Higher Education Lesson Plan from Turnitin: What Is Plagiarism? What Are the Consequences?

Lesson Topics:

Where to find academic honesty or integrity policies

Definition of plagiarism

Understanding consequences of plagiarism



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1.0 Goals

Many academic integrity policies define plagiarism, but the definitions are not necessarily consistent across educational contexts, making it difficult for students to have a clear grasp of what constitutes plagiarism as they progress through the educational system. This lesson will help students find the academic policy for their campus and understand exactly how their school defines plagiarism. Students will also be able to list the possible penalties for committing plagiarism in their courses.

2.0 Lesson Objectives & Resources Required

Lesson Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Locate their campus academic honesty/plagiarism policy
- Define plagiarism according to the school policy
- List the consequences for plagiarizing

Resources Required

- Dictionary (online),
- Copies of academic honesty policy (or relevant links on campus website, course syllabus, etc.)
- The Plagiarism Spectrum: http://www.turnitin.com/assets/en_us/media/plagiarism_spectrum.php

3.0 Lesson

Anticipatory Set Connecting to Prior Knowledge	"You've probably heard of plagiarism before, but what is it?" Write on the board the definitions students provide.
Procedure	 Note key words from student definitions and discuss with the students. Highlight the fact that it is "words and ideas" that cannot be borrowed. Use online dictionary of plagiarism, i.e. Merriam-Webster defines "to plagiarize" as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; to use (another's production) without crediting the source; to commit literary theft; to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source." Discuss the definition, using prompting questions like the following: How do you borrow ideas without words? Note from the definition words like "steal" and "theft" which criminalize plagiarism. And, then ask students to define intellectual property. Can this be stolen? (Use patents as an example of something that protects intellectual property.) What consequences befall those who are caught stealing? Transition now to how "consequences" for plagiarism are defined by campus policy: What should the consequences of plagiarism be? What are they here? And where do we find them? (Assess student knowledge of the location of the policy.) Read the consequences and list on the board for students How can students be made more aware of these consequences? For example, should the instructors print them on all syllabi? Should the consequences be spelled out in student handbooks, web tutorials, etc.
Collaborative Work	 Students work collaboratively on these questions. These can be formatted as case studies for the students to analyze. Provide names and descriptions to the papers to help make the exercise more real for the class What could happen to a student who Downloads a paper and turns it in as his or her own? Cuts and pastes a significant amount of information from the internet or other sources into her paper but does not cite nor put quotation marks around the text? Forgets to add a citation? Borrows the majority of a previous paper to use for an assignment for another class? Should the plagiarism policy be all or nothing, that is, should a student who downloaded a paper face the same consequences as a student who simply forgot to put a citation in a paper? Review the 10 types of plagiarism as defined by The Plagiarism Spectrum. "Which of the scenarios, discussed above, exemplify the types as described by the Spectrum?"
Assessment	 Students will be able to locate the campus academic honesty policy Students will be able to accurately define plagiarism Students will be able to list the consequences of plagiarism on their campus

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