Plagiarism: Avoiding Accidental Internet Plagiarism

Created by: Theresa Foy DiGeronimo
Title/Role: Teacher/librarian
Organization/School Name: Hawthorne High School
Location: New Jersey

Grade Level: 11, 12
Type of Lesson: Lesson in a unit
Type of Schedule: Flexible
Collaboration Continuum: Limited
Content Area: Language Arts
Content Topic: Research Paper Writing

Standards for the 21st-Century Learner

Skills Indicator(s):
2.1.2 Organize knowledge so that it is useful.
3.1.6 Use information and technology ethically and responsibly.

Dispositions Indicator(s):
1.2.2 Demonstrate confidence and self-direction by making independent choices in the selection of resources and information.

Responsibilities Indicator(s):
1.3.1 Respect copyright/intellectual property rights of creators and producers.

Self-Assessment Strategies Indicator(s):
1.4.2 Use interaction with and feedback from teachers and peers to guide own inquiry process.

Scenario: During a Professional Learning Community meeting, the English teachers concurred that too many students were in the habit of using the Internet to practice "cut-and-paste plagiarism" in their research papers. As part of the introduction to the Language Arts unit on writing the research paper [NJCCCS Language Arts Standard W.11-12.7; W.11-12.8: Conduct research to gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation], the SL was asked for assistance in teaching the students what Internet plagiarism is, why it is unacceptable and how to avoid it. For this full-period lesson, the students came with their teacher to the library computer lab for a team-teaching approach to this lesson. The classroom teacher will follow-up this activity as the research papers are written and return to the library for reinforcement lessons as necessary.

Overview: In this lesson in the research paper unit, students will learn why cutting information from the Internet and pasting it into a research paper is plagiarism. They will learn how to properly paraphrase and cite their sources to avoid the consequences of theft of intellectual property. The essential questions for this lesson include: Why can't I cut and paste information from the Internet? How can I report my research without risking a charge of plagiarism?
Final Product: Students will use a peer-edit assignment to finalize the process of correctly turning a paragraph of information into a bulleted list of facts and then turning that list into a paraphrased paragraph with proper in-text citation.

Library Lesson: Students will follow ethical and legal guidelines in gathering and using information. They will also avoid accidental Internet plagiarism by accurately paraphrasing source material.

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Assessment

Product: SL and teacher assess the students? completed note cards and paraphrased paragraphs; they also review the peer-edit of each paraphrase to determine each student?s understanding of how to take notes from an original text and how to transform those notes into a cited paraphrase. At the end of the lesson, SL and students return to a discussion of a version of the opening question: "Do you believe it is okay to take information from the Internet and put it into research papers without using either direct quotes or a paraphrase of the information with proper citation?"

Process: The SL and teacher circulate among the students to observe and help students create their bulleted lists on the index cards. They give individualized attention to make sure all the necessary information is paraphrased in the rewritten paragraph and is concluded with proper in-text citation. They then review each student's peer-edit assignment paper to determine if the student has fully grasped the concept of paraphrasing and citation.

Student self-questioning: Do I know why I can?t cut information from an Internet article and paste it directly into my research paper? Do I know how to use the bulleted-list notecard method to put research information into my own words? Do I know how to give proper attribution at the end of my paraphrased paragraph? Did I help my classmate by answering all the given questions and pointing out any areas of weakness in his/her paraphrase?

Instructional Plan

Resources students will use:
Text (books, letters, poems, newspapers, etc.)

Resources instructor will use:
Projector
Smart board

Instruction/Activities

Direct instruction: To engage student interest, this lesson opens with discussion based on the question: "Does the teen generation believe it is okay to take information from the Internet and put it into research papers without using either direct quotes or a paraphrase of the information with proper citation?" To further motivate discussion on the misconceptions surrounding Internet plagiarism, students will read the attached New York Times article "A Campus Fad That's Being Copied: Internet Plagiarism Seems on the Rise." After class discussion of the article, the SL will explain copyright law and the ethical protection of intellectual property that is required in all academic research. The SL will then explain the lesson objective to help students avoid the consequences associated with theft of intellectual property.
(These consequences will be based on the school policy for handling breach of academic integrity cases or may be based on an understanding of society’s damnation of intellectual fraud as seen in widely publicized cases such those involving contemporary authors such as Stephen Ambrose, Kaavya Viswanathan, or even Dan Brown.)

**Modeling and guided practice:** Using the Smart Board or computer projector, the SL demonstrates how to avoid plagiarism by using the bulleted-list notecard method. Using the attached "Modeling Example" students will see how to take notes of fact in bulleted lists and then how to turn that list of facts into a paraphrased paragraph with proper in-text citation at the end. (If SL does not have a Smart Board or computer projector, the attached document can be printed and copied for distribution to the students.)

**Independent practice:** Using the paragraph in the attached "Paraphrasing Assignment," students will practice the bulleted-list notecard method of transforming information into one’s own words and then giving proper in-text citation attribution.

**Sharing and reflecting:** Students will exchange paraphrased paragraphs with classmates. They will then peer edit the paraphrase by answering the following questions (also found on the attached "Paraphrasing Assignment"). 1. Does your classmate’s paraphrase include all of the same facts as the original paragraph? If not, which facts are not included? 2. Are there any facts in the original paragraph that are not included in the paraphrase? If so list the excluded facts on the bottom of your classmate’s paper. 3. Are there any incorrect facts in the paraphrase? If so, circle the inaccuracies. 4. Can you find a sentence that is a very close imitation of the original sentence (just a few word changes for example, but the same sentence structure)? If so, suggest an alternative way to write the sentence. 5. Does the writer include an in-text citation, giving credit for the information to the author? If not, please insert the citation.

**Have you taught this lesson before:** Yes

**Strategies for differentiation:** As the SL notices students needing differentiated instruction who may be struggling with the concept or falling behind in the paraphrase, the SL will alert the teacher who can provide individualized explanations. Students with in-class support personnel will work with their support person to find the key points to add to their notecards. Students with attention deficits will be given a printout of the model lesson that is displayed for the class on the Smart Board or with the computer projector.

**AASL/Common Core State Standards Crosswalk**

**English Language Arts:**

**CC.11-12.W.7** » English Language Arts » Research to Build and Present Knowledge » 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. (11,12)

**CC.11-12.L.6** » English Language Arts » Vocabulary Acquisition and Use » 6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (11,12)
CC.11-12.R.I.7 » English Language Arts » Integration of Knowledge and Ideas » 7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. (11,12)

CC.11-12.W.8 » English Language Arts » Research to Build and Present Knowledge » 8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (11,12)

CC11-12WH/SS/S/TS8 » Writing Standards » 8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (11,12)

CC.11-12.W.6 » English Language Arts » Production and Distribution of Writing » 6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information. (11,12)

CC11-12WH/SS/S/TS1a » Writing Standards » a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. (11,12)

CC11-12WH/SS/S/TS2a » Writing Standards » a. Introduce a topic and organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. (11,12)

CC.11-12.W.2 » English Language Arts » Text Types and Purposes » 2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (11,12)

CC.11-12.R.I.3 » English Language Arts » Key Ideas and Details » 3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text. (11,12)
Avoiding Accidental Plagiarism Peer-edit Assignment

Original Paragraph:
The following paragraph is the original paragraph taken from the article, “A Campus Fad That's Being Copied: Internet Plagiarism Seems on the Rise.”

Thirty-eight percent of the undergraduate students surveyed said that in the last year they had engaged in one or more instances of "cut-and-paste" plagiarism involving the Internet, paraphrasing or copying anywhere from a few sentences to a full paragraph from the Web without citing the source. Almost half the students said they considered such behavior trivial or not cheating at all. Only 10 percent of students had acknowledged such cheating in a similar, but much smaller survey three years ago. This year's study, organized by Donald L. McCabe, a management professor at Rutgers University, surveyed more than 18,000 students, 2,600 faculty members and 650 teaching assistants at large public universities and small private colleges nationwide. No Ivy League schools were included.


Peer-edit Questions
Read your classmate’s paraphrase of this paragraph and then answer the questions below as they relate to that paraphrase.
1. Does your classmate’s paraphrase include all of the same facts as the original paragraph? If not, which facts are not included?

2. Are there any facts in the original paragraph that are not included in the paraphrase? If so list the excluded facts on the bottom of your classmate’s paper.

3. Are there any incorrect facts in the paraphrase? If so, circle the inaccuracies.

4. Can you find a sentence that is a very close imitation of the original sentence (just a few word changes for example, but the same sentence structure)? If so, suggest an alternative way to write the sentence.

5. Does the writer include an in-text citation, giving credit for the information to the author? If not, please insert the citation.
A Campus Fad That's Being Copied: Internet Plagiarism Seems on the Rise

A study organized by Donald L. McCabe, a management professor at Rutgers University, surveyed more than 18,000 students, 2,600 faculty members and 650 teaching assistants at large public universities and small private colleges nationwide. No Ivy League schools were included. "There are a lot of students who are growing up with the Internet who are convinced that anything you find on the Internet is public knowledge and doesn't need to be cited," Professor McCabe said. The survey solicited students' comments about cheating, and one student wrote, "If professors cannot detect a paper from an Internet source, that is a flaw in the grader or professor." Another student wrote: "One time I downloaded a program off the Internet for my class. I hated the class and it was mandatory so I didn't care about learning it, just passing it."


Note card bullets of facts taken from the paragraph above:

- Study regarding cheating and plagiarism conducted by Rutgers management professor, Donald L. McCabe
- Nationwide survey of 18,000 students, 2,600 faculty members, 650 teaching assistants at large and small, public and private universities
- McCabe’s personal belief: this generation doesn’t cite research because it believes that Internet information is public knowledge
- Students gave responses such as “I hated the class… so I didn’t care about learning it, just passing it” that seemed to blame the professors and the required course work for cheating and plagiarism

Paraphrase of the bulleted information:

A study regarding cheating and plagiarism was conducted by Rutgers management professor, Donald L. McCabe. This was a nationwide survey of 18,000 students, 2,600
faculty members, 650 teaching assistants at large and small, public and private universities. McCabe’s personal belief is that this generation doesn’t cite research because it believes that Internet information is public knowledge. Students who answered the survey gave responses such as “I hated the class… so I didn’t care about learning it, just passing it” that seemed to blame the professors and the required course work for cheating and plagiarism (Rimer).
A Campus Fad That's Being Copied: Internet Plagiarism Seems on the Rise

By SARA RIMER

A study conducted on 23 college campuses has found that Internet plagiarism is rising among students.

Thirty-eight percent of the undergraduate students surveyed said that in the last year they had engaged in one or more instances of "cut-and-paste" plagiarism involving the Internet, paraphrasing or copying anywhere from a few sentences to a full paragraph from the Web without citing the source. Almost half the students said they considered such behavior trivial or not cheating at all.

Only 10 percent of students had acknowledged such cheating in a similar, but much smaller survey three years ago.

This year's study, organized by Donald L. McCabe, a management professor at Rutgers University, surveyed more than 18,000 students, 2,600 faculty members and 650 teaching assistants at large public universities and small private colleges nationwide. No Ivy League schools were included.

"There are a lot of students who are growing up with the Internet who are convinced that anything you find on the Internet is public knowledge and doesn't need to be cited," Professor McCabe said.

The survey solicited students' comments about cheating, and one student wrote, "If professors cannot detect a paper from an Internet source, that is a flaw in the grader or professor."

Another student wrote: "One time I downloaded a program off the Internet for my class. I hated the class and it was mandatory so I didn't care about learning it, just passing it."

Forty percent of students acknowledged plagiarizing written sources in the last year. As with the Internet cheating, about half the students considered this sort of plagiarism trivial.
Twenty percent of the faculty members said they use their computers, such as the turnitin.com site, to help detect student plagiarism.

Twenty-two percent of undergraduates acknowledged cheating in a "serious" way in the past year -- copying from another student on a test, using unauthorized notes or helping someone else to cheat on a test.

"When I work with high school students, what I hear is, 'Everyone cheats, it's not all that important,'" Professor McCabe said. "They say: 'It's just to get into college. When I get into college, I won't do it.' But then you survey college students, and you hear the same thing."

The undergraduates say they need to cheat because of the intense competition to get into graduate school, and land the top jobs, Professor McCabe said. "It never stops," he said.

One of the students from the survey wrote: "This isn't a college problem. It's a problem of the entire country!"

Professor McCabe said: "Students will say they're just mimicking what goes on in society with business leaders, politicians. I don't know whether they're making excuses for what they've already done, or whether they're saying, 'It's O.K. if I do this because of what's going on.'"

Many of the colleges involved in the survey have begun trying to fight cheating by educating both faculty members and students on academic integrity and revising school policies.

Princeton University was not involved in the survey, but it is among the schools that have been taking steps to make sure students know that it is wrong to use material from the Internet without citing the source.

"We need to pay more attention as students join our communities to explaining why this is such a core value -- being honest in your academic work and why if you cheat that is a very big deal to us," said Kathleen Deignan, Princeton's dean of undergraduate students.

There has not been any noticeable increase in cheating at Princeton, Ms. Deignan said, with 18 to 25 cases reported a year. Administrators have noticed, however, that sometimes students and parents do not understand why it is wrong to "borrow" sections of text for a paper without providing attribution, Ms. Deignan added.
Princeton students are also concerned, and they have organized a campus assembly on integrity for Sept. 21.

"We live in a world where a lot of this is negotiable," Ms. Deignan said. "Academic institutions need to say, 'This is not negotiable.'"

CHEATING

Water-Bottle Tricks

Some of the comments submitted anonymously by college students who took part in a survey about cheating:

If teachers taught better we wouldn't have to cheat.

Maybe schools and parents should focus on learning instead of grades.

You can't stop it. . . . Some people were just raised that way -- "do whatever you have to do."

In my freshman biology class, our professor would give us the answers to the test once we finished and turned in the test, so we could figure out what we missed before he got them out to us. One student turned in the test, went back to get his book bag and gave the sheet of paper to his friend who was still taking the test.

Someone I know once soaked the label off a water bottle, printed up a fake label, copied notes onto the back of the fake label, and pasted it back onto the water bottle. During the test, he had the water bottle on his desk. He'd take a drink, read the exposed line through the bottle and write down the answer.