TEACHING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
OR,
HOW TO PLAGIARISM-PROOF YOUR ASSIGNMENTS
How common is plagiarism? It’s hard to say because most studies focus on cheating more generally.

- William Bowers (1963) surveyed students about whether they had ever engaged in at least one of thirteen violations of academic integrity (ranging from getting questions on an exam from a student in another section to handing in a paper written by someone else): 75%
- Donald McCabe and Linda Klebe Trevino repeated Bowers’s study in 1993: 82%
- McCabe’s web surveys from 2002-2012: 65%
- Lisa: $\frac{7}{70} = 10\%$
Problem of defining *plagiarism* – the term gets applied to a number of different behaviours.

- **FRAUD**: Handing in something you didn’t write as your own work; copying from another student’s essay; writing a paper for another student
- **CONFUSION**: Receiving inappropriate levels of help and support; copying (perhaps too closely) the structure and/or content of what someone else has written
- “**DOING IT WRONG**”: Failing to follow citation standards; patch-writing; misjudging what counts as common knowledge
“Plagiarism” is contextual – there are a lot of contexts in which recycling of materials is both common and accepted.

• Administrative documents (policy statements) are often copied
• Many universities have identical academic integrity documents (they copied them!)
• Many professors copy assignments and slides from colleagues
• We know and accept that politicians do not write their own speeches
Reflection:

• Think of an assignment that you used in the past in which some students violated academic integrity (and how they did so).

OR

• Think of an upcoming assignment in which you fear or expect you might get cases of academic integrity violations (and how students might cheat).

Turn to partner, introduce yourself, and share.

Lang synthesizes decades of studies on cheating, plagiarism, and academic integrity as well as on teaching and learning to figure out

- Why students cheat;
- What individual instructors can do to prevent cheating; and
- What institutions can do to create a culture of academic integrity.
Situations in which students are most likely to cheat (Lang 35):

The Princess Alice Experiment (or, The Backwards Ball Toss)

- An emphasis on PERFORMANCE
- HIGH STAKES riding on the outcome
- EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION for success
- LOW EXPECTATIONS OF SUCCESS
Rebecca Moore Howard

Moore Howard’s key points

• Students are more likely to plagiarize when they believe there is no reason for or value in what they are doing
  – “I told you so.”
  – “I want it done this way.”

• Meaningful, genuine assignments involving writing are much more difficult to plagiarize -- and make students less likely to cheat.
Lang applied: Emphasize process, not performance

- Create assignments that students complete in stages.
- Emphasize formative over summative feedback. (Students pay more attention to this anyway.)
- At the end of the assignment, ask students to reflect on their own learning processes.
Lang applied: Lower the stakes

• Include more small assignments rather than one large project in a class plan.
• Be open to questions and give guidance to those who need it.
• Make it easier to complete than to cheat!
Lang applied: Increase intrinsic motivation

• Give a sense of control and ownership: allow students to design topics, or perhaps choose due dates; assign each student a part of a final project.
• Show that you value the product: Have a class conference, a poster session, a learning session with another class, etc.
• Do not recycle the same assignment for ten years!
Lang applied: Increase students’ expectation of success

• Provide a marking rubric and clear evaluation criteria.
• Teach the processes required for the assignment explicitly in class.
• Provide models of successful assignments.
Moore Howard applied: Teach through writing assignments

• Make explicit to students the reasons underlying the assignment. What should they be learning? Why is this important?
• Give students a genuine audience. (A class blog or wiki is an easy way to do this.)
• Ask students to solve a real problem by researching and writing about it.
• Give students the authority to help shape or create assignments.
Reflection:

• Think back to the assignment that you identified
• Can you revise it to
  – increase process over performance
  – lower the stakes for students
  – increase intrinsic motivation
  – increase expectation of success
Three aspects to decreasing plagiarism

Be explicit about expectations

Create a culture of integrity

Apply Lang and Moore Howard
Be explicit about expectations

- Last year’s consultation on editorial policy made it clear how much ambiguity there is on campus about what constitutes unfair help or correction.
- Be clear: can students work in groups? Consult? Hire an editor? Have their work corrected?
- If you give an exam or test question in advance, can they memorize an answer? Can they plan their answer together?
Reflection:

• Think about your assignment again:
  – What assumptions of yours underlie the assignment concerning AI?
  – How might you make these explicit to students?
Create an institutional culture of academic integrity

- Students learn from what they hear in other classes, from other students, and from you
- Model academic integrity
- Teach the issues as well as the process
- Show and discuss the AI policy – do not just put a link in your syllabus!
- Be part of a campus conversation!
Reflection:

• How might UVic create a stronger institutional culture of integrity?
• Should we have an honour code?
• Should we have some process of remediation as part of the AI process?
• What questions and concerns do you have about academic integrity that we should discuss as a campus community?
THANK YOU!