PLAgiarism: Academic Honesty in PLA

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• Capella University & PLA format
• Academic Honesty in PLA? Why the concern?
• Identification Examples
• Policy application
• Resources for learners, evaluators & PLA administration
Capella University at a glance

- Capella University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), [www.ncahlc.org](http://www.ncahlc.org).

- Completely online institution serving adult learners

- Degree programs focus on learning outcomes that are based on professional standards and employer recommendations
Capella University

• Course match PLA model

• Prior learning assessments are based on the course competencies

• PLA is offered in all undergrad (upper division and general education) and select master’s level programs
Prior Learning Assessment Labs

- Brings learners together in a familiar environment
- Provides resources and step-by-step guidance through the PLA process
- Reduces anxiety about the process and viability
  - Feedback from PLA expert
  - Examples of successful petitions
  - Testimonials
Academic Honesty...why the concern?
Plagiarism defined

Academic dishonesty refers to either intellectual property produced by the work of others that has not been given the appropriate recognition or the intentional misuse of quantitative or qualitative data.

• Plagiarism is one example of academic dishonesty:
  o Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s ideas or work as your own.
  o Plagiarism also includes copying verbatim or rephrasing ideas without properly acknowledging the source by author, date, and publication medium.

PLA and Sources

- The bulk of the assessment should be the learner’s description of their own knowledge.
- There are times when it is acceptable and necessary to cite outside sources.
• All of the academic honesty issues we’re talking about in PLA terms, are also issues in regular courses
• Plagiarism is a universal issue
  • online or on ground
  • PLA or coursework
  • Undergraduate or graduate
PLA-Specific challenges

- Many learners have practical experience, but not theoretical knowledge

- Some learners are frustrated by this because they feel the practical knowledge is not being valued

- Plagiarism can become a significant issue as learners rely on resources regarding theory
PLA-Specific issues

PLA evaluators are not instructors
- Do not have history of each student
- Cannot compare writing styles over time
- Each portfolio may have multiple pieces of writing

PLA “can’t be copied and pasted”
- Students can pay others to write for them.
Resources offered in PLA lab

- Writing Resources:
  - Plagiarism detection tools
  - Access to writing tutors

- Capella University Academic Honesty Policy

- Academic Honesty module on our learner home page (iGuide)

- Coaching and discussions
Types of computer memory

DRAM comes in two major form factors: DIMMs and RIMMS.

DIMMs are 64-bit components, but if used in a motherboard with a dual-channel configuration (like with an Nvidia nForce chipset) you must pair them to get maximum performance. So far there aren't many DDR chipset that use dual-channels. Typically, if you want to add 512 MB of DIMM memory to your machine, you just pop in a 512 MB DIMM if you've got an available slot. DIMMs for SDRAM and DDR are different, and not physically compatible.

SDRAM DIMMs have 168-pins and run at 3.3 volts, while DDR DIMMs have 184-pins and run at 2.5 volts.

RIMMs use only a 16-bit interface but run at higher speeds than DDR. To get maximum performance, chipsets require the use of RIMMs in pairs over a dual-channel 32-bit interface. You have to check your motherboard before upgrading.

Answer: The watermark from the site where the paper was purchased
Learner response

Mixed methods researchers use and often make explicit diverse philosophical positions. These positions often are referred to as dialectical stances that bridge postpositivist and social constructivist worldviews, pragmatic perspectives, and transformative perspectives (Greene, 2007). For example, researchers who hold different philosophical positions may find mixed methods research to be challenging because of the tensions created by their different beliefs (Greene, 2007). However, mixed methods research also represents an opportunity to transform these tensions into new knowledge through a dialectical discovery. A pragmatic perspective draws on employing "what works," using diverse approaches, giving primacy to the importance of the research problem and question, and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge (see Morgan, 2007). A transformative perspective provides an orienting framework for a mixed methods study based on values and democratic society that permeates the entire research problem to the conclusions, and the use of results (Mertens, 2005).

Answer:
• The font style and color changes
• Hyperlinks leftover from copying and pasting
Example 3

Profesor,
My paper on WWII attached. Plaese grade. Thx.
Student

The Battle of Iwo Jima
The Battle of Iwo Jima took place in February 1945. The capture of Iwo Jima was part of a three-point plan the Americans had for winning the war in the Far East.
By 1944, America and her allies in the Pacific War had the ascendancy. In the west, the Japanese were being turned back in Burma and island hopping had isolated Japanese forces in the east.

Answer:
Difference in style and tone from email to prior learning assessment response
Competency question: Identify the parts of a cell.

Learner response: A main purpose of a cell is to organize. Cells hold a variety of pieces and each cell has a different set of functions. It is easier for an organism to grow and survive when cells are present. If you were only made of one cell, you would only be able to grow to a certain size. You don't find single cells that are as large as a cow. Also, if you were only one cell you wouldn't have a nervous system, no muscles, no heart. Using the internet would be out of the question, and the cells in your body make your life possible.

Answer: The response is related to the question, but does not actually address it.
• Sources for Examples
  
  http://www.computermemoryupgrade.net/types-of-computer-memory-common-uses.html
  http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/battle_of_iwo_jima.htm
  http://obssr.od.nih.gov/scientific_areas/methodology/mixed_methods_research/section2.aspx
  http://www.biology4kids.com/files/cell_main.html
Learners are expected to be the sole authors of their work and to acknowledge the authorship of others’ work through proper citation and reference. Use of another person’s ideas, including another learner’s, without proper reference or citation constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is prohibited conduct. Capella extends the concept of plagiarism to include issues of copyright and trademark infringement. Submission of prior work without self-citation constitutes self-plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is prohibited conduct.
Reporting Academic Dishonesty

Anyone may report an allegation of academic dishonesty at Capella University.

A. The allegation should be reported verbally or in writing to the faculty member or university official responsible for supervising the course or activity during which the allegation occurred.

B. The individual receiving the report of the allegation will bring it to the attention of the faculty member or university official directly associated with the course or activity during which the alleged academic dishonesty occurred.
Academic Dishonesty Resolution

Whenever possible, allegations of academic dishonesty will be resolved by the faculty member directly associated with the course or activity during which the alleged academic dishonesty occurred.

• The faculty member notifies the learner of the alleged academic dishonesty.
• If the faculty member determines that the allegation was accurately identified, they will typically give the learner the opportunity to demonstrate academic honesty.
• The faculty member may offer the learner a “teachable moment” to correct the infraction.
• The learner will be given the opportunity to explain or refute the allegation.
The disciplinary consequences of academic dishonesty are determined on a case-by-case basis and may include but are not limited to one or more of the following sanctions:

- Non-acceptance of submitted course work
- Failing grade on an assignment
- Lower grade in a course
- Failing grade in a course
- Written warning
- Suspension and dismissal from the University
- Cancellation of previously awarded course credits or degrees
Intentional vs. Unintentional

- Some students choose to plagiarize
- Some don’t realize they are plagiarizing
- Policies do not differentiate
- Faculty may consider it intention and willingness to correct the problem.
Capella Policy and application for PLA

- PLA staff bring concerns to the learners themselves.
  - “Teachable moment” approach.
- Learners may revise, or may submit for official review.
- Staff alert faculty of any concerns if the learner continues without heeding feedback in their official submission.
Challenges with enforcement in PLA

- Capella’s policy addresses courseroom context, not PLA:
  - PLA staff typically notice plagiarism, but do not enforce the policy
  - Suggested sanctions may not be appropriate for PLA

- Per research literature, there are inconsistencies in enforcement among faculty:
  - Inconsistencies in application of the policy (over- and under-reporting)
  - Some faculty know less about academic dishonesty and the enforcement
  - Some faculty focus on teaching rather than documentation and other administrative tasks
Background

Academic Honesty...why the concern?

Examples

Policy Application

Resources
Plagiarism Detection Systems

- SafeAssign and TurnItIn are examples
- Electronic systems that compare papers to a library of other papers and sources
- Detect *non-original content*, not plagiarism
- Tools, not solutions
- The user should investigate the non-original content, as some uses are legitimate
  - Quotes
  - Bibliographies
  - Names of books, journals and conferences
Plagiarism Detection Systems

- **Advantages**
  - Relatively fast and easy
  - Perceived as being more fair
  - Most have well-developed libraries

- **Disadvantages**
  - May encourage minor wording changes to avoid detection
  - May encourage learners to copy from sources outside the library
  - Submitting drafts of the same paper can cause high matching percentages
Sample Policies and Cultural Practices

- Punishment and top down enforcement won’t work
- Focus on shared rights and responsibilities between the institution and students
- Honor codes and academic integrity policies should give students a voice
Stages of academic integrity

1. Primitive
   - No, or minimal policies and procedures
   - Great variation in faculty/administration approach

2. Radar Screen
   - Weaknesses in policies are known and discussed
   - Concerns with consistency and fairness.
   - May be fear of litigation or scandal
   - Early efforts to improve

Stages of academic integrity

3. Mature
   • Policies are widely supported, particularly by faculty
   • Ongoing effort to integrate academic integrity
   • A realistic, desirable stage

4. Honor Code
   • Students take primary responsibility
   • Belief that the honor code distinguishes the school and the students
   • Can be challenging to maintain
Sample materials

International Center for Academic Integrity

http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/resources-4.php

• More about the stages
• Policies and Honor Codes
• Syllabus statements
• Event descriptions
• Posters
• Judicial affairs process for academic integrity violations
Take Away Thoughts...

• Academic Honesty is an institution-wide issue with implications for PLA
  • Awareness is the first step to identifying and addressing issues

• Creating a culture of academic honesty is the goal
  • It is best to coach learners to prevent problems
  • Follow the appropriate policy at your institution
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