

Ensuring Academic Integrity through Community and Campus Outreach

Christy Wrenn and Kristi Kohl, Centenary College

Abstract

According to a recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center, “Most college presidents (55%) say that plagiarism in students’ papers has increased over the past 10 years.”¹ Academic librarians at Magale Library of Centenary College are addressing Pew’s documented increase in plagiarism by engaging local high schools, campus faculty and other local librarians. Magale Library recently organized collaborative efforts with other area academic and public librarians to allow for the collective sharing of ideas and to create a forum for discussion regarding how to improve information literacy on our campuses, further engage faculty and offer suggestions for classroom interventions that will increase student skills and success. Magale also initiated dialogue with Caddo Parish School Librarians by offering to provide supplemental instruction to college-bound high school students on academic expectations, specifically the issues of original writing and avoiding plagiarism. In addition, the librarians at Magale are currently developing seminars for campus faculty and local high school librarians and instructors which will cover ways to identify plagiarism, how to develop plagiarism-proof assignments² and how to address instances of academic dishonesty.

Keywords: academic integrity; common core standards; high school students; library outreach; plagiarism; secondary students

Ensuring Academic Integrity through Community and Campus Outreach

Introduction

Today's tech-savvy students have a wealth of information and technology at their fingertips. In our world of increasing digital information and easily copied material, many high school and college campuses face the ever-growing issues of academic integrity and student plagiarism³ despite countless efforts of faculty and librarians to educate students on the topics of information literacy and proper citation. Sometimes the sheer amount of information easily accessible online makes it difficult for students to locate reliable information, to effectively synthesize content and to successfully integrate their own voices into writing assignments. Unfortunately, many students entering college are inadequately prepared to write critical research papers at the post-secondary level or simply don't recognize the serious consequences of plagiarism. In order for students to adequately prepare for success during their college years and beyond, they need to understand how to properly conduct research, synthesize sources, formulate arguments, and credit resources they use.

According to a recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center, "Most college presidents (55%) say that plagiarism in students' papers has increased over the past 10 years. Among those who have seen an increase in plagiarism, 89% say computers and the internet have played a major role."⁴ In a recent white paper entitled "Plagiarism Report: Web Sources for Unoriginal Content in Student Writing," Turn-It-In⁵ reports on current trends in academia and responds to the Pew Research Center's findings, stating, "Educators should develop specific strategies to address plagiarism"⁶ Elaborating further, in their article entitled "Standards: A Critical Need for K-16 Collaboration," Brad

Phillips and Bruce Vandal encourage states to facilitate greater alignment between postsecondary education and K-12 education.⁷ Phillips and Vandal emphasize that such alignment and collaboration would result in a reduced need for remediation for struggling students and increased college success rates.⁸ Librarians are in a position to offer educators and students the assistance they need in combatting plagiarism, promoting original writing, and upholding the values of academic scholarship.

Not only has Magale Library of Centenary College begun to more openly address student plagiarism in its information literacy courses on campus, Magale has initiated three community outreach projects to help deal with the growing epidemic of plagiarism in higher education. Magale organized collaboration with area academic and public librarians that will create a forum for discussion, allow for cooperative community service, and streamline workloads. Magale has also reached out to Caddo Parish high school librarians. As educators in the state of Louisiana work to fully implement Common Core Standards⁹ across the K-12 curriculum in an effort to better align course content with college and work expectations, Magale hopes to help bridge the gap between the high school and the college experience by developing and offering supplemental instruction to local high school students on academic expectations, specifically the issues of original writing and avoiding plagiarism. The librarians at Magale are also developing seminars for high school librarians and Centenary faculty which will cover ways to identify the numerous types of plagiarism, how to develop plagiarism-proof assignments, and how to address instances of academic dishonesty.

Campus and Community Outreach

Until recently, Magale Library's information literacy instruction did not address

academic integrity or plagiarism. In January 2012, Magale's newly appointed Reference/Electronic Resources/Web Librarian Kristi Kohl reformatted the information literacy (IL) program to include material on academic integrity and drafted specific program goals and objectives based on ACRL's *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*.¹⁰ All librarian-led classes now include an overview of intellectual property, copyright law and academic integrity.

Interested in learning about other area colleges' IL programs and sharing ideas about effective teaching methods, Mrs. Kohl organized a meeting in April 2012 with two other academic librarians. Arranging for another meeting and broadening the scope of the collaboration, Mrs. Kohl invited public instructional librarians, in addition to more academic librarians, to participate in a meeting Magale Library hosted in July 2012. One public library and six institutions of higher education were represented at the meeting. In addition to information literacy instruction on our campuses, other topics discussed included community outreach to high schools, maintaining faculty and student relationships and collaborating on grant applications. The librarian collaboration, currently named the Northwest Louisiana Academic & Public Librarian Collaboration (NLAPLC), hopes to meet at least three times a year to share ideas about instruction, community outreach and streamlining workloads.

While improving information literacy on our own campuses is a primary goal, NLAPLC recognizes the need to collectively supplement instruction on plagiarism and academic integrity to area high schools. With the ever-increasing tendency (whether intentional or not) for students to copy written work rather than create original content, librarians are in a position to offer assistance and nurture an intellectual community based

on academic integrity. In addition, as Louisiana state schools work to implement Common Core Standards by the 2014/15 academic year, NLAPLC is willing and able to help students successfully meet the standards and expectations they will face in college and in the workforce.

In an effort to offer college-bound high school students insight into college academic expectations and to supplement current high school instruction on information literacy and plagiarism, Magale Library has begun developing and offering informational sessions to local secondary schools. In the spring of 2012, Magale initially contacted all Caddo Parish high school principals and/or school counselors via phone or email inquiring about the need or desire for such in-services. Although only one high school scheduled an in-class workshop at that time, several secondary schools indicated they will be interested in collaborating with Magale Library in the fall 2012 semester.

During the 2012 summer term, Magale reached out to the Director of the Caddo Parish School Libraries. This communication resulted in an invitation to present a program summary to all high school librarians at a back-to-school workshop. The presentation included an overview of NLAPLC, a summary of plagiarism on college campuses, and an invitation to collaborate with academic and public librarians to better inform college-bound students about academic integrity. The opportunity has established an initial contact with high school librarians in the hopes that they will follow-up with Magale to schedule an in-service or become involved in NLAPLC. Several high school librarians expressed their desire to be involved in the collaboration and the need to improve instruction in their schools.

The high school presentation currently offered by Magale Library, *Avoiding*

Plagiarism: Ensuring Academic Integrity, includes:

- discussion targeted to identify the level of information literacy taught at the school,
- definitions of information literacy and plagiarism,
- common types of plagiarism,
- reasons students plagiarize,
- consequences of plagiarism (specifically at Centenary College),
- ways to integrate research into writing, and
- ways to prepare for a writing assignment.

All students in attendance will be asked to complete a 5-question follow-up survey distributed online via Survey Monkey to help determine the success of the presentation (See Appendix A for survey and results of spring 2012 presentation). Not only will results of the student follow-up provide insight into the level of information gleaned from the presentation, the results will also indicate the potential need for additional in-services.

The inviting teacher will also be asked to offer feedback on the presentation and content of the experience by completing a 5-question survey distributed online via Survey Monkey (See Appendix B for survey and results of spring 2012 presentation). Teachers are also given the opportunity to indicate other Magale Library resources or services they would like to utilize, including instruction on:

- locating print resources,
- database searching,
- evaluating websites,
- using Google effectively,

- proper citation,
- formatting research papers,
- reviewing peers' writing,
- assigning plagiarism-proof writing assignments, and
- tutorials that instructors can access online.

Magale Library hopes to offer many more outreach services to local high schools in the fall of 2012, and will report back regarding the success of these efforts.

Although collaborating with other librarians and instructing students on issues of plagiarism are steps in the right direction, Magale recognizes the need to offer Centenary instructors and high school librarians informational sessions, too. Presentation topics include designing plagiarism-proof assignments, engaging students in peer reviews and ensuring copyright compliance and fair use in the classroom and library.

One strategy Turn-It-In suggests and Magale Library has incorporated into sessions for faculty and secondary school librarians is information on how to design plagiarism-proof assignments.¹¹ Plagiarism-proof assignments establish clear objectives and fair assessment practices (all of which should be outlined in course syllabi), require students to incorporate personal experiences with their research topics, and involve multiple steps in the writing process (note-taking/pre-writing, draft, revision, reflection). Instructors are encouraged to clarify what constitutes academic dishonesty and reiterate class and institutional policies throughout the course. Another suggestion encourages early student collaboration and active engagement in forums and discussions. Allowing students to collaborate with each other and conduct peer reviews of each other's writing will encourage critical thinking, increase internalization of writing skills and enable them

to better integrate their own voices into writing assignments. Additional suggestions

Magale librarians may offer educators include:

- regularly require writing assignments that evaluate students' ability to apply research skills,
- share Kulthau's model of the information search process with students to offer validation for their anxiety and help eliminate desperation,¹² and
- learn how to detect and effectively address plagiarism, including emphasizing student accountability and the need to uphold the enterprise of scholarship.

Conclusion

As the ease of access to information and plagiarism rates continue to grow on high school and college campuses and as the state of Louisiana works to better align K-12 curriculum with college expectations, librarians are needed more than ever to assist students and educators. Recognizing the increasing challenges of academic integrity that educators face will allow librarians to more effectively assist and develop solutions to the growing problem of plagiarism. Magale librarians hope that local high school teachers and Centenary faculty will actively collaborate and take advantage of the services and resources offered in order to better ensure their students' success in college and in the workplace. Lastly, Magale Library will continue its collaborative efforts with other academic and public librarians to better serve our students and assist our faculty in addressing the prevalence of plagiarism on our campuses.

Appendix A: Avoiding Plagiarism and Ensuring Academic Integrity: Student Survey and Results

1. Prior to today's instruction, how familiar were you with the topics of academic integrity and plagiarism?

	Response percent	Response count
Extremely familiar	30.8%	4
Somewhat familiar	61.5%	8
Slightly familiar	7.7%	1
Not at all familiar	0.0%	0

2. Which of the following examples constitutes plagiarism?

	Response count	Response percent
Plugging in synonyms for text copied from another source and turning it in as your own.	0	0%
Copying text from a website, pasting it into a document, and turning it in as you own.	0	0%
Downloading a paper or report from the Internet and turning it in as your own.	0	0%
Rearranging the order of the original sentences and turning it in as your own.	0	0%
All of the above.	13	100%

3. To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you

	Response count	Response percent
use another person's idea, opinion, or theory.	0	0%
paraphrase another person's spoken or written words.	0	0%
use quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words.	0	0%
use any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings that are not common knowledge.	0	0%
All of the above.	13	100%

4. Ways to integrate your research into a writing assignment does not include

	Response count	Response percent
Copying the original text and pasting it into your document.	10	76.9%
Quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing passages with proper citation.	3	23.1%
Using in-text citation and attributive tags.	0	0%
Balancing scholarly thought with your own personal analysis.	0	0%

5. How helpful was this presentation in assisting you with your upcoming college admissions process and academic expectations?

	Response percent	Response count
Extremely helpful	100%	13
Somewhat helpful	0.0%	0

Slightly helpful	0.0%	0
Not helpful	0.0%	0

Appendix B: Avoiding Plagiarism and Ensuring Academic Integrity: Instructor Survey and Feedback

1. Please identify the reason(s) you scheduled instruction on plagiarism and academic integrity for your students today. (Check all that apply).

Response count	Response percent
To supplement current classroom instruction on plagiarism and academic integrity. 1	100%
To offer students' insight into college academic expectations. 1	100%
I was instructed by my principal or counselor to allow you to visit. 0	0%
My school lacks instruction on plagiarism, so your visit was greatly needed. 0	0%
Other (please specify) 0	0%

2. Prior to today's instruction, how familiar were your students with the topics of academic integrity and plagiarism?

	Response percent	Response count
Extremely familiar	0%	0
Somewhat familiar	100%	1
Slightly familiar	0%	0
Not at all familiar	0%	0

3. Did the librarian provide the scope of information needed and cover the topic(s) requested?

	Response percent	Response count
Yes	100%	1
No	0%	0
Maybe	0%	0

4. How helpful was this presentation in assisting your students with their upcoming college admissions process and academic expectations?

	Response percent	Response count
Extremely helpful	100%	1
Somewhat helpful	0%	0
Slightly helpful	0%	0
Not helpful	0%	0

5. What other resources and/or services could Magale Library offer that would better serve you and your students' information needs?

	Response percent	Response count
Instruction on locating print resources	0%	0
Instruction on database searching	0%	0
Instruction on evaluation websites	0%	0
Instruction on using Google effectively	0%	0
Instruction on proper citation	0%	0
Instruction on formatting research papers	0%	0
Instruction on reviewing peers' papers	100%	1
Online tutorials that can be accessed on an as-needed basis	100%	1
Other		

Bibliography

- Association of College & Research Libraries. "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education." (2000). Accessed July 29, 2012.
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency>
- "Common Core State Standards Grade-Level Content Comparison Reports (ELA)." Common Core State Standards. Louisiana Department of Education. State of Louisiana (2011). Accessed May 17, 2012,
http://www.louisianaschools.net/topics/ccss_implementation.html
- Kuhlthau, Carol. "Information Search Process," *Rutgers University*, Accessed May 15, 2012, http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/~kuhlthau/information_search_process.htm.
- Lenhart, Amanda, Kim Parker, and Kathleen Moore. "The Digital Revolution and Higher Education: College Presidents, Public Differ on Value of Online Learning." *Pew Social and Academic Trends* (August 28, 2011). Accessed May 17, 2012,
www.pewsocialtrends.org/.
- Phillips, Brad and Vandal, Bruce. "Standards: A Critical Need for K-16 Collaboration." *Education Week*, 31, no. 10 (November 1, 2011): 20-21, 23.
- "White Paper: Plagiarism and the Web: A Comparison of Internet Sources for Secondary and Higher Education Students." Turn-It-In/iParadigms, LLC. (November 2011). Accessed May 17, 2012,
http://pages.turnitin.com/rs/iparadigms/images/Turnitin_WhitePaper_SourcesSECvsHE.pdf

¹ Lenhart, Amanda, Parker, Kim, and Moore, Kathleen. "The Digital Revolution and Higher Education: College Presidents, Public Differ on Value of Online Learning." *Pew Social and Academic Trends* (August 28, 2011).

² For the purpose of this article, *plagiarism-proof assignments* require students to offer an individualized approach to writing, or reflection based on personal experience. Plagiarism-proof assignments involve multiple steps in the writing process (note-taking/pre-writing, draft, revision, reflection) which naturally allows for student's original voice to emerge.

³ For the purpose of this article, *plagiarism* is defined as the act of "steal[ing] and pass[ing] off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : us[ing] (another's production) without crediting the source," and *academic integrity* is the absence of plagiarism or cheating (Merriam-webster.com/dictionary).

⁴ Lenhart, Amanda, Parker, Kim, and Moore, Kathleen. "The Digital Revolution and Higher Education: College Presidents, Public Differ on Value of Online Learning." *Pew Social and Academic Trends* (August 28, 2011).

⁵ Turn-It-In is a provider of plagiarism-detection software. In researching about the software for Centenary College, Kristi Kohl attended many of Turn-It-In's free webinars about students' research habits, why students plagiarize and how to encourage critical thinking by allowing students to conduct peer reviews.

⁶ "White Paper: Plagiarism and the Web: A Comparison of Internet Sources for Secondary and Higher Education Students." Turn-It-In/iParadigms, LLC. (November 2011): 4.

⁷ Phillips, Brad and Vandal, Bruce. "Standards: A Critical Need for K-16 Collaboration." *Education Week*, 31, no. 10 (November 1, 2011): 20-21, 23.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Common Core State Standards Grade-Level Content Comparison Reports (ELA)." Common Core State Standards. Louisiana Department of Education. State of Louisiana (2011).

¹⁰ Association of College & Research Libraries. "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education." (2000). Accessed July 29, 2012. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency>

¹¹ "White Paper: Plagiarism and the Web: A Comparison of Internet Sources for Secondary and Higher Education Students." Turn-It-In/iParadigms, LLC. (November 2011): 9.

¹² Carol Kulthau. "Information Search Process," *Rutgers University*, Accessed May 15, 2012, http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/~kuhlthau/information_search_process.htm.