Designing Out Plagiarism Toolkit

UON University of Northampton

Toolkit Aims and Objectives

- To enable you to be better equipped to identify challenges in assessment design leading to an increased likelihood of academic misconduct occurring
- To enable you to review your own assessments in order to 'design out plagiarism'

Identifying the Problem

- What specific problems are you experiencing with your assessments?
- Are these challenges related to the removal of face-to-face exams or are they more general assessment strategies?

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct – Definitions

'Passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own, for benefit' (Carroll, 2005, p.9)

There are multiple types of academic misconduct. These include: cheating, collusion, duplication, fabrication, replication, contract cheating and commissioning. Definitions for each of these are contained in the University Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy. Under certain circumstances, depending on the seriousness of the offence, the misconduct also be considered as fraud.

Strategies for Assessment Design

There are various strategies that you can employ to guide your assessment design and ensure that opportunities for students to commit misconduct based upon the nature of the assessment are minimised.

1. Have a look at this Strategies for Assessment Handout
2. Consider the criteria listed in the handout and ask yourself the following questions:
   a. When should you use 'make, not find' approaches?
   b. When should you make the process important?
   c. When are both the process and the product important?
   d. When should you authenticate? (check who did the work)

There are several challenges that you need to overcome in order to do this successfully:

- Choosing the right method for the situation
- Choosing the best way to apply the method
- Checking that the changes have made things better for you
- Checking that the changes have made things better for the students
- Being able to justify and explain why and how you designed the assessment the way you did.

Activity 1:

Have a look at each of the assessment challenges below. In the light of the Strategies handout (linked above), what assessment design strategy would you employ in order to minimise opportunities for your students to engage in plagiarism or misconduct?

Assessment Challenge	What assessment design strategy would you employ and why?
You need to assess 300 students. You do not know them individually. **Is what they hand in for credit 'their own work'?**	
You teach 72 students to write computer programs. **Did they write the programs they are handing in? Does each student understand how his or her program works?**	
You are supervising 12 Masters students' projects. **Is the thesis they hand in 'their own work'?**	
You have taught the same course for six years. The assessment is always a project report. The projects are the same, year on year, because they are very complicated to set up and to manage. There are 35 students. **How do you reduce opportunities for misconduct in the assessment design?**	

Discouraging Copy and Paste

Some assessment questions lend themselves to 'copy and paste' behaviour by students. This is often the case when a question is very broad or generic or has been used for many years in succession. The challenge for assessment designers is to think of new ways for students to engage with the subject matter but from a different perspective that encourages students to produce their own answer rather than copy from others. Have a look at this handout on 'Discouraging Copy and Paste Strategies' to get some more ideas.

Summary

Consider all that you have learned from this document and the associated handouts. What have you learned that you can apply to your own assessments? Which ideas should you employ and how do you need to amend your assessment?

When you've redesigned your assessment, why not ask a colleague to critically review it. They could use this 'Interrogation Checklist' to guide their review.

Reference List:

Carroll, J. (2005). *A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education.* Available from: https://www.academia.edu/578635/A_handbook_for_deterring_plagiarism_in_higher_education Accessed: 23 September 2020.