

UiT

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Strengthening teacher qualifications to prevent student plagiarism

- presentation of an open online course and discussion of a strategy

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Introduksjon

Dette er en ressurs for undervisere ved Universitetet i Tromsø som ønsker å arbeide med forebygging av plagiat i studentarbeider. Vår hovedinspirator for arbeidet med forebygging av plagiat er Jude Carroll. Her finner du [Judes hjemmeside](#) ved Oxford Brookes University, samt et [intervju med Jude](#).

Prorektor for utdanning Wenche Jakobsen ønsker velkommen.



Search

Where to find the course:

<http://result.uit.no/plagiat/>



About the course - in general

- Background assumptions:
 1. Only a small portion of student plagiarism is intended
 2. Good conduct in referencing and citing is a practice based in research ethics & general academic values
 3. The best way to reach the students is through their teachers
- Focus:
 - Plagiarism is a problem for *student learning and Bildung* and for the students' future role in the production of knowledge
- Objectives:
 1. Contribute to the teachers' focus on methods that may prevent students'
 - unconsciously ending up plagiarizing, or
 - resorting to plagiarism,
 2. Achieve more of the teachers to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competence for plagiarism prevention in student work

What is plagiarism?

Posted on [November 30, -0001](#)

In short, plagiarism is presenting something that someone else has created as your own. The use of the word plagiarism stretches beyond the mere textual; it is possible to plagiarise not just texts, but images, music, or even a dance. The word originates in the latin *plagiarius*, meaning kidnapper.

The Norwegian dictionary [Bokmålsordboka](#) defines the term as “literary or artistic theft” whilst the [Store norske leksikon](#) says that plagiarism is the “inappropriate exploitation of intellectual property; in the act of presenting the ideas of others as your own, or as an author, exploiting the works of others without proper referencing or acknowledgement” (our translations). An expert in the field, Jude Carroll, puts it this way: “Plagiarism happens when you submit someone else’s work as your own” (Williams and Carroll, 2009:52).

There may be a number of additional definitions available. However, that does not negate the fact that it is difficult to provide a concise definition of the term ‘plagiarism’ — we are examining a subject matter with unclear boundaries and culturally determined interpretations and understandings of what the notion encompasses. For example, is it plagiarism if the work is not

Module 1	What is Plagiarism	-
Unit 1	What is plagiarism?	
Unit 2	Why students plagiarise?	
Unit 3	How to teach?	
Unit 4	Redesigning exams	
Unit 5	Detecting plagiarism	
	Procedures upon	
Unit 6	detection of plagiarism	

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Intended learning outcomes for the teachers: (knowledge, skills and competences)

1. understand that plagiarism is a phenomenon with unclear boundaries and culturally determined interpretations and understandings
2. know about the common causes of student plagiarism
3. know about students' perceptions of plagiarism and students' educational needs
4. know how to plan and conduct teaching activities that effectively help students avoid plagiarism
5. know how to design assignments and exams that guide students away from plagiarism
6. be able to better detect instances of plagiarism in students' texts
7. be able to make qualified judgments regarding which cases they can deal with on their own, and which cases they should report

Strengths and weaknesses of open non-facilitated online course

Pros

- long lasting
- flexible (time & place)
- continuously on offer

Cons

- a passive role for the learner
- few possibilities for real interaction with the thoughts conveyed
- harder to acquire and train skills
- learner does not have to form his or her own understanding in spoken or written words: lack of knowledge construction
- harder to achieve attitudinal formation
- lack of feedback from a teacher or facilitator
- lack of other participants to discuss and share experiences with

What have we done for avoiding common weaknesses in learning efficacy?

- Make it more interesting by variation of learning resources, not only texts but also video clips.
- Reflection tasks break up the text and motivate to engage with the thoughts and ideas of the course content.
- Feedback on the multiple-choice questions provides interactivity
- Case generator provide interactivity (different plagiarism cases are generated, to be reflected upon)
- Video demonstration of the electronic text recognition program Ephorus, reducing barriers for use
- Links to other useful resources encourages a more active role

Are the intended learning outcomes possible to reach?

- Will the teachers – after having participated in the course – through having read the texts, seen the videos, gone through the reflection tasks, and answered the multiple choice questions – actually have reached the intended learning outcomes?
- We believe that learning outcome nr 4 and 5 (especially nr 5) will be tricky to reach through an open online course like ours. In order to acquire skills one need to practice and be able to discuss one's suggestions with peers.

Will it work – as an educational intervention?

- We have not yet had the opportunity, nor the sufficient amount of course participants to rigorously test the course as an educational intervention. (By March 2015: a total of 173 users enrolled. 42 (24 %) of these had completed and passed the course.)
- However: we do not expect the world from this course alone.
- We can expect significant effects when staff start working with the issue of plagiarism prevention in student work as a *systematic collaborative act*, within their departments.
- We assume that systematic educational development projects carried out around integrated ways of organizing the teaching of information literacy, as well as actual development of learning tasks and exam tasks that make students make use of higher-order thinking, will be necessary for significant effects.

Why an increase in teacher awareness and qualification is the single most important place to start when the aim is a decrease in student plagiarism?

1. The teachers are the ultimate authorities for the students
(normative legitimacy)
2. The teachers are the ones who
 - through teaching the students how to avoid plagiarism and
 - through forming & grading assignments and examshave the power to significantly affect student actions
(powerful conditioning)

We have a focus on the academic staff because

1. The dissemination of **the value base of the academy** - to the students
– research ethics, academic values – must go through the teachers
2. The teachers need to acquire **the knowledge, skills and competence**, needed for designing programs & courses, and specifically designing assignments and exam questions – in new ways such that plagiarism is no longer a tempting option for the students

Ultimately:

- The learning and the academic Bildung (formation) of the students is at stake
- and thus: also the future production of knowledge is at stake

Academic Bildung in Net-based Higher Education. Moving beyond learning, (Fossland et al 2015) ch. 3

- Academic Bildung
 - a developmental process of persons heading toward “something better - a tacit or out-spoken normative ideal, value or vision of ethical, existential, aesthetical or spiritual quality - in an educational setting”
 - double-tracked: involves both the critical-emancipatory society-oriented dimension (the strive for autonomy) and the identity formation process (the strive for authenticity) associated with the search for meaning that is specific for teaching, learning, and research in higher education

Our advice to teachers and departments: How to prevent plagiarism in the works of students?

- Make sure that you have a common understanding among staff and students of what plagiarism is.
- Make sure you have a specific and thought out approach to the dissemination of academic attitudes and values to students.
- Ensure good introductions and guidance on what is expected at UiT and in your subjects, regardless of where students come from ("new game, new rules").
- Offer courses in information literacy, preferably integrated in subject courses.
- Recommend various resources, books and other aids in information literacy to students.
- Redesign programs and courses so that the students in assignments and exams will create answers rather than find answers.
- Focus on the use of sources in supervision.
- Make sure you have several different methods to detect plagiarism, where the use of anti-plagiarism software is one of them.
- Follow up – do not ignore – cases of suspected plagiarism.
- Make sure you have consistent, transparent and trustworthy procedures for dealing with plagiarism.
- Be good role models.

Literature

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