Exploring and Preventing Accidental Plagiarism in a Digital Age

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Exploring and Preventing Plagiarism in a Digital Age

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Issue

- Students use information from the Internet without proper attribution, but students attest to using their own words and ideas.
- Quick Internet search locates sentences and passages they have used verbatim.
- Where is the disconnect?
Questions

How do digital natives view information accessed via the Internet?

How do digital natives conduct academic research and use it in their writing?

How do students define common knowledge?

How can educators best assist students who complete online research and present with plagiarism issues in their writing?
Copy/Paste – Two Most Frequent Types of Plagiarism

**Clone**
- Submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own

**CTRL-C**
- Contains significant portions of text from a single source without alteration (Turnitin, 2010).
Academic Research

Before Internet
- Limited access
- Physical possession
- Careful note-taking

After Internet
- Easy access via computer, devices
- No physical possession of source
- Copy and paste (Gabriel, 2010)

“A digital culture that promotes sharing, openness and re-use is colliding with one of the fundamental tenets of education – the ability to develop, organize and express original thoughts” (Turnitin, 2011).
Changing views of ownership and originality, as well as different ways of acquiring information may be linked to increased plagiarism among digital natives. Trip Gabriel (2010) suggests that digital natives may see information accessed via the internet as belonging to all and free for the taking – without attribution.

“Today’s digital culture has blurred the lines of originality and authorship” (Turnitin, 2010).
Shifting Views of Information and Knowledge

Information Individually Owned, Knowledge Independently Constructed

Information Communally Owned, Knowledge Collaboratively Constructed (Gallant, 2014).

The Internet is a “mutual brain that we can all tap”
~ Anonymous student (as cited in Gallant, 2014).
Defining Common Knowledge

I found this on Wikipedia, so it must be common knowledge.

This information can be found in five or more different sources, so it is common knowledge.

(Gallant, 2014)
Institutional Solutions

Foster a culture of academic integrity

Establish clear, fair academic integrity policies

Encourage consistent reporting of policy violations

Create relevant, meaningful assignments that are difficult to plagiarize

(Evering & Moorman, 2012; Gallant, 2014; Turnitin, 2010, 2011)
Classroom Solutions

- Have explicit conversations about plagiarism
- Redefine common knowledge
- Teach why of citation before teaching why
- Offer real life/workplace examples of plagiarism

(Evering & Moorman, 2012; Gallant, 2014; Turnitin, 2010, 2011)
Classroom Solutions

Teach note-taking skills

Teach students effective paraphrasing

Provide templates for student research (i.e. double entry journals)

Teach time management skills

(Evering & Moorman, 2012; Gallant, 2014; Turnitin, 2010, 2011)
Realize that threatening students with plagiarism detection may not work

Model correct citation and attribution

Use Internet sources for modeling and teaching

Allow students to submit drafts and then revise

(Evering & Moorman, 2012; Gallant, 2014; Turnitin, 2010, 2011)
References


