a problem for students who understand the reasons underlying the need to cite completely and specifically. Ideally, in the training, generous handouts with both the rules and lots of examples are distributed for reference.

Librarians also are more likely to return to tried and true methods for teaching students to produce a research paper. Often, students have no idea that in a time of computer programs that the use of note cards can be critical in organizing research citations and notes and also offer the ability to rearrange the order of the paper.   Therefore, librarians give special attention to the preparation of citations on note cards. Generally since students

do not have the paper fully formulated at the time of research, they must be taught to make a bibliographic citation of all items consulted. At this point, librarians remind students that summarizing another writer's material without giving credit is plagiarism. They further remind students that it is indeed very difficult to write a truly original manuscript after reading materials relative to a topic. Social work educators can follow the same steps in discussing the research paper, or if students have received this information from the librarian, ask the students to share what was learned with the social work professor.

Librarians also point out to students that there will inevitably be some close similarity of words, phrases, and even concepts or ideas as a second writer expresses his/her collected knowledge on the same topic. Planning to steal may be the greatest of the plagiarism evils, but integrity in authorship calls for scrutinizing one's work thoroughly to avoid failure to give credit. Much plagiarism falls into the category of unintentional failure to give credit. Librarians emphasize this concept in the training sessions.

Librarians also have some helpful ideas for the college professor who is invested in preventing plagiarism and in helping students develop scholarly habits. One option is to require reading outside of class and then preparing the paper in class. This is much like an open book test.   A variant of this option is to require students to prepare a single note card with citations and a fact or quote which impressed them from each source. These may or may not be used in class and could be submitted as evidence of research completed even before the written assignment. This lessens the chances that students will copy and paste from library and/or electronic resources without attribution. Another variant on the note card assignment is to switch topics for writing. Instead of writing on the topic, the students write papers describing their research and note-taking strategies on a selected topic. Students may share these ideas with one another.

The third barrier to plagiarizing reflects all lessons in academic honesty, whether presented by the librarian or by the instructor. Librarians are generally helpful in assisting professors to develop materials detailing the consequences of plagiarism. For example, professors may choose to establish and make available to students a grading scale awarding a failing grade to plagiarized work. Such a scale usually has consequences where additional cheating results in failing the course, or receiving academic dismissal (Dutilloy, 2003). Ideally, the classroom academic honesty policy is supported by an enforced policy of the institution. Chances are that no classroom will be completely free of plagiarism. Copying from a printed work is only one form of plagiarizing. Foss (2006) points out that "parents writing papers, using papers from another class or submitting an old paper of someone else" are falsifications of originality. Buying papers on the Internet and hiring someone to write an assignment merit addition to the list. In another arena, electronic availability of full-text has brought volumes of research to the reader. Along with the availability of full text articles and books has entered the ease of clipping from another's work with a click of the mouse using copying and pasting skills (Auer, 2001). All of these possibilities give librarians reason to support classroom teachers in their efforts to control plagiarism.

6. Conclusion

In summary, students' plagiarism cannot be allowed to threaten the actual worth of the degree. Librarians are key players in the process to prevent plagiarism. The librarian can be an important team member to help control plagiarism through preparatory lessons that incorporate preventive instruction. If it is not possible for librarians to do the actual instruction, the methods used by librarians can be utilized by social work educators. Further, if librarians do the major part of the education for plagiarism prevention, social work educators can follow up with questions about what students are learning in the instruction from the librarian and also add material from the *Code of Ethics* to make plagiarism prevention professionally relevant to social work students.

Students equipped with these research skills enriched with note taking coupled with the ability to convert their citations into footnotes and bibliographies experience successful writing. The reward is more than the grade. The student learns the joy of joining the company of those who enhance the knowledge of others. In addition, social work students are complying with Section 5 of the *Code of Ethics*, Section 4 Part B: "Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge."

Knowledge acquired through research and writing papers facilitates the switch from objective tests stressing recall to creative productivity as evidence of learning throughout students' scholastic careers. Stealing another's creativity occurs in all areas of knowledge. Assuming anyone understands plagiarism is an error. Instructors in higher education must check their own knowledge of plagiarism and then teach students so plagiarism can be avoided. Teaching about plagiarism should be linked to professional ethics in the context of social work education. Teaming with a librarian to teach this material models interdisciplinary collaboration for students and also models the professional behavior of seeking consultation when necessary.

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Letters to the Editor Spring 2008

Steve,

I so appreciate that the J. of SW Values and Ethics is so easily accessible online!! Very helpful!

Thanks so much,
Deana Morrow

Dear Steve:

On behalf of the students and faculty of Slippery Rock University, please accept my belated thanks for helping us celebrate the 25th anniversary of our social work program's accreditation. Your keynote lecture and workshop on teaching social work ethics was informative and offered a challenging assessment of how we should go about formulating the values and ethics that undergird the profession. We were honored that we could be the host for your first video editorial, which appeared in the Fall 2007 edition. Surely an advantage of publishing an online journal is the ability to communicate through the use of media that transcend the printed word. I believe the letters you printed in the Winter 2007-8 journal in response to your video editorial offered some valuable opinions. Mr. Sumpter favored a "shorter and more focused" editorial, and Dr. Kuechler spoke of the tedium resulting from too much information as presented in the charts illustrating the differences between the British and U.S. models used in the development and professional use of social work ethics.

Your presentation was more lecture than editorial. Web lectures that are longer than just a few minutes often result in the "talking heads" problem. To retain viewer interest, videos must be quite short, or else use a variety of techniques, such as the use of music, cut-away scenes, fade outs/fade ins, moving graphics, etc. I do hope you will continue to experiment with the use of video technology. Not many journals are as innovative as JSWVE. Perhaps the video editorials could be true editorials: concise, focused opinions on relevant issues. You might also consider video book reviews, perhaps including interviews with authors or panels of reviewers (which you mentioned to me at our meeting).

Finally, I don't want to rule out the video lecture; however, as I have described, such an innovative venture would seem to require going beyond the traditional lecture format.

Again, we commend you on the innovative work you are doing and appreciate your visit to western Pennsylvania.

Sincerely yours,
Michael Stowe, Ph.D., ACSW

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Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
Slippery Rock University

Book Reviews: The Plagiarism Handbook and Using Sources Effectively

Reviewed by Peggy Pittman-Munke, BA, MLS, M.Ed., MSW, PhD, Associate Professor of Social Work
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HARRIS, Robert A. (2001). *The Plagiarism Handbook: Strategies for Preventing, Detecting, and Dealing With Plagiarism*. **Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing. 208pp., $19.95.**

In his first book, Harris explains that plagiarism is a complex issue involving many factors ranging from "changes in ethical values" to "poorly designed asignments" and "perceived lack of consequences. He provides activities to educate both students and educators about plagiarism in order to eliminate plagiarism. The appendices are expecially useful, containing definitions of plagiarism, language for constructing policies, tests and other activities to use with students, teaching resources, Internet search material, term paper mills [this section probably needs to be updated since many more have sprung up], and other useful Web links, and other reference materials.

I found the chapter on dealing with plagiarism especially helpful, since it covers many possible scenarios and provides clear strategies for dealing with the situation, as well as a reminder about the potential legal issues. The format of the book is particularly pleasing. It is easy to use and poses issues in language that is clear enough that even the least sophisticated student can understand the issues. Even more helpful are the strategies to help students avoid both intentional and unintentional plagiarism.

Chapters include: educating yourself about plagiarism, educating your students about plagiarism, constructing assignments to prevent plagiarism, strategies for detecting plagiarism, strategies for dealing with plagiarism, and administrative and institutional issues relating to plagiarism. Appendices include sample definitions of plagiarism and policy language, quizzes and activities, teaching resources, Internet search tools, term paper mills, useful Web links and articles, and teaching ideas through cartoons. This is a relatively inexpensive book that is well worth its price.

Harris, Robert A. (2005). *Using Sources Effectively: Strengthening Your Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism*, *2nd ed.* **Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing. 115 pp., paper.**

This inexpensive book is an ideal book to assign in a research class or indeed in any class in which research papers are a part. Targeting two common problems, unintentional plagiarism and ineffective use of research source material, this book can help students produce better writing on assignments ranging from essays to full scale research papers.

A major strength of this book is its plentiful use of specific examples of proper use of quotations, paraphrase, summary, and citation. The sections on selecting, evaluating, and preparing sources for use will be very helpful for students. Both ALA and MLA citation styles are referenced. Additional student aids include a true/false quiz at the end of each chapter, an appendix on grammar review, and an excellent section on Internet sources. This text also deals with the overuse of tutors in preparing written work, as well as with the benefits of using reference librarians.   The overall tone is warm and clear without being condescending. This text covers most of the questions students are likely to ask and many more that they do not know they need to ask.

Plagiarism & Fair Use Webography

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Turnitin.com

http://www.plagiarism.org/

Although this is a commercial site for Turnitin.com [academic plagiarism] and ithenticate.com [corporate protection], this site has some quick and clear information on reasons for citation and general citation methods through the Learning Center. There is also a clear explanation of plagiarism for instructors and students to review together.   This is a useful site to orient students to plagiarism.

The Online Writing Laboratory [OWL] at Purdue University

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/

The Online Writing Laboratory [OWL] at Purdue University has an excellent resource on plagiarism aimed at helping students avoid plagiarizing. This site includes an overview, a section describing the continuum that leads to outright plagiarism, a section on safe practices and a student exercise on safe practices. This site has the potential to help students at beginning levels avoid plagiarism.

The Honor Council at Georgetown University

http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/plagiarism.html

Developed by the Honor Council at Georgetown University, this site is written in student-friendly language and probably would be more useful for junior and senior undergraduate level students and for graduate students. Through clear examples and discussion of plagiarism, this site broadens the student's understanding of plagiarism beyond the idea of direct copying to the idea of intellectual honesty.

Ryerson University

http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/ep1.html

Ryerson University in Toronto has an excellent fun Web site that addresses many common forms of plagiarism and lack of academic integrity, including unintentional plagiarism, buying or borrowing course work, cheating on tests and exams, forging or misrepresenting, and unauthorized group work. The scripts are written in a way that will hold undergraduate student interest while presenting serious issues and possible solutions. Some of the material may need to be modified for local use, since a number of the Web sites mentioned are at Ryerson University.

Duke University

https://plagiarism.duke.edu/

Duke University has an excellent site to help students avoid plagiarism. The site is easy to understand and offers an easy tutorial on plagiarism. The page on avoiding plagiarism is especially useful since it includes a specific suggestion to help students paraphrase without plagiarism. A valuable resource within this site is https://plagiarism.duke.edu/procedures/table.php, a Web site that discusses common scholarly procedures related to writing and citing in an easy-to-understand table format.

Association of Colleges & Research Libraries of the American Library Association

http://personal.ecu.edu/cooninb/Greyliterature.htm

Prepared by the Science and Technology Section of the Association of Colleges & Research Libraries of the American Library Association, this site gives an excellent overview of gray literature. Gray literature sometimes appears in plagiarized assignments, particularly by upper class undergraduates and graduate students. It is exceptionally difficult for professional plagiarism detection sites to detect. This Web site is helpful in locating some of the sites where gray literature is likely to be found.

Dalhousie University

http://senate.dal.ca/Files/reports/
2004June16_Final_Report_ad_hoc_committee_of_plagiarism.pdf

The final report of Dalhousie University's faculty senate ad hoc committee dealing with plagiarism is a significant resource for faculty senates and similar bodies dealing with this issue.

University of Luton

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/luton.pdf

University of Luton [UK] evaluated software for plagiarism detection. The final report describes the performance of software and services for the detection of plagiarism in text based assignments and compares their effectiveness.

University of Texas System

http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/teachact.htm

This site offers a clear explication of the TEACH Act, including some of the differences in fair use for face-to-face classes and fair use in distance education.

North Carolina State University

http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/scc/legislative/teachkit/

This great resource for helping faculty understand the provisions of the TEACH act provides materials suitable to modify for in-service presentations for faculty, as well as a clear checklist to help faculty check compliance with the TEACH Act.

American Library Association

http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section= Distance_Education_and_the_TEACH_Act&Template= /ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=25939

This is the definitive site for distance education and the TEACH Act. Provided by the American Library Association, this site provides the legislative history of the TEACH Act, the meaning and importance of the TEACH Act on distance education, and related information. Duties of the educational institution, the institutional technology officials, and instructors are clearly differentiated.

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

http://www.copyright.iupui.edu/dist_learning.htm

An excellent site that covers the range of issues related to the TEACH Act provided by IUPUI. Some features are a checklist that assists in recognizing compliance, a clear explication of the doctrine of "fair use," and helpful links for in-depth understanding of some of the surrounding issues. An easy-to-use checklist is found at http://www.copyright.iupui.edu/teachlist.htm within this site. This checklist clearly

delineates institutional responsibility, technology officials' responsibility, and individual faculty responsibility.

TEACH Act

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?
dbname=107_cong_bills&docid=f:s487es.txt.pdf

This site contains the text of the TEACH Act bill.

Library and Information Technology Association

http://www.lita.org/ala/washoff/woissues/copyrightb/distanceed/
teachdrm.pdf

This ALA site provides valuable information on the technological requirements of the TEACH Act as it relates to distance education. While not offering legal advice, this site raises the issues a university must consider when putting courses online.

Pennsylvania State University

http://tlt.its.psu.edu/dmd/teachact/teachactFAQ.html

This site developed by Pennsylvania State University Libraries presents frequently asked questions about the TEACH Act.

Chronicle of Higher Education

http://chronicle.com/free/v49/i29/29a02901.htm

This Chronicle of Higher Education Article from March 28, 2003 discusses the importance of the TEACH Act for higher education. A Copyright Check List for Online Courses is included. This checklist makes clear what can be included without infringement of the act.

Announcement: Term Paper Contest

The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics (JSWVE) and the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) are sponsoring a term paper contest. The term papers will be collected by the JSWVE editorial board and judged by ASWB staff.

Details for the contest are listed below.

- Must have a central theme of social work values or social work ethics.
- Must be written as an MSW or BSW student. (Student may have graduated.)
- Must be nominated by a faculty member.
- Must follow the general manuscript submission guidelines found at http://www.socialworker.com/jswve/content/view/4/27/
- Must be in APA citation style.
- Deadline for submission: May 15, 2009
- Paper must be submitted by e-mail to finnj@u.washington.edu
- Winning term papers will be published in *The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics.*
- Judges will be the staff at the Association of Social Work Boards.
- Judging criteria will include:

  - Knowledge of Material
  - Relevance of Citations on the Central Theme
  - Coverage of the Topic
  - Number and Appropriateness of Citations
  - Organization – flow of ideas
  - Quality of Writing – spelling, grammar, coherence
  - Originality of the Presentation