**Introduction**

Twenty years ago, if a student were to do a research paper, they would go to the library, search a database of thousands of books, leaf through the pages, and find the information they needed. This day and age, it is extremely easy to find information on any topic via search engines on the internet. “The New Plagiarism may be worse than the old because students now wield an Electronic Shovel that makes it possible to find and save huge chunks of information with little reading, effort or originality” (McKenzie, 1998). The reasons for plagiarism vary. Some students are lazy, others enjoy being deceitful; some students do not have the skills to complete the work their selves, and a select few plagiarize accidentally. Regardless of the reason, it is important to for students to know that it is not tolerated, which is why most learning institutions have a “Zero Tolerance Policy” for plagiarism which is typically stated in every syllabus. However, that does not mean that students will not do it!

**Plagiarism and DE**

According to Singh and Bennington (2012), “…there are strong arguments that the Internet is contributing to the increase in cases of plagiarism in higher education including distance education” (p 115). Distance Education has opened the doors for students to plagiarize more now, than ever. Instructors are not able to interact face to face with students, see students completing work, or see them handing it in for that matter. Who is to say that the student enrolled is even the student participating in the conversations or writing the papers? It is difficult to know. To make matters worse, now there are online businesses that sell paper-writing services, where before students had to “borrow” a friend’s paper and risk the teacher recognizing the past work. The unveiling of Turnitin.com in 2004 has helped teachers to identify plagiarism, but there are many ways to manipulate a paper to produce a clean plagiarism report. For example, students may do a great job paraphrasing, making it hard for Turnitin to detect the act. So how do instructors detect plagiarism?

**Overview**

A tutorial entitled “Intellectual CSI: How to Spot Plagiarism” is a short course that will aid instructors in spotting plagiarism with the naked eye and without the help of any software or websites. This tutorial will show not only what kinds of plagiarism there is, but also how to spot it and what tools can be used. There are signs to look for in written works and in the classroom that teachers may or may not be aware of. For example, if a student uses one voice in the “classroom” and another when writing a paper, that may be a sign of plagiarism. The tutorial will provide examples for teachers to use. This will allow instructors who do not have access to Turnitin to be able to recognize issues in students work. Not only that, but other instructors that use Turnitin will be able to identify clues that will lead them to identifying plagiarized content. The learning module will also provide instructors with resources to teach students about plagiarism in attempts to prevent it from occurring.

**Analysis of Current Modules**

While there are many websites that have bits of information covering plagiarism detection, there are not many complete tutorials that offer a complete course on detection without referring teachers to online tools. One of the modules found was found on Youtube.com and entitled “How to Detect Plagiarism. In this tutorial, an instructor first introduces two online tools that he uses, Duplichecker.com and Plagium.com. He then goes to an essay that he does not suspect and runs it through the systems and they come out clean. Afterwards, he tries another paper. This paper has different font types, an unusual format and a level of writing that the instructor claims is “better than his usual work” (Vu, 2011). When the instructor runs it through the system, 56% of the paper is detected as plagiarized. Most institutions will allow for 10-20% detected based on the errors that the system may make (Turnitin.com detects text in quotations). This video could be better if the instructor went further into detail on how he detected the student’s deception.

Another short tutorial is given by Rutgers University by their library. This resource is for bother students and teachers and covers how to avoid and recognize plagiarism, as well as how to properly paraphrase, use, and cite sources. On their “Recognize It” page the give 5 examples of how one may notice plagiarism and it works for both students and instructors. It is important for students to be able to recognize plagiarism because there are truly times when they do not mean it. So if they know what it looks like, they can change it. One example is “Osmosis,” according the website (Department of Education, Rutgers University). Osmosis occurs when a student uses information from an instructor’s lecture without citing. Many students are not aware that they can cite a lecture, but instructors are quick to notice their own work!

**Conclusion**

Although there are many reasons for plagiarism, there remains one simple fact: students plagiarize because they can. They know that if they are clever enough, they will get away with it. A major part of the battle is educating students to prevent plagiarism, but the other part is being able to detect it. With a comprehensive guide to plagiarism detection, faculty may now be able to do just that.

References

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