Academic integrity

Education

Academicintegrity must be enforced within the educational institution as students and faculty represent the image and reliability surrounding the reputation of the facility; therefore, dishonesty upon any level should be unacceptable which includes the act of plagiarism. In order to combat such dishonest events educators must learn to identify blatant acts of plagiarism and address cultural differences, as well as the mind's ability to unconsciously reproduce intellectual concepts belonging to others.

Defining plagiarism in my own terms would be the intentional use of materials that are not of my own creation, copying text from other sources, including non-published individuals, as if they were my own, and submitting academic assignments that I did not complete personally but submitted as if I had.

As academic dishonesty is common among students, it's imperative that students self-police to avoid any unconscious acts of dishonesty and those educational institutions implement strategies to combat those who intentionally break the rules.

College campuses have faced the issue of academic dishonesty from the beginning; however it has become a major problem on college campuses, as the number of students engaging in acts of dishonesty is increasing.

The publication of how-to books and internet websites that focus oncheatinghave been published, such as Corbet's The Cheater's Handbook and various internet based businesses offering thousands of term papers and examinations for purchase. (Whitley, Jr, 2002, p. 3)

The internet continues to expand and with this massive explosion of growth, sites promoting resources allowing students to defraud the educational system continue to increase. Experts have attributed this high level of dishonesty among students to being " raised in an era of decline in public morality." (Whitley, Jr, 2002, p. 3)

Cultural diversitywithin American society continues to grow and many professionals " increasingly reflect this diversity" as the " possibility of cultural differences in the definition of academic dishonesty." (Whitley, Jr, 2002, p. 20) Professionals believe that students who were raised outside of the " Euro-Americanculture" find it difficult to comprehend the " notion that words or ideas" can be owned by another individual and considered as intellectual property.

(Whitley, Jr, 2002, p. 20) As a result students from other cultures such as " Middle Eastern, Asia and African cultures" see no fault with using the intellectual concepts of others – some cultures believe that it is " disrespectful to the author to alter the original words [of a source document] (Robinson, 1992, p. 15)." (Whitley, Jr, 2002, p. 20)

When producing a thesis or a lengthy academic writing assignment students must analyze a " wide body of knowledge, yet produce a novel, creative output." (Perfect (Ed.), 2002, p. 148) In a study conducted in 1997 with undergraduate students professionals found evidence that some students are not even clear of the definition of plagiarism and until they are " explicitly told" that the act has occurred the students are unable to identify that plagiarism has occurred.

These students did not have a clear idea of the difference between " plagiarism and paraphrase." (Perfect (Ed.), 2002, p. 148 - 149) This unconscious plagiarism must be taken into consideration by educators and a clear definition of the misrepresentation of intellectual materials must be defined.

Plagiarism in the classroom has various degrees. For example, a student who commits the act purposely by purchasing a pre-written essay from the internet would in most instructors' opinion be the highest degree.

Identifying the less deliberate, as well as less obvious, degree of plagiarism would be a student copying a few sentences from sources without the addition of quotations or the appropriate citation that give the author credit for his or her intellectual property. Regardless of the level of dishonesty or if the act was unintentional, plagiarism is wrong and it must not be allowed.

Instructors have evaluated the act of plagiarism to identify the appropriate course of action and methods have evolved over the years when confronting cultural differences. The first stage of educators was to automatically assume that the " behaviors were always wrong."

(Hafernik, 2002, p. 43) The second " teachers continued to believe they were wrong, but understood there were cultural reasons" that students did not share the educator's beliefs. (Hafernik, 2002, p. 43) The third stage the teachers continued to hold fast to plagiarism as unacceptable, however " their understanding of the cultural differences led them to question, at least somewhat, the absolute correctness of their stance on the issues." (Hafernik, 2002, p. 43-44)