Addressing Plagiarism Series
PART 1: The Dilemma of Academic Integrity in the Information Age

Over the last several decades, increased access to technology and the development of a global internet has had a profound and democratizing effect on education. However, with this increased access to information has come a bevy of legitimate concerns regarding the potential unethical use of sources by students (and faculty), and other serious forms of plagiarism. The Council of Writing Program Administrators [CWPA] (2003), a national academic and professional association for faculty and administrators directing writing programs, argues that the increased focus on investigating suspicions of plagiarism in students' writing may have the unintended consequence of diverting attention away from "developing students' writing, reading, and critical thinking abilities." While the importance of emphasizing and maintaining academic integrity cannot be stressed enough, for the sake of student learning, it is equally important to consider a more nuanced understanding of how and why plagiarism happens, especially for international students and first-generation students that may not be as familiar with the conventions of academic language.

Defining Plagiarism & Notifying Students
In the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct, instances of plagiarism as recognized by the university include the following:
- Taking credit for any work created by another person. Work includes, but is not limited to books, articles, experimental methodology or results, compositions, images, lectures, computer programs, internet postings.
- Copying any work belonging to another person without indicating that the information is copied and properly citing the source of the work.
- If not directly copied, using another person's presentation of ideas without putting it in your own words or form and not giving proper citation.
- Creating false citations that do not correspond to the information you have used.

Although it is essential to uphold the above institutional policies on plagiarism in your classroom, researchers have argued that many of the current conversations around plagiarism fail to distinguish between intentional plagiarism and unintentional misuse of sources (CWPA, 2003; Li & Casanave, 2012, Thomas & Sassi, 2011). With this in mind, the CWPA (2003) define plagiarism in the following way: "In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer *deliberately* [emphasis added] uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source."

Additionally, as of Fall 2018, Academic Senate Regulation 537 requires that "by the end of the first week of instruction, the instructor will provide students with a course outline containing information regarding the anticipated: topical content of the course, amount and kind of work expected, examination and grading procedures, and notice of the Code of Academic Conduct." Therefore, syllabi should contain a section clearly outlining an academic integrity policy and providing students with a hyperlink and/or the URL address to the Code of Academic Conduct.

Reasons students might plagiarize
Pearson (2011) argues that the best way to defend against plagiarism in the classroom is to develop a better understanding of why students plagiarize in the first place. Doing this can help you develop teaching strategies and assignment designs that make it difficult to plagiarize. Additionally, considering the reasoning as well as the intentionality behind a suspected instance of plagiarism can help you to determine how to respond in a way that will both hold the student accountable for their actions and help them learn from the experience. The chart below outlines a few common reasons for plagiarizing, taken from CWPA (2003), Jamieson & Howard (2013), Li & Casanave (2012), and Pearson (2011):

Types	Common Reasons for Plagiarizing
Unintentional	<u>Lack of Knowledge of Ethical Citation Practices</u>: Some students (e.g., international students, first-generation students, etc.) may have received incomplete or inconsistent education on citation in the past, or they may lack knowledge of the more sophisticated requirements for citation in college. They may fail to devote enough attention to the stylistic requirements of citation, or may not understand the importance of those characteristics, which can lead to sloppy or unclear citations.
	<u>Tried but Improperly Integrated Sources</u>: Many students have difficulty comprehending the complex scholarly sources they are expected to cite in college and may consequently accidently misappropriate or misuse sources (e.g., patchwriting, misrepresentation, etc.). They may know to make a references page, but may not understand that in-texts citations are also required (or vice versa). They may know to cite some things (like quotes) but not others (like paraphrases). They may also just make honest mistakes (like forgetting to cite a source).
	<u>Cultural Differences in Attribution</u>: The CWPA (2003) notes that differing cultural conceptualizations of ethical attribution practices may mean that "students from other cultures may not be familiar with the conventions governing attribution and plagiarism in American colleges and universities."
Intentional	<u>Panic Plagiarizing</u>: Students may fear that they will do poorly or even fail the assignment or may fear being turned down if they were to ask for an extension. They might have insecurities about the quality of their writing or may feel hopelessly confused by the project. They may have poor time management skills or may honestly be overwhelmed by too many responsibilities (school, work, family/children, etc.).
	<u>Intentional Cheating</u>: Students may have a sense that the class is unimportant or lack the desire to complete the assignment. They may have plagiarized without penalty in the past, or seen others getting away with it. The course assignments may make it seem so easy to plagiarize that a student may feel justified in doing so.

Additional Resources
- The Purdue OWL provides comprehensive guides for citing in APA, MLA, AMA, and Chicago style.
- The UC Davis Libraries also provide comprehensive subject guides for a variety of citation styles.
- The following two resources come from the Writing Commons, a peer-reviewed, open-source resource for writers. Both resources are meant for students, and provide information about what counts as plagiarism, as well as strategies for avoiding it:
  - "Avoiding Plagiarism" (article)
  - "Avoiding Plagiarism: A Checklist for Student Writers"
- There are a number of online plagiarism-checking services that can be helpful in detecting instances of plagiarism. Some of these services are free, while others require a paid licence. It is important, however, to use these services with caution, as they are not always reliably accurate (Straumsheim, 2015), and are fraught with their own ethical conundrums (Marsh, 2004, McKeever, 2006). Here are a few examples of online plagiarism checkers:
  - Turnitin.com
  - Glatt Plagiarism Services
  - Viper
  - Plagiarismchecker.com
  - Google

Citation
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Addressing Plagiarism Series
PART 2: Strategies for Addressing Plagiarism in the Classroom

Specifically addressing plagiarism in the classroom can be one of the most effective strategies for helping students avoid it (Thomas & Sassi, 2011). Teachers often assume that students have already been taught ethical citation practices and what constitutes plagiarism; in reality, some students may have little to no experience with this topic at all (Pearson, 2011). The Council of Writing Program Administrators [CWPA] (2003) outlines a few strategies for effectively addressing plagiarism with your students:

Strategies	Teaching Suggestions
Develop clear policies	Develop clear policies and expectations for the use and misuse of sources in your classroom, and discuss these policies and the underlying implications of plagiarism with your students. Make sure your policies are also clearly articulated in your syllabus and that your syllabus refers students to the Academic Code of Conduct as per Academic Senate Regulation 537. Transparency can be especially important for first-generation students who may feel less confident about approaching instructors for clarification (Engle & Tinto, 2008), and has been shown to lead to better retention and increased academic confidence in students (Winkelmes et al., 2016).
Discourage plagiarism through assignment design	Design and sequence your writing assignments in ways that discourage or avoid opportunities for plagiarism (see PART 3 for more specific strategies on how to do this).
Develop students' reading skills	Help your students develop strong reading skills, and ask them to cite a variety of different sources from varying points of view. Consider discussing how to evaluate the credibility of sources with your students as well.
Consider intentionality	Consider the intentionality behind a suspected instance of plagiarism; has the student deliberately plagiarized, or have they misused a source? Ask the student to provide process drafts and to walk you through their research process. If they cannot do this, then refer to your syllabus policy for what to do next.
Follow UC Davis guidelines	When taking disciplinary action, be sure to follow institutional guidelines outlined in the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct. Consider what you want the student to learn from the experience as well; while failure of the assignment or course can be an effective learning experience for the student, so can recreating the research process and rewriting the paper.

How can I help my students learn how to use sources more ethically?
Jamieson (2008) argues that because accepted standards for the use of sources can differ significantly from discipline to discipline, "we need to focus on *use* of sources rather than *misuse* of sources" [emphasis original] (pp. 183-184). If a student has tried to cite sources but failed to do so properly, this can provide an opportunity for discipline-specific learning. Here are a few suggestions for how to help your students develop ethical practices for using sources:

Strategies	Explanations	Teaching Suggestions
Teach students the citation norms of your discipline in class...	Glenn & Goldthwaite (2014) argue that while students may have some knowledge of citation, they may have a limited understanding of the ethical and	Take a few minutes of class time to talk about how writers in your discipline cite and integrate sources, or ask your TAs to do so if you have a lab or a discussion

	rhetorical function citation plays in academic writing, especially when disciplinary differences are factored in.	section for your course. By discussing this issue with your students, "you'll provide a forum for discussing the ethical and cultural dimensions" of citation in a way that shows its importance beyond the classroom (Glenn & Goldthwaite, 2014, p. 92).
...or through a homework project out-of-class	Having students complete a low-stakes homework assignment about plagiarism can demonstrate the importance you place on ethical source use, and give your students a sense of your expectations regarding plagiarism.	If you don't have time to take during class to discuss citation practices, have students complete an out-of-class assignment on the topic. For example, Indiana University has developed a series of tutorials and tests meant to help students understand what counts as plagiarism.
Help develop your students reading comprehension skills	In their study, Jamieson & Howard (2013) found that most of the time, students only cite single sentences from a source, and that those sentences generally come from the first 1-2 pages. They conclude that there is "scant evidence that the students can comprehend and make use of complex written texts" (p. 129), and suggest that this might in part explain students' common misuses of sources.	Help your students develop stronger reading comprehension skills by practicing reading and interpreting complex scholarly works in class or through out-of-class homework activities. For example, consider assigning Karen Rosenberg's "Reading Games" at the beginning of the term. This article, written for college students, provides strategies for tackling complex texts quickly.
Provide resources for citation through Canvas	Providing students with additional resources on citing and integrating sources can help to reinforce your conversations on these concepts in class, and can be useful for them in future classes as well.	Link to resources on Canvas for citing and integrating sources (such as the ones cited in Additional Resources in PART 1), so that students can access citation support if needed.

Additional Resources
- See PART 1 of this resource for a list of additional resources related to plagiarism.

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Addressing Plagiarism Series
PART 3: Designing Writing Assignments that Discourage Opportunities for Plagiarism

In their book, Glenn & Goldthwaite (2014) argue that "the best policy for dealing with plagiarism is to avoid inviting it in the first place" (p. 92). In fact, Heckler, Forde, & Bryan (2013) found that assignments designed to discourage plagiarism were statistically associated with lower instances of it. Below, Glenn & Goldthwaite (2014) and the Council of Writing Program Administrators [CWPA] (2003) offer a number of suggestions for designing assignments that discourage or avoid opportunities for plagiarism.

Strategies	Teaching Suggestions
Avoid assigning common projects	Avoid assigning standard writing projects on common or popular topics, as it may be easy for students to find papers on these topics for sale online. Also try to avoid assigning the exact same prompt year after year, as students may find it easy to submit a friend's copy from the year before.
Multiple drafts	Ask students to submit multiple drafts of their project at various stages of development. A variation on this is to ask students to complete research portfolios that include previous drafts, outlines, annotated bibliographies, and other process work.
Design active writing assignments	Design assignments that ask students to do more than just regurgitate information they found from sources. For example, Heckler, Forde, & Bryan (2013) advocate for assignments designed to have students "*operate* on the information [they find from sources], not just regurgitate it" [emphasis original] (p. 96).
Sequence your writing assignments	If possible, design a sequence of writing assignments that build on each other, using the same topic. For example, you could have students complete an annotated bibliography, followed by a compare/contrast analysis of two sources holding differing positions on the topic, and then a research argument paper synthesizing their own perspective with that of their sources.
Create "authentic" writing projects	Consider grounding your writing assignment in a local context. For example, you could ask students to research and present a solution to a campus or Davis-specific problem. A variation on this is the "Authentic Writing Assignment": Anderson, Hoffman, & Little (2014) define "authentic" writing assignments as asking students to practice the types writing and thinking professionals in their discipline actually engage in. These types of assignment are less likely to show up on paper mill sites, and are unique enough to be memorable should a student attempt to submit a copy from a peer.
Allot plenty of time for the assignment	Give your students plenty of time to delve deep into the research on their topic, and provide specific deadlines for drafts so that they can manage their time well. Many students may "panic plagiarize" because they have not developed adequate time management skills, or because they do not feel they have enough time to complete a quality writing project.

Additional Resources
- See PART 1 of this resource for a list of additional resources related to plagiarism.
- Be sure to direct students to the Academic Code of Conduct on your syllabus as required by the Academic Senate Regulation 537.
- For additional suggestions on incorporating writing assignments into your classroom, please see our "Designing Effective Writing Assignments Series."

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