

Course design and assessment strategies for dealing with student plagiarism

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Why does plagiarism happen?

Misunderstanding:

Not clear about definitions & not clear on regulations /rules
Lack of clarity in assignments & requirements

Misuse: Weak academic skills, weak language skills

Over-reliance on others' work
Poor planning / time management
Partial accuracy in using citation rules

Misconduct: Too easy to do; too hard to resist

Poor decision making eg about deadlines
Already an established behaviour; Fear of failure;
Only wanting 'a good grade / qualification'

‘Academic apprenticeship’: [designing **in** at programme level]

- activities to **build a shared understanding**
- early **diagnostic activities & targeted feedback** on correct / incorrect use of academic rules
- requirements** that students show they know about the conventions
- excellent **written support** and guidance
- modelling and rewarding** academic values

Designing out plagiarism

1. Start early.

Habits & behaviour are established early

Established behaviours are hard to change

Designing out (continued)

2. Acknowledge **students' poor planning.**

Design in compulsory stages
chunk tasks,
create compilation assessments,
check things are happening,
require evidence of activity

3. Review assessment criteria.

[to match assessment rewards with espoused values]

Do students' grades improve if they show authority and credibility?

Do their grades improve if they use referencing skilfully?

4. Consider peer review and peer assessment.

Make work public and owned

Require students to use the results of peer review

Value students use of others' feedback by building their use into the assessment

5. Focus on assignment tasks

Novelty: task or format

Requirements: specific, local , recent, personal, individual, unique

Higher-order cognitive skills (eg. rank, justify, choose, revise, interpret, analyse, invent, plan;

not knowledge (eg. ‘describe, state’) or understanding (‘explain’) or generic application

Assess the process as well as (or instead of) the product

Authenticate (*‘Who did this work?’*)

Examples of 'make it'

NO: An essay on 'smoking and public health'

YES: Find 3 '*stop smoking*' websites. Create criteria to judge which will best improve public health. Rank them. Justify your ranking

YES: Select xxx recent decisions w. impact on smoking. Which are most / least likely to have a positive impact? Why? Draft advice to a government cttee to strengthen the decision - include quantitative data.

YES: Here's a case study, evaluate it.

YES: Be ready to debate, '*The best way to improve public health is to stop people smoking*'. [variation: write the script in class]

YES: Imagine you are xxx trying to convince yyy to fund a stop-smoking campaign. Prioritise your arguments + support each one with cited evidence from recent reliable studies.

NO: A description of 'Anatomy and physiology of the nose'

YES: Identify an every-day task. Design one of the sensory systems a robot would need to complete the task. Imagine that you can do anything. What would you NOT need to include in a mechanical device that is vital in a human for that sense?

NO: A care plan for 'Balance after below-the-knee amputation'

YES: Randomly allocate 3 characteristics & 2 symptoms to create a 'person'. Design a care plan to improve the symptoms

No: What factors influence the success or failure of speculators on the commodities market?

Yes: Download a current set of commodity futures prices [*then five questions about how to analyse and interrogate the download*]. If your answer to (v) shows an imperfect hedge result, explain the probable main reasons for this. If your result is a perfect hedge, explain why this is unexpected given this is a contango market. **Explain the factors relevant to the success or otherwise of speculating in this example.**

Rosser, U of

Coventry, 2008

Putting theory into action

‘make it’ or ‘fake it?’

‘find the answer’ or ‘make the answer?’

It's hard to spot your own – why?

Too close.... or too fixed on one kind of
assessment

Wrong time of the year for thinking

Not sure what is possible or permissible

Worry about workload

6. Authenticate

Observe the work in progress

Request meta-task actions

Orally review material with some or all students

Check coursework understanding in exams

Enhancing design-based solutions

Needs a **holistic approach**

The student needs to see actions in place to **detect and defend the rules**

Teachers need to feel students are being **treated fairly** when they are punished

Everyone need to feel **colleagues** are doing the same