

Rationalized Plagiarism and Misplaced Ethics in Higher Education

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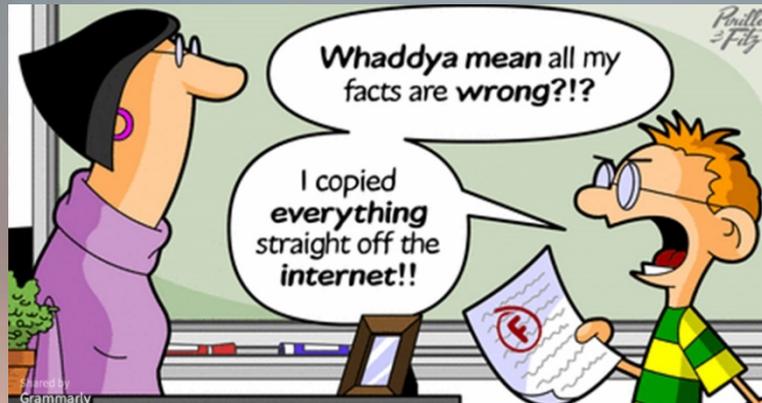
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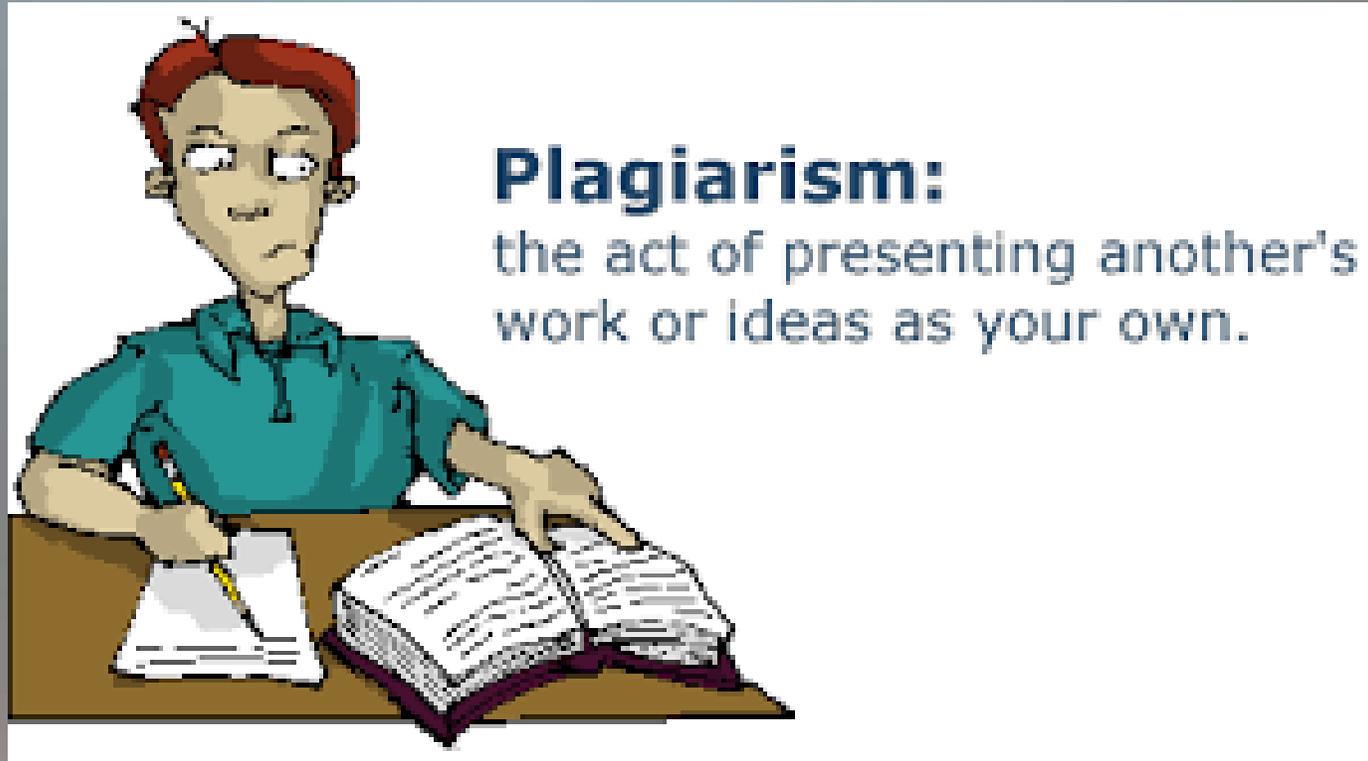


What is Plagiarism ?

- Plagiarism and all forms of academic dishonesty continue to be prevalent within educational settings.
- More information than ever before is readily available from the Internet and this has unleashed a “...generation of intellectual kleptomaniacs who simply cut and paste with ease” (Awdry & Sarre, 2013, p. 35).



In a nutshell.....



Involuntary Plagiarism

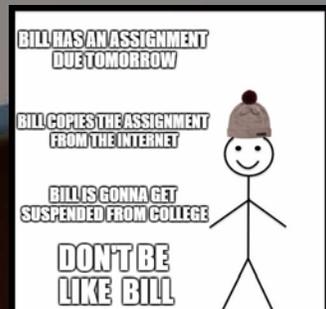
- Involuntary Plagiarism results when students have low understanding of the citation systems, while the complexity of the assessment task that is directly linked to the amount of effort the students require to work under a tight schedule, is resulting in voluntary plagiarism (Badge, Cann and Scott, 2007).
- Software, such as, Turn it In often helps in identifying if plagiarism was unintentional.
- While in theory can be treated the same, those instances are usually handled differently by different faculty members.

Study's Purpose

- While previous research provided student motives for plagiarism, no studies have delved into possible relationships between the different higher education academic levels (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior and graduate) and a more defined segmentation of student justification responses.
- The proposed study classifies students' justification for plagiarizing from an internal locus of control or external locus of control and then, examines the frequency within each academic level to uncover possible alignments.
- The results of this study may help in developing strategies to proactively address academic integrity and academic writing issues based upon the responses the students provided to justify their actions.

Research Questions

- What are the experiences and perceptions of faculty members as to student's responses and reasons (internal or external locus of control) why students plagiarized academic work?
- What is the relationship between the prevalence of occurrences of student plagiarism and enrollment in a undergraduate or graduate degree program?
- What is the relationship between the prevalence of occurrences of student plagiarism and the letter grade earned in a specific course?



Hypotheses



- H1_o There is no comparative difference between faculty experiences and perceptions as to internal locus of control justification responses and external locus of control justification responses submitted by students charged with plagiarism.
- H1_a There is a comparative difference between faculty experiences and perceptions as to the internal locus of control responses and external locus of control responses submitted by students charged with plagiarism
- H2_o There is no relationship between the prevalence of occurrences of student plagiarism and enrollment in a undergraduate or graduate degree program
- H2_a There is a relationship between prevalence of occurrences of student plagiarism and enrollment in a undergraduate or graduate degree program
- H3_o There is no relationship between the prevalence of occurrences of student plagiarism and the letter grade earned in a specific course
- H3_a There is a relationship between the prevalence of occurrences of student plagiarism and the letter grade earned in a specific course

Literature Review

- According to Heitman and Litewka (2011), due to the diverse backgrounds of students flowing into the United States, the universities are very stringent with the plagiarism policies which are not widely known in different countries.
- Many researchers agree many students cannot identify instances of plagiarism and do not adequately understand how to paraphrase text with appropriate citation to avoid plagiarism.” (Marshall & Garry, 2006; Yeo, 2007; & Pecorari, 2002).

Literature Review Continued..

- The United States writing standards also contradict with international views. For example, common knowledge does not need to be quoted because informed readers should be aware of certain material.
- Corruption in society is directly related to the decrease in ethical reasoning of a research community in a developing country (Marshall & Garry, 2006).



Group Discussion



- What have you encountered at your institutions in reference to plagiarism?
- What steps are you taking to educate your students on this topic?
- Do you feel that uniform international standards for plagiarism and academic integrity would be helpful?
- What obstacles do you foresee with implementation of these standards?

Data Selection

- The goal is to secure a large (200+) data sample.
- The intent is to collect survey responses from Ashford University fulltime and adjunct faculty (primary data source).
- This means that the data collection related to subjects instructing in undergraduate degree programs may automatically exceed the number of participants that instruct in the graduate level degree programs.



Thank you for your time!



References

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