

The act of plagiarism: how far is too far?

[Business](#)



To our Frisco community and our country's future: Is it truly a battle against one's morals to avoid copying another's work or the lack of enforcement of copyright laws as protection of one's unique work? " According to 2009 survey held by Common Sense Media, a non-profit organization, more than one-third (38%) of students from grades 7-12 copied text from a website." With the continuously deteriorating rate of innovation and students abusive use of copy and paste, it becomes difficult to identify the true reason behind why students would purposely duplicate or claim ownership to text from off the web. Obviously, violating copyright laws is a morally unjust act because it is stealing someone else's work without credit and would otherwise promote plagiarism or prevent those from creating their own original works. Copyright is the basic protection of works from copying without acquiring permission from the original owner.

However, if such regulations were not put in action, it would not be able to create boundaries for the control of academic integrity, thus embedding plagiarism in education. With our current highly competitive education system, plagiarism is seen as the instant solution in order to achieve high grades while ignoring the severe consequences that would affect one's education and reputation. Not only is plagiarism " an act of fraud," but it involves both " stealing someone else's work" and " claiming it as your own." (As stated by the plagiarism 101 site) Although " most cases of plagiarism can be [completely] avoided by [simply] citing sources," many are ignorant to the how easily it is to prevent plagiarism from occurring.

According to the Pennsylvania State research, " reminding students of the

penalties” if they’re caught will help students see that plagiarism really is not a ‘ solution.

‘ ” According to a CNN Online article, “ students expressed the view that cheating is necessary in order to maintain a competitive G. P. A. and be successful in life.” That fact that many students have to go so far to “ sacrifice [their] own integrity” in order to “ make a good impression” is not only depleting to one’s potential but degrading to their educational experience as well. Although some may believe that it is acceptable as long as one isn’t caught red-handed, this is a show of academic dishonesty and lack of creativity.

Copying other’s work is not only unjust, but also degrading to one’s reputation; thus, openly displaying that one is not capable of creating their own original work. As the line of plagiarism blurs for the students surrounded by the Digital Age, it becomes difficult to control the amount of information shared or even copied. The lack of awareness of proper citation or anonymous sites on the internet gives students a false sense of ownership, making it easier for other works being manipulated and copied, rather than advocating for creating one’s original work. Those may believe that making minor changes within the original work and therefore claim the work as theirs, without realizing that taking words from off the internet could be offending to the original writer and also not a credible source. As the twenty-first century classroom becomes “ a wonder of online tools and content” that can be easily be accessible, “ digital technology makes copying and pasting easier” so that students have created an environment based on taking information from the internet and using the same expression of words rather

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than interpreting it in their own words. (Waters, “ From Texting to Plagiarism”) Not only does this hinder the learning process, but in some cases, overexposure to internet sources may lead to the intake of incorrect information or to discourage students from creating their own original pieces.

As reported in an article on the New York Times News, “ at Rhode Island College, a freshman [had] copied and pasted from a website’s questions page about homelessness” and believed that he did not need to “ credit [the] source in his assignment” because the author information was not included. Not only as mass media developed the lost of ownership on the web, but allows students to utilize such information that “ break the rules of academic integrity” without realizing it. Due to the overincorporation of internet sources and browsing, it deteriorates the need to do a thorough research for any writing or school project, thus provoking the use of cheating strategies and shameless plagiarizing. It is without a doubt that violating copyright is an unjust act, the rules, however, may only be bent depending on the initial usage or purpose. The copyright extends to allow copyrighted material to be utilized for educational purposes and for one’s personal use.

As stated by the Columbia University Copyright Advisory Office, “ the fair use offers an opportunity for educators to make reasonable and limited uses of copyrighted materials.” Therefore, only limited amounts of the material may be utilized, but yet permission is still required. Circumstances such as “ posting materials for distance learning” or usage in exams are allowed, so that the material itself could be utilized as an “ study aid” to draw off of, but the act of copying the material is not an accurate part of the learning

process. Overall, the main purpose for research sources is to act as the learning basis to provide an expansion of one's ideas, but not to simply copy ideas from. Although there may be certain circumstances in which using copyrighted material for educational purposes is permitted, this should not create the false assumption that merely editing or switching words within copyrighted work is allowed.

Therefore, plagiarism affects one's academic ability and develops a false sense of ownership which destructs one's sense of honesty and identity. The strong advocacy of copyright laws has been enforced to provide protection to one's original ideas, but it does not encourage students to maintain honesty in their own creative arts within the exposure to the media and could potentially develop an obstacle that hinders the diligent writing process. In order to prevent from further academic dishonesty within the school system, educators should provide clarity towards student misconceptions of plagiarism and incorporate the correct use of citations and research to students, which will help improve the conditions within the classroom setting. It is important to promote awareness and enforce copyright laws in the early stages of education to prevent students from abusing the power of copy and paste and avoid legal conflict. MLA Citations Gabriel, Trip. "Plagiarism Lines Blur for Students in Digital Age.

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