POUNCE OUT the Plagiarism in your Classroom
~ estimated 16-minute read ~

Before the March 2020 Pandemic school closings across not only the nation, but the world, plagiarism was one of those occurrences that happened in our classroom that we as teachers wanted to squash. The internet and the easy "copy and paste" makes plagiarism prevalent and problematic in our secondary education classrooms.

However, since the Pandemic school closings gave our students lots of freedom when completing assignments, they didn't experience before in their education unless they have been home on a medical sick leave, plagiarism, unfortunately, has become a more normal occurrence in our student writing assignment submissions now that we are back in school.

It's gotten to a point where you can't read a teacher's reflection of post-pandemic school inside the physical classroom post-pandemic where plagiarism hasn't escalated to

pandemic numbers. The teachers who I coach share their #1 complaint this school year as plagiarism in student submission with the #2 complaint that students don't know how to do school anymore. Many of our students are having a hard time accepting and following the policies and procedures that were much a part of normal school and classrooms pre-Pandemic.

Students are back in our physical classrooms but much of what was the culture in our physical classrooms before March 2020 is gone and needs to be rebuilt. The freedom our students lived at home in their learning and assessments during the school shutdown, has created a confidence of getting away with plagiarism. And because assignment submissions were low in many classes during the Pandemic, where many times students may have earned a decent or good grade for work that was not their own. Many teachers were told to grade with leniency during the Pandemic so the grade leniency along with the freedom students may have created a plagiaristic monster.

Whenever I want to change anything in the classroom, I start with my students...where they are inside the subject. I like to start the conversation around plagiarism with some statistics, so they know I'm not just "making this up." The statistics of plagiarism I begin with is outside our classroom. Then the statistical numbers move inside the classroom which this timeline of data makes their numbers more acceptable without a fight or argument.

I gather our class's statistics about plagiarism with an anonymous pre-lesson survey about plagiarism, which offers real-time data points. Also, I start the lesson with a simple definition of plagiarism since some students may not know its term but know about copying and pasting content.

One of the most easy-to-understand plagiarism definitions for students is, "the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own," from the [Oxford Dictionary](). I also like to follow the definition with some fun animations about plagiarism. Below are a few of my favorites and each appeal to different grade-levels.

- [What is Plagiarism?]() - created in Powtoon
- [What is Plagiarism?]() - created in XtraNormal
- [Don't Plagiarizzle]() – great for middle school students
- [How to Avoid Plagiarism]() – created in GoAnimate
- [Funny But Teaches about Plagiarism]() – created in XtraNormal
- [Funny Classic Informative Plagiarism Video]()
- [Plagiarism Video for Schools]() – Grand Theft Info

There is a funny plagiarism video done by Saturday Night Live that high school students would learn a lot since many different ways to plagiarize is described in the video, however, there is a part in the video I feel is not appropriate. If you want to show the video for its plagiarism content, either skip over the inappropriate part, "BEEP" it out, or do not show the video. I chose not to list it here due to this concern.

Beginning with humor tends to create the kind of atmosphere where students feel more comfortable when talking about subjects that may bring some discomfort, which is why I like to show a video or two.

I also like to ask in the pre-lesson survey what the reasons are for plagiarizing and then as a class, we go over each one of those reasons with an alternative plan of action that avoid plagiarizing in an assignment. Since I use polleverywhere to create the pre-lesson plagiarism poll, I share the poll results by projecting the slides in polleverywhere on the whiteboard.

Continuing in the plagiarism lesson, we go over the different types of plagiarism. We discuss the following terms and how they may show up in the classroom:

- Self-plagiarism – when students hand in a writing they did for a prior assignment, for this assignment.
- Mosaic plagiarism – faulty paraphrasing with no source cited.
- Cyber plagiarism – downloading or copying and pasting an entire work and passing it off as the student's own writing.
- Accidental plagiarism – just changing words, citing incorrectly or not at all, not using quotation marks for quotes, or notes are similar to the original writing and student forgets the notes are not the student's words.
- Hybrid plagiarism – a mixture of correct citations and incorrect or missing citations.
- 404 Error plagiarism – citing a source that does not exist
- Aggregator plagiarism – very little original, unique writing. Citing is correct but the bulk of the writing is someone else's writing.
- MashUp plagiarism – copy and pasting from a number of sources and not citing the sources.

One may think in going over all the several types of plagiarism, I'm educating my students how to better plagiarize, but just the opposite is the case. When you, as the teacher, look like the "plagiarism expert", that assumption tends to create a feeling among students they will have a challenging time getting away with plagiarizing in your classroom.

The step that follows is to go over with students the consequences of plagiarism in your classroom, school, college, and the workplace. This part of the lesson usually gets students' attention because many of them, up to this point, have not experienced these consequences if they have plagiarized in the classroom.

Continuing in the plagiarism lesson, next comes the real case episodes about copyright infringement. I like to share cases where students recognize the names of the parties involved. The following copyright infringement cases usually get their attention. If you search for information, there are many online sources to give your students more information about these specific cases.

- Metallica v. Napster (2000)
- Vanilla Ice v. Queen and David Bowie (1990)
- Avatar Movie – William Roger Dean and James Cameron (2015)
- Apple vs. Microsoft (1988)
- Rapper Milly vs. Fortnite (2019)
- Jimmy Smith v. Drake (2014)
- Ed Sheeran v. Marvin Gaye (2020)

So far, we began with a pre-lesson plagiarism survey, plagiarism definitions, plagiarism videos and animations, information and statistics shared from the survey and other sources, plagiarism consequences, and real-world copyright infringement cases. The next step is to place the students in the teacher role and give them papers where plagiarism was found to see if they can find the signs of plagiarism. Students click on documents that I saved in my OneDrive so they may see the document firsthand. Then, they watch as I run each paper's text in an online plagiarism checker. I use paperrater.com. Students are usually open-mouthed when they see that the online plagiarism checkers give me the exact URLs, or website addresses, where text was copy and pasted into the paper. I also like to go to a website, select text, and copy and paste the text right into the online plagiarism checker to show students how quickly the online checker provides the exact URL where the text was copy and pasted.

We also talk about other features in these online plagiarism checkers like English convention checks as well as checks on vocabulary, word choice, sentence structure, and more. We talk about how using the plagiarism checker cannot only find plagiarism, but also helps to improve the grade of the paper with the tips given with the writing in the analysis it provides.
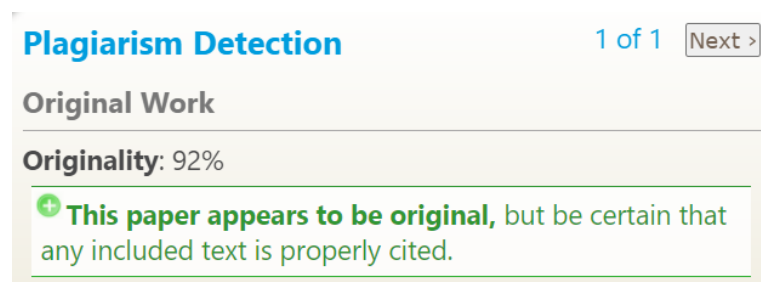
My favorite online plagiarism checker to use is paperrater.com because it not only checks for plagiarism, but also checks for errors in:

- Spelling
- Capitalization
- Punctuation
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Word Choice

Paperrater also offers:

- Resources for correcting errors
- Positive feedback
- To provide a good and correct analysis, students may choose:
  - Their Grade level, grades 1-12 are options
  - Purpose of Writing, narrative, book report, speech, lab report, and presentation are 5 of the fifteen types of writing
  - Do a slower review to find all errors
- Easy e-Submission for students to send teachers their Analysis plagiarism reports run in paperrater.com

Having student self-assess their writing with an online plagiarism checker prior to handing it in should be a recommended step in the writing process in the 21st century classroom. You may also have students peer review each other's writings, with a run through an online plagiarism checker be one of the Peer-to-Peer Review steps in the process. Also, asking students to e-submit their online plagiarism checker report to you in addition to submitting their paper to the assignment should also be a requirement. I recommend telling students they need to revise their papers until their analysis numbers are 95% plagiarism free, with less than three errors in writing. See the analysis quick shot below to understand what the students see inside the paperrater.com GUI, graphical user interface.

Plagiarism Detection   1 of 1 [Next >]

Original Work

Originality: 92%

⊕ **This paper appears to be original,** but be certain that any included text is properly cited.

By this time, students are usually in a better place about plagiarism. Since I do not make it a secret or treat copy and pasting an undisclosed topic in an assignment, the "cat's out of the bag," with my students when it comes to plagiarism. I like to finish the lesson with students reflecting, anonymously, about the lesson, what they learned, and what they will change in the future when it comes to how they show up in writing assignments knowing this information.

Remember, you also get the best honest answers when students may submit anonymous feedback to you.

To help teachers in reducing plagiarism in their classrooms post-Pandemic, this month (December 2021) in my **EdTechEnergy Momentum EdTech Coaching membership**, the EdTech assets are about *Plagiarism Prevention*. The following resources are available to EdTechEnergy Momentum members in December 2021:

WEEK 1: Plagiarism Prevention in your Classroom EdTech Coaching lesson in both audio and video formats (40:51 minutes)

WEEK 2: Step-by-Step Guide with screenshots on how to use an online plagiarism checker with student writings in your classroom using paperrator.com.

I've also included the two BONUS student guides:

Plagiarism Prevention Student Guide

- How to Interpret, Analyze, and Summarize
- How to Paraphrase
- How to Quote Sources
- How to Cite

Media Creation, License, and Attribution Student Guide

- Where to create media
- How to license own created media
- How to attribute own created media
- How to promote own created media

WEEK 3: Timesaving templates that provide teachers what they may use when preventing plagiarism in the classroom and rewarding and celebrating original, unique student writing:

- High School Writing Assessment Design
- Middle School Writing Assessment Design
- High School Peer Review Rubric
- Middle School Peer Review Rubric
- High School Writing and Multimedia Assessment Rubric criteria
- Middle School Writing and Multimedia Assessment Rubric criteria

WEEK 4: Implementation Guidelines and Resources about Plagiarism Prevention in your Classroom

- Online Plagiarism Surveys (Pre-[data points] and Post-[reflection])
- Plagiarism Prevention Classroom Poster
- High School Academic Integrity Policy
- Middle School Academic Integrity Policy
- Prevent Plagiarism Syllabus Content

  If you are interested in joining the **EdTechEnergy Momentum EdTech Coaching membership**, click on the link below. The cost of membership is $15/month or $144/annually, saving you 20%.

Click here to join: https://edtechenergy.thinkific.com/courses/edtechenergy-momentum

Cancel anytime. Membership ends when the paid subscription time ends.

I've put together a Plagiarism Prevention Checklist to begin your pounce on plagiarism in your classroom. Grab the checklist at the link below:

https://engage.edtechenergy.org/plagiarism-prevention-checklist

Please comment below—What will be your first step in preventing plagiarism in your classroom different from what you are already doing? OR what do you already do in your classroom that thwarts plagiarism from being a normal occurrence in your classroom? I'd love to know and learn.

Share your ideas in the comments below. Or share them on social media and tag @EdTechenergy.

Next episode topic: Encouraging and inspiring students to be their own media creators is a strong and important move into getting them to feeling empowered in our media-laden society. Giving students a VOICE in different forms makes an impact in the 21st century classroom. What impact does assigning podcasts do for your students when podcasts are all the rage?