

Dealing with student plagiarism in Swedish universities, 2008/9

Session 3 Themes

'We need to design programmes and examination tasks which make plagiarism difficult'

Aims and goals of the series



- Discuss and share **good practice**
- **Identify what** needs attention and action in your own university
- **Planning for action**

Reminder: 2 more sessions



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17 March Identifying cases [detection]

12:00 – 4:00

Some dinner

18 March Policies and procedures

9:00 – 1:00

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Our hopes / goals.....



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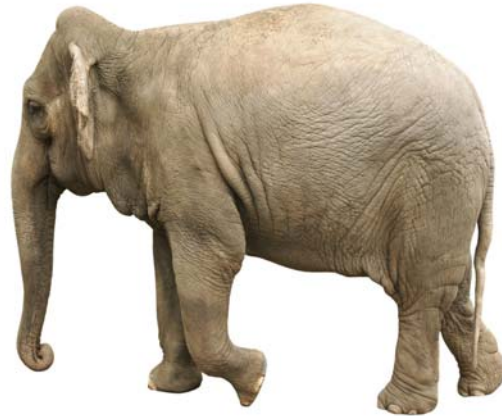
Action back at your universities

Networking at the sessions

Culture change in Sweden

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1. The most important issue for us in addressing the plagiarism issue is.....
2. The thing we have started doing at our university is.....
3. The biggest gap in our approach to plagiarism is.....



Plan for this session

The politics and practicalities of **programme design**



A case study of a **course design**

Suggestions for **examination task designs**

Thinking about teachers' resistance..... Can we do anything?

Planning for action

Strategies for course design:

1. Teach students (and teachers) what plagiarism is
2. Early diagnosis [*'Do I know?' 'Do I plagiarise?'*]
3. Teach the skills – *not just referencing*
4. Track and manage the process students use to make their assignments
5. Authenticate the results [*'Yes, this is Anders' work'*]

programme

Key issues for teaching 'how' to avoid plagiarism

- **Targeting students** who find this especially hard: which ones?
- **Providing practice and feedback over time** : how can this be done?
- This must happen **in the subject area**

Here is a case study of one way this can be done

Programme design: pedagogy and politics!

- 'Is this really our responsibility?
- Shouldn't the students already know this before they come here?
- I do not want to give up time to this..... I want to teach my topic
- Our courses are not planned as a programme. They are a collection, not a programme
- This kind of teaching is better done by a specialist....

Making time and space for doing this within programmes



Who will teach this?



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Questions students ask themselves.... [We want these questions]:

What does this assignment question mean? What is it asking me to do?

What do my lectures say about this question?

How should I organise and structure the answer I give?

Where should I start?
etc

Some students start with these questions

Can I do this assignment well (or well enough) to get a good mark?

Has someone else already done it? Has someone addressed this question / topic? Can I find the result?

Is it worth me putting in the time and effort to do this examination or should I spend my time on other assignments?

Should I spend time doing something else besides assignments?

If I copy or if I go and find someone else's answer, will I be caught by the teacher?

If I am caught in copying, what will happen?

One KTH teacher said to me yesterday.....



*'I think we **should** make assignments that are easy to copy.*

How else are students going to learn to be honest?

How will the students learn to be ethical if we always make it too easy for them to follow the rules?'

What would you reply to this teacher? I am sure from what he said as well that he was 100% committed to his students' learning

Make or find?

Describe the process of prescribing eyeglasses for someone who is short-sighted

Discuss the prescribing process in relation to a patient with these characteristics: xxx, yyy, zzz

Discuss a prescribing case you encountered in the Outpatient clinic. Describe what you did and justify the decisions you made with reference to

Address this case. Explain why prescribing eye glasses would **not** be appropriate for this person and rank three alternative treatments in order of their likely positive outcome. Justify the ranking.

Make or find?



'The best way to improve health in a population is to get people to stop smoking.'

Discuss.

Now you do it:

The learning outcome: to critically analyse Swedish government spending which is designed to improve the health of Swedish citizens.

The home examination question:

Discuss this statement: 'The best way to improve public health in Sweden is to stop people from smoking'.

Now, redesign this question. Your new version must check the learning outcome + discourage finding or copying an answer.

Make or find? 'Smoking and Public Health' Discuss.

Make or find? Here is a case study of Patient X.

She smokes. She is overweight, does no exercise and has high blood pressure.

Which of these four problems should be her number one change to get the most improvement. Justify your decision.

If you were also the person paying for any changes, would you make the same suggestions? Provide evidence to support your decision.

Make or find? 'Identify two different kinds of programmes designed to reduce smoking in a specific population.

If you could only fund one of the two programmes, which one would it be? Justify your choice in terms of cost and benefit for that population's health.

What changes are needed here?

Students must write a 50-page thesis on a topic of their choice to complete their Masters degree.

They do this independently in the final four months of the programme.

They submit their topic to the supervisor who agrees it four months before the hand-in date.

They see no one before they hand in the result.

Strategies to encourage 'make' in a BIG writing task

- Stages. Chunking
- Feedback
- Structures – for time and for content. Templates
- Examples
- Language support

Authenticate: 'Who did this work?'

Student writes the programming code & hands it in.

1. You use **software** to look for matching code ...
[on all the work or for a random subset]
2. a 5 minute 1:1 **discussion** on the code
3. ... an observed **alteration** to the code

Summarising advice:

1. New each time
2. Higher order thinking skills
3. Local, recent, specific
4. Specify what sources and information
5. Control the process, start early
6. Authenticate

Apply this advice to an example:

What can fix this situation?

'The Varsity', Cambridge University, UK.

[1000+ responses to an on-line poll]

... 49% of undergraduates said they claimed other people's work as their own

... 5% said they had been caught plagiarising.

... 82% of essay plagiarists used Wikipedia as their source.

One student said:

"Sometimes, when I am really fed up, I Google the essay title, copy and throw everything on to a blank Word document and jiggle the order a bit. They usually end up being the best essays."

The university was unavailable for comment. 1 November, 2008

A case study

An on-line course is taken by up to 3500 students each year.

The assessment tasks:

1. to participate in a discussion group where cases are discussed [cases are chosen randomly from a collection of 15 cases]. Then, each group member writes a **reflection on 4 cases, drawing on the discussion**
2. **Multiple choice exam** [randomly selected questions from a closed collection of 150 questions]
3. Individual task : to deal with and **prioritise 20 discrete messages** [randomly chosen from a closed collection of 50 tasks]

Things people say about this:

1. I teach classes of 150. It is not realistic to say 'use drafts'.
2. Students learn by copying. It doesn't matter if the work is not original.
3. It took a long time to write the case study. It is not realistic to expect me to make a new one each time
4. Marking individual answers takes more time. I don't have time.
5. The rules stop me from changing my examination. I can't change what I have always done.
6. When I write the home examination, it looks fine to me. How do I know what students will find easy to copy?
7. Thinking up new assignments takes time. I always have to do it at the end of the year when all I want is to go on holiday!

Methods for helping teachers rethink assignments



- In groups, not as individuals
- Interactively, not reading and thinking.....
- Scheduled, not accidental
- Supported by experts, not DIY
- Monitored and reviewed, not trust and hope

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Complex problem, **holistic** solution

1. Students know what to do and how to do it
2. Programmes and tasks are designed to make copying, finding and faking difficult
3. Detection using a range of strategies to identify *'not the student's own work'*
4. Policies and procedures that are fair, fast and efficient