

All About Plagiarism

Promising Practices 29

Suggestions for Program Improvement for Ohio ABLE Practitioners

Curriculum/Instruction

Program Puzzler

In order to prepare their students for college-level writing, instructors at ABLE Program X are teaching the basics of writing a research paper. This is a different process than writing a GED-type essay, because students must now do research and incorporate source material into their writing. The instructors decided to address the issue of plagiarism with their students prior to delving into the actual research process. What are some practices that can help students understand and avoid plagiarism?

Peer Perspective

Do students know what the word “plagiarism” means?

- Be sure to define it and provide examples of what it is and what it isn’t. They may find it interesting to know that the word “plagiarism” comes from the Latin word *plagiarius*, meaning “kidnapper.”

Do students know the difference between intentional and unintentional plagiarism?

- Most students understand that it is wrong to copy someone’s work word-for-word and pass it off as their own. But they may be confused over the less obvious forms of plagiarism, such as changing a few words in a sentence or putting an author’s idea into their own words and not giving proper credit (Gilmore, 2009). Discuss these issues in your classroom; provide examples or scenarios of student writing and have students determine whether or not they constitute plagiarism.

Do students know why it is important to avoid plagiarism?

- One reason to avoid plagiarism that students may not have considered is that the whole purpose of doing research and writing papers is to learn. The process involves critical thinking skills such as how to:
 - Find the needed information
 - Determine if sources are credible
 - Determine which information to incorporate into their writing
 - Take notes
 - Summarize and paraphrase
 - Organize the gathered information
 - Form an outline and write a rough draft
 - Add their own personal perspective on the topic



Timely Tips

An excellent resource on teaching students how to avoid plagiarism is the book, *Avoiding Plagiarism: A How Not-To Guide*, by Barry Gilmore, Heinemann Publishing (available through the Southwest ABLE Resource Center’s lending library). Gilmore addresses such issues as learning to paraphrase and summarize; understanding what is common knowledge and what is not; and why it’s important—and more satisfying—to resist the cut-and-paste urge.

Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) is an award-winning website with over 200 free resources, including style guides for writing and teaching writing, grammar and mechanics, and ESL (English as a Second Language). Go to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> and have a browse.

Peer Perspective

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Other reasons to avoid plagiarism

- Students need to know that committing plagiarism is a serious offense; it is stealing. There are consequences for stealing. Students have been expelled from programs; some have been taken to court over plagiarism incidents.
- The obvious reason for students not to commit plagiarism is that if they do, they will probably get caught. The Internet puts information at their fingertips, but instructors use the Internet as well. Instructors can easily paste some of the student's text into Google to see if other sources pop up. Many colleges have plagiarism "detector" services, such as *Turn It In* (<http://turnitin.com/static/index.html>).

Added Insights

The Read Write Think website, at <http://www.readwritethink.org>, provides high quality lessons and tools on reading and writing. The lesson on plagiarism helps students understand copyright, fair use, and plagiarism by focusing on why students should avoid plagiarism and exploring strategies that respect copyright and fair use. The lesson includes three parts, each framed by a KWL chart. In the first part, students discuss plagiarism and look at examples to determine whether the passages are plagiarized. Part two introduces copyright and fair use. Students use a Think-Pair-Share strategy to explore questions about fair use, then read several scenarios and determine if the uses described are fair use. In the third part, students develop paraphrasing skills through direct practice with paraphrasing text book passages using an online notetaking tool.

Link to the complete lesson plan: <http://www.readwritethink.net/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/exploring-plagiarism-copyright-paraphrasing-1062.html>

Another useful online tool from Read Write Think is the Essay Map. The following link will take you to the website's "Student Interactive" tool for Organizing and Summarizing information. <http://www.readwritethink.net/classroom-resources/student-interactives>

This interactive essay map can help students with the critical steps that come between research and writing.

Works Cited

Gilmore, Barry. 2009. *Plagiarism: A How-No-To Guide for Students*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

ABLELink Accompaniments

- ◆ Students Who are Being Tracked in Writing
- ◆ Students Who Do Not Pass Writing on the GED Test
- ◆ Students Whose Goal is to Enter Post Secondary Education

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