PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC ETHICS

HELEN HARTON

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

• Definition (UNI Student Academic Ethics Policy)

• Word vs. Idea plagiarism (Giuliano, 2022) vs. Structure plagiarism
POLICY AWARENESS (HARTON ET AL., 2016)

• 87% of students and 97% of faculty said they knew that UNI has a policy

• 37% of students and 74% of faculty said they had read it
HOW COMMON IS PLAGIARISM/CHEATING AT UNI? (DATA FROM 2016)

• https://uni.edu/policies/301

• Have you done it/had students do it (yes/no)

• How morally wrong is it (1 = not at all to 4 = definitely)

• How common is it (1 = very uncommon to 4 = very common)

• Does it violate UNI’s AEP (1 = definitely not to 4 = definitely)

• Demographics, online classes, other policy questions
DO STUDENTS AND FACULTY AGREE ON WHAT’S CHEATING?

• On 10 of 17 “is it a violation” questions, faculty were more certain that it was.

• On 11 of 17 “is it morally wrong” questions, faculty saw behaviors as more wrong.

• There were differences on 9 of 17 items in terms of how common they were.
  • Faculty thought 4 were more common than did students—generally having to do with plagiarism/citing.
  • Student thought using prohibited materials during a test, taking a test for someone else, interfering with other students’ materials, and making up research were more common than did faculty.
WHAT PREDICTED MORE TYPES OF CHEATING?

- Perceptions that it was common and not that wrong
TAKE HOMES FROM UNI STUDY

• To reduce cheating/plagiarism:
  • Change perceptions of the norms
  • Teach students what they should and shouldn’t do
  • Try to keep things more consistent across classes
  • Let students know it matters and you care
WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2016?
NEW RESOURCES FOR PLAGIARIZERS

• Coursehero
• Paraphrasing tools
• Anti-plagiarism synonym tool
• Translating and back translating
• Paper mills
SO WHAT CAN PROFESSORS DO?

• Explain what it is and why it’s a problem
• Turnitin
• Honor codes
• Online quizzes
• Class discussions
• Homework assignments
• Combination approaches
• Turning in papers and drafts in steps, turning in notes
MY APPROACH (RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCH)

• Lecture and class activity
• Online tutorial
• Teach students the scientific writing process
  • Take proper notes on articles
  • Outline the paper
  • Write topic sentences with notes under
  • Fill them in
  • Show my process
• All this happens over multiple class days
• Students turn in topic, references, outline, rough draft, final draft, and notes
HANDOUTS/CLASS EXERCISES/HOMEWORK

• https://osf.io/pq7m4/
  • Giuliano, 2022

  • Lamoreaux et al., 2012

• https://sites.uni.edu/harton/plag.doc
  • Strohmetz, 1999
ONLINE TUTORIALS

- https://owl.excelsior.edu/plagiarism/
- https://plagiarism.iu.edu/
- http://www.beyondplagiarism.sweetland.lsa.umich.edu/
- https://library.clark.edu/techservices/iris2/plagiarism/
- https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-quiz/?fbclid=IwAR3BCGA1suesLljjGXlunsJGX3C02tjJSatF0TGA_UDpzTrKMcryVrG5-4
- http://teachpsych.org/page-1603066?fbclid=IwAR153RCZld4_vMZyMEZOp1M4zFxj1IH_Xeaazle0Y_DfAr2-weC9JAzfE#ethical
- https://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/exercises.cfm?fbclid=IwAR2sDAKTrDLnRrkNuE6Wl4fUSqXT7o56eQWMd2IBQogJ-vy-CPSFTE7ZIz0
Who cheats more—gender

- Men (Hubertz, 2015, Davis et al., 1992; Yu et al., 2015; meta-analysis Whitley et al., 1999)—all self-report
- No difference (meta analysis, Vandehey et al., 2007)
- Women (experiment, Leming, 1980). Women more cheating to help others Miller et al., 2007)
- More cheating in male-dominated majors—Newstead et al., 1996; McCabe & Trevino, 1997, but no difference by major Hubertz, 2015
Perhaps the most investigated demographic correlate of cheating is gender. Whereas more men in some studies have admitted to cheating (Davis et al., 1992; Hubertz, 2015; McCabe & Trevino, 1999; Yu et al., 2015) and an early meta-analysis showed that men were slightly more likely to report cheating (Whitley et al., 1999), other studies, including a more recent meta-analysis, have shown no differences (Vandehey et al., 2007), and at least one study using a non self-report methodology found higher rates of cheating among women (Leming, 1980). These differences might be related to types of cheating, with women more likely to engage in “altruistic” cheating (Miller et al., 2007), or to differences in majors that women vs. men tend to choose (McCabe, 2012). There is some evidence that cheating is greater in male-dominated majors such as the physical sciences, mathematics, engineering, and business (Newstead et al., 1996; McCabe, 2012; but see Hubertz, 2015).
WHAT DO YOU DO?
STRATEGIES TO AVOID IT IN OUR OWN WRITING

• Happens among professionals as well

• How can you avoid it in your own writing?
HOW TO REPORT SUSPECTED PLAGIARISM

• Students: UNI Academic Ethics Policy

• Others: Their university's Research Integrity Officer, Journal