IMITATION, NOT THEFT: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF PLAGIARISM

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study examines how student writers' use of others' work that is labeled plagiaristic may actually represent productive attempts to engage in scholarly discourse through imitation, which has a long history of use in pedagogy. The study's two research questions were: do points of transition into new composing contexts correlate with higher rates of plagiarism? and: is the education students receive about plagiarism in lower-level composition classes transferable to new composing contexts? The research conducted at Dalton State College includes the analysis of records kept by its Dean of Students Office and interviews with instructors. Findings from this project may inform a more understanding approach to plagiarism reporting and handling grounded in the potential of imitative writing as a pedagogical strategy to help students develop their composition skills. The study offers insights into the prevalence and handling of plagiarism at the college, on both an institutional and instructor level.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

For students, an accusation of plagiarism can lead to a failing grade on an assignment or in a class, or even to suspension or expulsion. But other, less-visible consequences can follow, and my position as a college librarian means that I see a side of this issue that others might miss, like in the case of the student who emailed me after she had been found responsible for plagiarism, her first offense. She had met with me for a required workshop about citation earlier in the month, but was upset by the circumstances, writing that she had tried so hard in the class, ended up failing despite her efforts, and felt like giving up on college entirely. I was especially concerned by this development, since, after looking at her paper, it was my opinion that she hadn't plagiarized at all. Another student in a similar situation actually did fail a class, resulting in her expulsion from her major program, which led her to leave the institution entirely.

As part of my job, I'm involved in my institution's management of plagiarism, from preventative instruction to sanctions meetings with students who have been found responsible, but in my five years at Dalton State College, of the dozens of students found responsible for plagiarism, only one case involved blatant copying with no citation. The other students, including the two described earlier, had gotten in trouble because of misunderstandings, inadequate citation knowledge, or simple mistakes. That such behavior was punished as if it were deliberate did not seem to reflect the purpose of the college's plagiarism guidelines, motivating me to learn more about how plagiarism is handled.

Underlying the concept of plagiarism is the belief that ideas, though intangible, can be owned. Historically, this construct emerged after the commodification of physical resources like land, when the right of ownership was extended to intellectual property. This belief persists

today, informing academia's consideration and handling of intellectual property. In student work, the use of others' intellectual property is governed by citation norms that vary by discipline. If these norms are not followed correctly, students may be accused of plagiarism.

A perpetual issue of concern to institutions and classroom instructors, plagiarism's "wrongness" is usually explained two ways, identified by anthropologist Susan Blum: morally—"a sin" or legally—"a crime" (149). These approaches contrast the academic conception of intellectual property with its legal understanding (Haviland and Mullin 131). The central concept of plagiarism is honesty, whereas the central concepts of copyright are property rights and revenue (Cvetkovic et al. 40). Both interpretations are often invoked in discussions of plagiarism.

As many scholars have noted, plagiarism refers to a variety of phenomena (Buranen 25; Haviland and Mullin 130; Blum 6; DeSena 47). A prominent voice in this conversation is Rebecca Moore Howard, director of the Writing Center at Syracuse University. Howard has argued that some forms of plagiarism, in particular one known as patchwriting, or "copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one synonym for another" represent a necessary and productive step in students' development of proper citation skills, and suggests its "decriminalization" (Buranen 26); Blum adds that "many in composition studies have now been persuaded of the rightness of [Howard's] position" (27). Composition scholar Lise Buranen extends Howard's call, saying "much of what is labeled as plagiarism indicates a need for consciousness-raising and instruction (of both faculty and students), rather than censure or punishment" (25). Further evidence that learning about citation contributes to the reduction of plagiarism comes from researchers Lauren Breen and Margaret Maassen, whose findings indicated that "many incidents of plagiarism are likely to result from ignorance and poor skill development," instead of the common perception that they are due to

intentional cheating. Distinguishing between intentional and unintentional plagiarism is especially important when the students are early in their academic careers (Cvetkovic et al. 80).

A valuable partner in the effort to help students understand attribution and citation is the campus library, a place that exists expressly for helping students, free of the power dynamic of grading. Buranen has labeled the library a "safe place" (30). The library is uniquely situated to help students, not solely because librarians are not in a position to assign grades to student work, but also because librarians are:

> neither ethically nor legally bound to report students to the Judicial Affairs Office, academic dean, or principal, if they see instances of possible plagiarism, they can focus their efforts on helping students negotiate the seeming contradictions and very gray areas built into citation practices, making it clear to students that librarians are not there to turn them in, but to help them make sense of it all. (Buranen 30-31)

It is not, however, just students who would benefit from working with librarians. Faculty "need to become educated about the complexities of using and citing information and in turn…educate students about them" (Buranen 32). Citation education efforts represent an opportunity that librarians can take advantage of, and, since librarians work closely with students as they work toward understanding, they can likewise bring this appreciation of student mastery and areas of confusion to faculty in their meetings together.

Another way libraries can contribute to the efforts to educate students on issues of citation is to develop their own instructional materials. Many libraries have created tutorials to address the need for educational resources on the topics of citation and plagiarism. In *Stop Plagiarism*, chapter six outlines the process used by the library at Rutgers University, and chapter seven cites a study conducted on the University of Texas-Austin library's tutorial that found it "at least as effective as in-person instruction" (Cvetkovic et al. 87).

While this project does not specifically attempt to explore the relationship between librarians and instructors, it is worth including because I am a librarian, and this informs my perspective as well as the motivation for this project, which reports the results of a mixed-methods study that seeks to understand how often and when students are reported for plagiarism and how instructors respond. The study is motivated by two questions relating to plagiarism in student work. First, do points of transition into new composing contexts correlate with higher rates of plagiarism? and second, is the education students receive about plagiarism in lower-level composition classes transferable to new composing contexts?

The nature of plagiarism in student work is complex, since inappropriate citation can be mislabeled as plagiarism, when it may actually represent attempts to work toward the ethical use of others' intellectual property. As argued by scholars including Howard and Buranen, the imitative nature of such writing may cause this ambiguity. Because imitation underlies a pedagogical approach that may help inform a scholarly understanding of plagiarism that is more productively focused on improving students' ability to use others' work in a responsible and well-documented way, this project will begin by examining the historical use of imitation in pedagogy and its relationship to intellectual property in student work. This review will serve to contextualize a quantitative and qualitative investigation of plagiarism in student work at Dalton State College, a public liberal arts college in Northwest Georgia.

Literature Review

When students begin writing for college composition assignments, they are asked by academia to "speak our language" (Bartholomae 4); they are called upon to begin engaging in

scholarly discourse. Later in their educational careers, they will continue writing in a particular discipline. The periods of transition into college and from the core curriculum to coursework in the major include the expectation that students will take on new roles as writers. To engage in writing that is new to them, students need to become proficient with unfamiliar vocabulary and moves, in addition to artifacts produced in a new discourse community. Using imitation in pedagogy, as advanced by classical rhetoricians, may provide students the opportunity to do so.

Imitation is an unconscious human behavior, which functions as a form of social learning (Bandura 33). Its role in learning was acknowledged by Aristotle, who wrote that our earliest lessons are learned through imitation. Historically, the use of imitation was commonly accepted in pedagogy dating back to the Greek bards (Kennedy 6). During the Roman period, imitation was integral to education, as described in Murphy's *A Short History of Writing Instruction*. The use of imitation as a teaching tool would continue into the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but current cultural beliefs about the use of others' intellectual property mean that imitation is rarely used today.

Rhetorical instruction among the Greeks is known to have employed imitation; the sophists used it widely (Kennedy 30). Greek orator Isocrates expressed his support for the practice, writing in *Against the Sophists* that students who are educated using imitation develop the ability to perform like their exemplars, a claim he repeats in *Antidosis*, suggesting that imitation "is the core of his didactic method" (Too 186, 191, 185). Centuries later, Roman rhetorician Cicero was also a proponent of the pedagogical value of imitation; not only did he value the practice, he also implemented it. Another work from Cicero's era, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, "begins and ends with the injunction to use Imitation as well as Exercise" (Murphy 54); that the manuscript's "treatment of forensic invention is similar to Cicero's—word for word

in some places" (Bizzell and Herzberg 241) is additional evidence of the author's commitment to the practice. Contemporary to these works, Longinus's *On the Sublime* is another example of Roman use of imitation in education. Roman rhetorician Quintilian also expressed support for imitation, with an approach designed so that students could learn the 'moves' and vocabulary of discourse as they begin to develop their abilities; one of his teaching techniques to ask students to paraphrase the works of others (Murphy 58).

The use of imitation continued through the Middle Ages (Kennedy 178), during which it was highly valued by Augustine (Murphy 61). Later, during the Renaissance, Erasmus relied on imitation to teach students through paraphrasing (Murphy 110), which was one of a group of imitative exercises used in antiquity (Clark 18). Following the Renaissance, belief in the value of imitation persisted. Among its proponents were John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and John-Jacques Rousseau. Locke and Rousseau, however, expressed concern that imitation was "a betrayal of the true self," a position taken more strongly by Rousseau than by Locke (Warnick 2, 19). Enlightenment thinkers were inclined to a skeptical view of imitative learning because of the period's "overly individualistic interpretations of reason and creativity" (Warnick 115). The skepticism bred during the Enlightenment has grown to dominate contemporary beliefs about imitation pedagogy. While still used in education as late as the nineteenth century, by the twentieth century it was largely maligned (5). A 1989 article by academic Dale Sullivan about the shift away from imitation pedagogy argues that "the prevailing assumptions in our world view" inform beliefs about the value of imitation (18). He writes, "in a culture that values progress, genius, and technique, imitation seems antiquarian, tedious, and unscientific," but advocates for a return to imitation pedagogy and argues for its benefits (18).

Acknowledging the value of imitative writing can inform efforts to prevent plagiarism from occurring. Instead of focusing on punishment, a more constructive approach supports students' understanding and development of citation skills. Plagiarism, as noted earlier, is heterogenous, and some of it can be productive. It is the employment of imitation by students that enables them to develop the ability to use others' work in an ethical way. Exploring our cultural assumptions about intellectual property adds further value to this effort. Beliefs from antiquity about using others' intellectual property in some ways parallel those today: "literary and rhetorical imitation must be carefully distinguished, not only from fair use or borrowing, but from unfair use or plagiarism. Fair use then, as now, involved acknowledgement" (Clark 12). Of course, not all instances of imitative writing are considered transgressive today and attempts at citation education represent efforts to encourage this acknowledgement.

In academic settings, though, incorrectly cited use of others' work is often labeled plagiarism. While "some plagiarism is willfully unethical" (Buranen 25), because "copying of any sort is condemned in academic settings" plagiarism typically "is treated as a grave manifestation of intellectual dishonesty," and treated "simply as an ethical and a legal issue, not as a pedagogical one" (Jones and Freeman 158). While copyright law is concerned with ownership and revenue, academic integrity is concerned with honesty and attribution, and because the classroom is an educational setting, it makes more sense to consider plagiarism from an academic than from a legal perspective.

One problem with casting all imitative writing as plagiarism, Warnick writes, is that "not all work that replicates what another has done is viewed as a moral affront. That is to say, imitation does not always mean cheating. It is not simply an attempt to escape work; it can also be part of an initiation into a sphere of work" (100). Rather than considering patchwriting a

7

transgression, it can be seen to function as a means of productive imitation, used by students to establish their scholarly ethos and enact rhetorical agency as they take on new authorial roles. In a 2010 article examining textual appropriation in the writing of graduate students in engineering, librarian Edward Eckel emphasizes the value of context when handling situations involving plagiarism, especially since with many charges of academic dishonesty, discerning intent is a challenge, and not all students who use others' work are doing so in an attempt to steal, but may simply be making errors in citation (478). One 2005 study found preventative rather than reactive measures more effective in handling incidents of plagiarism. Preventative measures that aim to educate students about intellectual property, academic integrity, and using others' work in acceptable ways would be more constructive than waiting for students to turn in assignments and penalizing them for making mistakes.

Bartholomae writes that becoming a participant in scholarly discourse is more "a matter of imitation or parody than a matter of invention and discovery" (9). Students who are writing for a scholarly audience must develop their voices somehow, and establish their ethos, which for beginners, means relying heavily on the work of others. Teachers of composition, and in fact, any teachers who request written work from their students, therefore, must consider where to draw the line between plagiarism and productive imitation.

Pedagogical flexibility toward, rather than stigmatization of, imitation, can be of value to contemporary students. Imitation, being an unconscious behavior, will happen, even if it is not expressly used in the classroom as a pedagogical tool. Since students will imitate the work of others, and may do so in an attempt to become part of the scholarly discourse in which they have been asked to engage, an understanding that not all imitative writing is necessarily plagiaristic in nature can guide the management of incidents in which others' work is not cited appropriately.

Composition teacher Jane Hindman suggests reimagining writing instruction as an extension of Bartholomae's work that she calls "inventing academic discourse" (28). The requisite change in mindset—"from policing plagiarism to educating emerging scholars" (Boland and Haviland 104)—can be achieved through pedagogical practices such as instruction and assignment design, and can be supported by institutional policies. In the classroom, there exists an opportunity for instructors and students to discuss citation, an approach used by composition instructor Missy Watson, who reports success with explicit in-class source-use exploration (89). She describes her class discussions that include the admission that she "vividly recall[s] patchwriting [her] way to learning academic discourse" (97). This show of empathy is used to encourage students' self-study of their own citation techniques and practices (97). Watson explains that they may find that patchwriting appears more often than they may be aware, but:

> I encouraged students to be at peace if they've been patchwriting up to this point. After all, I reminded them, it's a learning strategy. But I acknowledged that paraphrase is far more highly valued in academic writing than patchwriting and that, unfortunately, teachers and institutions alike may still be inclined to penalize or even expel students for patchwriting offenses. (Watson 96)

Watson concludes, "I believe that with careful, reflective, and collective efforts, we might all agree to stop policing students and instead use our labors to design better pedagogical approaches, as Howard encouraged us to do so long ago" (100).

Not only can approaches like Watson's class discussions contribute to student understanding of citation practices and expectations, assignments can also be designed to help students develop their abilities. While instructors may require a particular type or number of sources, motivated by an attempt to encourage students' engagement with scholarship, quantified requirements may seem arbitrary and take the focus off of doing research (Howard and Jamieson 237). Another assignment guideline, the disallowance of quoting, is one students find restrictive

9

(Breen and Maassen), but is favored by instructors who value paraphrasing as a way to encourage students to extract and contextualize meaning (Haviland and Mullin 73). Watson writes that in-class paraphrasing activities can support students' development of this skill (97-8).

To ensure institutional support for a more flexible approach to plagiarism prevention and handling, Howard argues that changes in policy may be called for ("Plagiarisms"). She provides a sample policy illustrating her recommendations ("Plagiarisms" 798-802), beginning with an explanation of why citation practices are important in academic work, and including definitions of behaviors that may be construed as plagiarism. A section of advice for students is part of the policy, including examples showing original work and student patchwriting. Toward the end of the sample policy, Howard also offers advice for faculty about how to understand, handle, and prevent plagiarism and associated behavior.

Other changes Howard believes institutions can make include ensuring working conditions allow instructors the time and energy to spend teaching about source use and addressing concerns about it in students' work,

> whether that means cutting class size, reducing teaching load, or placing more emphasis on teaching in decisions about hiring and promotion. Writing is an invaluable means of learning. Professors must demand that their students do the writing that they are submitting as their own; professors must assign essays that foster learning; and institutions must ensure that their professors' working conditions make good teaching possible. ("Forget" B24)

The already-heavy workload of instructors may be compounded by the time and effort required to deal with plagiarism accusations, and preventative efforts could offer a better return on investment of instructor time and effort. Additionally, students who are making a good-faith effort to engage in academic work and unintentionally engage in writing that is reported as plagiarism may find themselves discouraged and disillusioned, which could affect their self-perception as participants in academic discourse, and could adversely affect their continued

enrollment. At a time when overall student enrollment in higher education has been decreasing and is projected to continue its downward trend, the effect of treating all instances of plagiarism as intentional, when some are inadvertent or even pedagogically valuable, as argued by Howard, should not be ignored.

METHODS

In order to evaluate whether the unique challenges presented to student writers at the points of transition from high school to college and from lower-level composition courses to discipline-specific writing result in higher rates of plagiarism reports, this study examines the rates of plagiarism reports in five undergraduate courses at Dalton State College, and compares them to overall rates of plagiarism reports from the most recent academic year during which data was available (2015-2016). It also uses interviews with faculty to investigate the ways in which plagiarism cases are handled.

Study site

Dalton State College is a public four-year college located in Dalton, a city of 33,500. Dalton is the county seat of Whitfield County, located in Northwest Georgia. The region's primary industry is the manufacture and sales of textiles and flooring, which has attracted a largely Latino workforce in recent decades. As a result, Dalton State College has been designated the first Hispanic-Serving Institution in the state of Georgia, with a 31% Hispanic/Latino student population. Additionally, the student body is made up by over half first-generation college students ("Dalton State Celebrates"). To serve its unique student body, Dalton State College prioritizes affordability, and "ranks among the top 10% for the lowest net price (cost of

attendance minus grant/scholarship aid), according to the College Affordability and Transparency List compiled by the U.S. Department of Education" ("Regents Approve").

The college's stance on plagiarism is outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, where it is listed alongside 22 other conduct violations including drugs, gambling, theft, and weapons. The section called "Academic Misconduct" (Appendix C) outlines the behavior considered plagiarism:

1. The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without clear acknowledgment
2. The unacknowledged use of materials by another person or agency engaged in selling papers or other academic material
3. The use of previously submitted work without acknowledgment on a subsequently submitted academic assignment

The document goes on to outline the "Academic Misconduct Process" (Appendix D), reading, in part:

1. In cases of a student being found responsible for a violation of academic misconduct, the faculty member teaching the course is responsible for assigning any course-related sanctions, which can include but are not limited to mandatory completion of an assignment, reduction in grade, grade of zero (0) for the assignment, or failure of the course. The faculty member determines course-related sanctions based upon the situation and course syllabus.
2. Academic misconduct cases should be reported as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Once reported, the Academic Misconduct Process allows the student to have another party, not affiliated with the course, hear the alleged violation(s). The process will also result, when necessary, in non-course-related sanctions, such as educational workshops and assignments, and/or disciplinary warning, probation, suspension, or expulsion. Based on information gathered during the investigation, as well as the outcome of the hearing, the hearing officer may support the course-related outcome(s) assigned by the faculty member and/or recommend other course-related outcome(s) to the faculty member.

Because the handling of plagiarism is structured as outlined, students face dual sanctions that are parallel but separate; the Dean of Students' office can impose conduct sanctions such as

academic probation, suspension, or expulsion while the instructor can choose their own sanctions which include points off the assignment, failing the assignment, or failing the course.

Research design

The research project was focused on students' transition into new writing environments. The first transition period of interest is a student's transition from high school to college, and the composition course that will represent this transition is English Composition I (ENGL 1101), usually taken in the student's first or second semester. The second transition period of interest to this study is that of students whose composition courses were housed in an English department, but whose majors require composition in a different discipline; the courses selected to represent this transition are Research Methods in Biology (BIOL 3000), Business Communications (BUSA 3301), and Health Assessment (NURS 3000). These courses were selected because they are junior-level courses required in the major, taken after lower-level composition classes, but prerequisite to courses in the major. The business, biology, and nursing subject areas were selected due to being outside of the School of Liberal Arts, offering a contrast to the lower-level composition class environment in the School of Liberal Arts.

To evaluate whether the transition from lower-level courses to upper-level courses is affected more by the assumed increased rigor of upper-level classes compared to lower-level classes, or by the change in subject, and as a result engaging with a new discourse community, I identified a junior-level course required for English majors, Introduction to Literary Studies (ENGL 3010), as one of the courses to examine.

Based on the courses identified, and on the research questions that motivate this study, I determined two hypotheses to test. First: plagiarism report rates will be higher in the five identified courses compared to overall rates and second: rates for ENGL 3010 will be lower than

rates for BUSA 3301, NURS 3000, and BIOL 3000. The first hypothesis reflects the assumption that periods of transition into new composing contexts (in this case, subject-specific writing courses) may correlate with higher rates of plagiarism because, in attempting to assimilate into a new composing context, students may rely more heavily on the ideas and writing styles of sources used in their writing as they attempt to develop the skills that enable them to become engaged in scholarly discourse in college in general (represented by ENGL 1101), and their major field of study in particular (represented by BIOL 3000, BUSA 3301, and NURS 3000). The second hypothesis is based on the assumption that the composing context of an upper-level English class is more similar to the composition courses required as part of the core curriculum, and therefore, more of the skills developed in the lower-level class's composing context would be transferable since the upper-level class is part of the same field of study; compared with courses and composing contexts outside of the English department in which there would be fewer similarities; therefore, the rates of plagiarism reports may reflect the relative difficulty of this transition.

This project used the records kept by the Dalton State College Dean of Students' office tracking reports of suspected plagiarism to address the hypotheses by:

- comparing the rates of plagiarism reports from the ENGL 1101 course to overall rates of plagiarism reports at the college,
- comparing the rates of plagiarism reports from the BIOL 3000, BUSA 3301, and NURS 3000 courses to the overall rates of plagiarism reports at the college, and
- comparing the rates of plagiarism reports from the ENGL 3010 course to the rates of plagiarism reports at the college and in the BIOL 3000, BUSA 3301, and NURS 3000 courses.

Because the preliminary data analysis suggested findings that warranted further examination, qualitative research in the form of semi-structured interviews with Dalton State College faculty was added to the project to begin to understand how plagiarism reports are

handled at Dalton State College. The interviews with instructors of the targeted courses allowed for the further examination of why the number of reports were low in relation to enrollment, possible reasons for the reports, and the context in which reports occurred. An email invitation was sent to all Dalton State College faculty members who teach BIOL 3000, BUSA 3301, ENGL 1102, ENGL 3015, and NURS 3000. Ten faculty members volunteered to participate, representing BIOL 3000 (one), BUSA 3301 (one), and ENGL 1101 (eight). Three of the interviewees were male and seven were female. The faculty ranged in teaching experience from two years to thirty years and taught in a variety of institution types, from community colleges, to technical schools, to universities. I assigned each interviewee an alias for clarity: Amanda, Anne, Brian, Carrie, Doris, Hannah, James, Lily, Martin, and Naomi. A list of eleven questions was used to guide the semi-structured interviews with instructors (see Appendix E). The interviews were conducted by phone and manually transcribed by the interviewer. Each interview lasted between 20 to 50 minutes.

Limitations

The study has a few limitations. The first of these is the low rate at which plagiarism is reported by many faculty, which is reflected in the institutional data provided by the Dean of Students' office. Inconsistent reporting also affected this data (few faculty consistently report students, and many faculty do not report at all, or report less often than their colleagues, and less often than the code of conduct requires). Additionally, because the scope of the study was focused on five specific courses, this limited the investigation, and likely contributed to the low

sample size of interviewees. At a larger school, such a limit might be realistic, but at a school the size of Dalton State College, it did not prove helpful to the project.

The interviewees also represent a limitation to this study. Their perspectives may not be generalizable to all other contexts, and their beliefs about plagiarism may not accurately reflect the frequency of and motivations behind student plagiarism. Despite these limitations, the information provided by these participants contributes to the understanding of and ongoing discussion about plagiarism in student work.

RESULTS

The findings from the quantitative data analysis and from the interviews offer insights into the prevalence and handling of plagiarism at the college, on both an institutional and instructor level.

Institutional records of plagiarism reports

During the 2015-2016 academic year, in which the college's enrollment was 5044 (4351 FTE) ("Quick Facts"), only 33 instances of plagiarism were reported. Assuming each report was associated with a unique student, these numbers would represent .06% of Dalton State College's students; when compared with the findings of McCabe et al., that 61% of U.S. students engaged in some form of plagiarism (62), this discrepancy suggests a need for further inquiry about the frequency with which plagiarism is reported at Dalton State College.

Neither hypothesis could be tested, since only three of the reported incidents occurred in any of the selected courses, all originating from ENGL 1101. Nine percent of plagiarism reports originated from ENGL 1101 classes. Because all students are required to take ENGL 1101, this

means more students take ENGL 1101 and therefore the rate of plagiarism reports in that course do not appear to suggest that students in that class plagiarize or are reported for plagiarism more than others. However, the data do provide information about the levels and disciplines in which plagiarism reports occur.
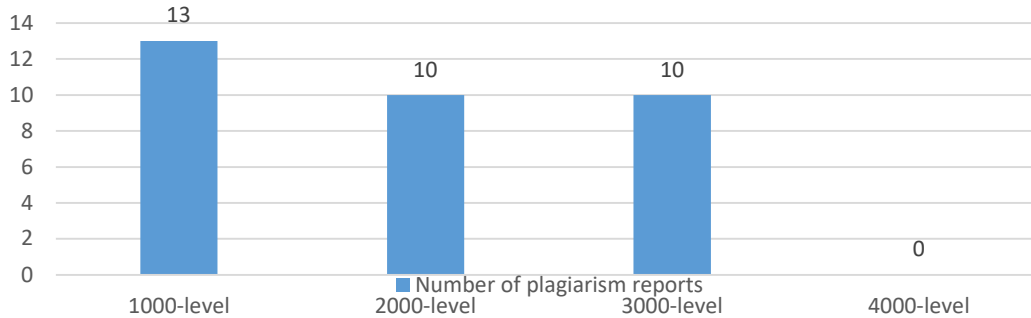

Figure 1 Plagiarism Reports by Course Level

In Figure 1, the highest number of reports at any course level originated from 1000-level classes, and the remaining reports showed an even division between 2000- and 3000- level classes. No plagiarism reports originated from 4000-level classes. These numbers suggest that plagiarism reports fell during students' progression from freshman to senior.

  Examining the number of plagiarism reports by discipline (see Figure 2) also provides some insight into the occurrence of plagiarism at the college.
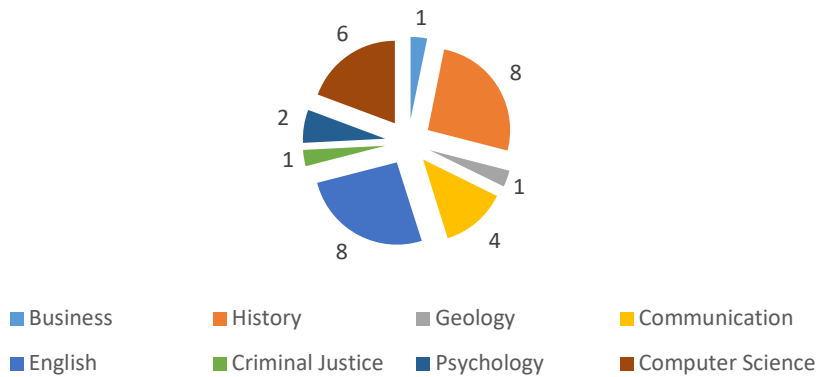
Figure 2 Plagiarism Reports by Discipline

English and history are the two subject areas in which reports were highest at eight each. The

high number of reports within English (24% of the total) is not surprising, since every student is

required to take ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102 as part of their core curriculum. The number of

reports in the field of history is somewhat surprising, because only one history class is required

in the core curriculum. However, multiple history courses are considered eligible to be counted

as electives as part of the core requirements. Writing in history often draws on written artifacts,

so students may be citing more often in these assignments, and if this is done incorrectly,

students could be reported for suspected plagiarism. Furthermore, the order in which students

take their core courses is not restricted, so it is possible that the students involved in these reports

have not had previous plagiarism or citation education at the college level.

The high number of reports (6) in computer science, representing 18% of the total

number of reports, may be attributable to the difficulty and specialized nature of that field.

This finding echoes previous research at Stanford University, where computer science students

had higher-than-average rates of plagiarism charges (Haviland and Mullin 21). Stanford faculty

theorized that this was likely due to the prevailing acceptance of "open source" work in the

field—that is, freely available work, accessible for anyone's use and further development (22).

While the reuse of intellectual property may be accepted in computer science, that it is reported as plagiarism in student work suggests a distinction between pedagogy and practice.

Instructor perceptions of plagiarism

Overall, interviewees reported a low prevalence of plagiarism. Martin said it's "not super widespread." James also reported that it rarely occurs, and when it does, it usually is not outright plagiarism. Anne agreed that there is a low prevalence overall, and added that it was "less of a problem" in the past, but the Internet has made it easier. Carrie said she sees it more now, noting that it's easier to catch with tools, and Doris described her belief that there's been an increase in plagiarism over the years. Hannah, on the other hand, said she believes that there may appear to be higher rates of plagiarism now, but that technology makes it "easier to catch," so while it was happening before, students were getting away with it.

Interviewees identified several possible reasons that students plagiarize. Foremost among these is time management, specifically mentioned by Anne, Carrie, Hannah, Naomi, and James. James said that he thinks approaching deadlines and burnout contribute to an increase in plagiarism toward the end of the semester. Carrie also noted that plagiarism is more common then, because the end of the semester is a period when students may be more stressed and have more work to complete in a short time. She added that research papers tend to be due at the end of the term, and this is the type of assignment that is more frequently plagiarized. Martin also said he believes that plagiarism is more common on research papers. Other factors, identified by Carrie, include a lack of understanding or confusion about citation norms. Doris agreed that students may not have the requisite knowledge about how to cite the sources they use, but said "they want to understand." Naomi added that plagiarism seems to be more prevalent in lower-level classes, and Doris wondered if this is because "they get away with it in high school."

The effect of plagiarism on faculty time and workload came up in the interviews, and Hannah, Naomi, and Carrie agreed that it can take up a lot of time. Brian, on the other hand, said dealing with plagiarism reports does not take a significant amount of time or increase the burden on his workload, but it is an "annoyance." Faculty's experience at other institutions came up as well. Lily reported that plagiarism was more common at the community college where she previously taught. Hannah agreed, and said that in her experience, plagiarism was more common at the technical school where she used to work than at Dalton State College.

Reporting

As the data from the Dean of Students' office records hinted, the rate of reporting was found to be low. With the exceptions of Brian and Lily, every interviewee acknowledged this. Martin called reporting "a lot of work," and Anne said not only doesn't she report instances of suspected plagiarism to the school's conduct coordinator, she doesn't know anyone who does "because it's a royal pain." Carrie, who has worked at Dalton State for ten years, said she has only reported three cases of plagiarism during her tenure, and explained that she only reports if she's "really mad." She elaborated by saying that, in addition to the time it takes to document and report, there is a "mistrust" of the conduct process among faculty. The lone outlier was Brian, who said he reports every student he suspects of plagiarism. At first, he explained, it's more work. But once you're familiar with the process, he said, it takes less time and effort. Brian added that he believes his colleagues don't have practice reporting, which is why they don't do more of it.

However, Hannah, who has worked at Dalton State for nine years and only reported one student during that time, offered a different explanation for why she doesn't report students: she believes that instances of plagiarism are a learning opportunity for students, and said she gives

20

students "the benefit of the doubt." She added that she meets with students once she detects plagiarism to offer outreach and help, telling students that plagiarism "is not okay, but you can recover." Hannah expressed her belief that her role is to offer students a safety net. She noted that she feels that her job is to work with students, because they're learning. This more understanding stance was shared by instructors like Amanda, who "don't want to be the plagiarism police," preferring instead to give students "another chance." Most interviewees (even Brian, who adamantly repeated his assertion that plagiarism is "theft and fraud," and students don't need instruction in citation, but rather ethics) allowed that students may make honest mistakes, so in many cases, plagiarism can represent a teaching opportunity. To this end, faculty acknowledged that different types and degrees of plagiarism exist, and explained that they consider the amount of borrowed material, the degree of similarity, and the student's intent when deciding how to handle violations of academic integrity.

Some interesting points were made by interviewees. While they reported not reporting students for plagiarism because they saw the pedagogical opportunity to help students improve, they also pointed to the difficulty of reporting as a factor in their decision to not report students. However, instructors' emotions were also sometimes involved in their decision to report students: Carrie acknowledged that she only reports students if she's "really mad" and Martin asserted that he feels "resentful" that students believe they can fool him. This indicates that sometimes instructors place their emotions and feelings over the ethics of reporting plagiarism. This is troubling, because it results in students receiving inconsistent treatment based on subjective factors out of their control.

Prevention

21

Plagiarism prevention at Dalton State College starts with a statement in the course syllabus as required by the college's Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Manual, which states: "Each faculty member should clearly state in the course syllabus policies on violations of academic integrity at the beginning of each course and the penalties for such infractions." Often, as part of this statement or elsewhere within the syllabus, instructors also refer to the code of conduct.

In addition to the syllabus statement, instruction is widely used as a preventative measure. Martin and Doris said that they offer deliberate instruction about plagiarism like their colleagues Carrie and Anne, who reported that they explicitly teach about plagiarism and citation, and spend a week of class on the topic. Doris added that she also incorporates an element of reflection, asking students to think about how they'd feel if their work was taken. James said he teaches about the principles of credit and citation, while Amanda said that she talks about ways to use others' work. Carrie explained that she believes preventative instruction is effective, because without it, she sees five to six cases each course, and when she includes it, this decreases to one to two cases.

Another technique instructors said they use to head off plagiarism is the use of assignment design to minimize opportunities for students to plagiarize. One straightforward way interviewees do this is to assign completely original writing. Brian said he does not require secondary sources on the first essay, and Lily said that she doesn't allow the use of outside sources at all. Doris said she asks students to do assignments based on close reading, since her discipline is literary studies, and that she also uses in-class writing activities. Hannah added that she makes assignments "hard to plagiarize" by breaking them down into smaller pieces to be submitted throughout the semester, so "everything's not due at once." Martin also said he makes

22

plagiarism hard to do by limiting students' opportunities to plagiarize. His colleague Amanda expressed her belief that instructor involvement throughout the writing process can help prevent plagiarism. One interesting response came from James, who said he grades on writing uniqueness.

Turnitin

The text-matching software service provided by Turnitin is widely used for plagiarism detection, and at Dalton State College, it is English department policy to use the software in all classes. This policy was introduced about five years ago, and interviewee Carrie identified herself as one of the primary advocates for the adoption of the software and the implementation of the policy. Carrie noted that Turnitin is not useful just to faculty, but to students as well. She said she lets students use it to check their work and fix any poorly-paraphrased passages prior to submitting their work to be graded.

Overall, interviewees found value in the Turnitin software, but did not believe it alone could detect all instances of plagiarism. This belief was expressed by Brian, who said Turnitin doesn't work all the time. Naomi called the software "a good tool" but a "starting point." Doris echoed Naomi's assessment, and explained that she thinks software "can enhance but not replace" traditional methods of detection. These methods of detection include Google, according to Brian and Hannah, but most instructors rely primarily on their ability to assess student work. Doris said she does this by looking for inconsistency in writing style and document formatting, including citations. Amanda said that when she notices a change in the writer's voice, it "raises eyebrows," and Brian also noted that a change in voice is a hint that the writing may not be the

student's own. Hannah agreed that writing that sounds different from the student's voice or different from the rest of the paper may be an indication of plagiarism. Anne said that she can also tell when a student has plagiarized, calling it "obvious" when she notices "style, syntax, or diction" changes. Martin said he too "can spot it" and added that it's more obvious among freshman writers.

Handling

When plagiarism occurs, instructors reported, they often work first with the student to address the violation. Notably, Brian was the exception to this trend. Brian said that he reports violations first, then talks with the student afterward. But like many others, as described earlier, Hannah said she meets with students to support them as they learn. Anne said she holds a conference with students, and offers them one opportunity to redo the work, but if it happens again, she gives them a failing grade for the class. Similarly, Carrie said she tells students that they can rewrite the paper, but that if they plagiarize again, they will get a zero. Carrie added that a second offense is rare.

James said that in cases where minor infractions have occurred, "a conversation might take care of it," and described his belief that students are learning how to write for the field and learning how to synthesize voices and paraphrase. He said he allows drafts, because students "are finding their voices" as well as learning vocabulary new to them, but common in the field. James explained that he does not take a punitive approach, but gently and firmly guides students as they develop their confidence as writers. He said that he thinks it's important to understand the root causes of plagiarism and attempt to fix them, and added that he thinks "punishment doesn't help" and could actually be harmful. He said he observes that when students are starting out writing in

24

the field, they show more similarity to their sources, but as they develop skills and knowledge of the discipline, this is less common.

The responses offered by Hannah, Anne, Carrie, and James suggest the value of a personal connection between faculty and students, something that is part of the institutional culture at Dalton State College. In Fall 2019, the college used surveys and focus groups to develop an "Academic Signature" as part of its strategic plan, which resulted in the creation of a new unit, the Center for Engaging and Supportive Academic Experiences, whose mission statement reads, in part: "Faculty will develop sustained and meaningful relationships with our students."

DISCUSSION

The results of this study offer insight into the connection between the abstract concept of plagiarism and how it is actually handled in practice. While a test of the hypotheses proved impossible because only one of the five selected courses was involved in any of the reports tracked by the Dean of Students office, the project offers a valuable examination of how plagiarism is viewed and managed at Dalton State College. It appears, both from the analysis of the data provided by the Dean of Students office and from the interviews with instructors, that plagiarism is more common in lower-level classes and decreases as students progress toward graduation, suggesting that perhaps the composition skills learned in lower-level classes are transferable to new composing contexts. However, the college does not have a comprehensive plagiarism prevention strategy and there appears to be widespread inconsistency in how instances of suspected plagiarism are handled.

Faculty acknowledged the range of behaviors that may be construed as plagiarism, and tended to agree that many minor infractions represent a lack of understanding, and therefore an opportunity for learning, rather than intentional attempts to plagiarize. This softer attitude, focused more on teaching and less on preventing plagiarism, could be further informed by an understanding of imitation. Because imitation is innate, students will use it, and working with their instincts could be a valuable technique to inform plagiarism prevention efforts, which would be enhanced by the understanding that not all imitative behavior represents a violation of academic integrity. Additionally, to detect imitative writing, tools like Turnitin could be used proactively rather than punitively.

Turnitin was identified by most of the interviewees as one tool they use to identify possible plagiarism in student work. While the program has been criticized as a crutch that eventually weakens the instructor's ability to detect plagiarism without it, this did not seem to be an issue at Dalton State College, as faculty described their strategies to detect plagiarism by assessing student writing. Interviewee Carrie noted that the text-matching service was unable to detect the borrowing of arguments, one of many weaknesses other scholars have pointed out:

> Plagiarism detection services cannot detect uncited, and thereby plagiarized, ideas that have been summarized, paraphrased, or translated. They cannot detect copy-and-paste plagiarism that students have extensively altered with a thesaurus. They also cannot—nor will they ever be able to—identify whether a paper has been written by a student's roommate, boyfriend, or hired ghostwriter, purchased from a "custom research" paper mill, or recycled for the first time from an offline archive. The only chance teachers have of identifying these types of plagiarism once they have occurred is to be familiar enough with students' writing to recognize a difference when they see it. (Twomey 152)

It is therefore encouraging that interviewees spoke about their ability to determine irregularities in student writing that may offer clues to possible plagiarism.

Another drawback of plagiarism detection software that did not come up in the interviews was that its use includes the presupposition of cheating: "By telling students we will be checking

all papers for plagiarism, we are essentially calling them all cheaters before they have even begun to write, and treating them as if they are 'guilty until proven innocent' by the returned results of electronic surveillance" (Twomey 150). Interview responses that describe using Turnitin so that students could review and fix their work before submission, however, show that the software can be used in a supportive, rather than punitive, way.

Another way that instructors work to ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to avoid plagiarism is through pedagogy. Both preventative instruction (something Twomey advocates for) and plagiarism-resistant assignments are used in this pursuit. Not only is instruction used among the participants interviewed for this study, it's believed to be effective. This is encouraging because the findings of Breen and Maassen, whose research was discussed earlier in this thesis, indicate that students, especially those early in their academic careers, struggle to understand citation, specifically the use of paraphrasing:

> For example, first- and second-year students often defined paraphrasing as making small changes to the order of words in the original text, and spoke of deciding on the number of words from the original text that can be copied before the need to reference. One first year student stated, "Yes that's right, you remove some words and use others." In addition, some students, especially first year and international students, did not understand that paraphrasing meant that the original idea was not their work and consequently they had difficulty understanding the need to reference paraphrasing at all.

The description given by these students indicates that their conception of paraphrasing is quite similar to the phenomenon of patchwriting, adding further support to the belief that many students who are accused of plagiarism indeed lack the intent to steal, but also lack understanding of how to abide by scholarly norms. The importance of teaching students how to paraphrase, as was practiced using imitation in pedagogy by instructors of rhetoric dating back to antiquity, should not be undervalued as a measure to prevent plagiarism from unintentionally occurring.

27

A review of the literature indicates that Howard's more understanding stance on the range of behaviors has gained support over time, and the instructors interviewed in this study seem to agree that not all plagiarism is equal in degree or intent, often representing a learning opportunity for students. This connection between scholarly argument and classroom practice is fundamental to shifting from policing plagiarism to investing in students' development of the set of skills and abilities needed to use others' work in a responsible and academically-appropriate way.

Reimagining assignment design to allow students to develop their skills is one of Howard's recommendations; she believes that encouraging students to submit drafts as they work on research-based projects allows instructors to see how students develop their own ideas, and provides opportunities to support students as they write. This technique was mentioned by interviewees Amanda and Hannah. Howard asks "Do professors' shortcomings excuse students' textual transgressions? No. But they do demand that we recognize and reform pedagogy that encourages plagiarism because it discourages learning" ("Forget" B24), indicating that one of the most compelling reasons that plagiarism should be addressed is that it demands time and attention from instructors and students and takes focus away from course content. Also, as Doris pointed out, punishing offenders takes up instructors' time and energy, adversely affecting students who did not plagiarize.

The findings of this project provide nuance to the exploration of plagiarism handling at one institution, and appear to offer support for explicit plagiarism instruction during targeted points in a student's academic career, specifically early on. The college does not have a comprehensive plagiarism plan for freshmen; with a range of beliefs about plagiarism and inconsistent practices for handling and reporting instances of suspected plagiarism among

instructors, this may be called for. In addition, the sharing of pedagogical techniques among faculty could be beneficial.

Going forward

This project offers an examination of attitudes about plagiarism at one institution, but is contextualized by the work of scholars who have identified the value and potential of imitation for pedagogy. This thesis, like the work of the scholars it cites, advocates for a more widespread understanding of the nature of imitation and its relationship with behaviors often called plagiaristic. The goal of this better understanding is to allow for a critical examination of how plagiarism is handled, from the more granular level of an individual assignment, to the institutional policies and practices that apply to student work.

Some interesting questions were raised as a result of the interviews. These include whose purview the handling of plagiarism is, or should be. The inconsistency with which the Dean of Students' office is involved is troubling, because it leads to some students being penalized while others are allowed a chance to improve without significant punishment. Faculty handling makes sense for situations where students don't understand citation, because there is an opportunity for learning and improvement. However, dedicating time and attention to these instances requires more work by faculty. Additional questions raised here include: Is the conduct process working if reporting is inconsistent? Is it even beneficial to have conduct involved?

These questions suggest the need for an institution-wide audit of plagiarism policy and its application. The inconsistency with which plagiarism is handled and the inconsistency with

which penalties are applied may be good reasons for the college to consider implementing a campus-wide effort to educate students in the responsible use of others' work and appropriate citation. This intervention would be best timed for early in students' academic careers, when plagiarism appears to be more common.

Some themes that emerged appear to represent promising avenues for future research. One of these is the role of emotions (the comments from Carrie and Martin suggest that an exploration of this phenomenon may be instructive) as it relates to instructor perceptions of plagiarism. Another is the relationship between time management skills and plagiarism frequency. Further, discipline-specific investigations of plagiarism may allow for a more in-depth exploration of the phenomenon in areas where it appears common, but that were not addressed in this study; namely, in the fields of history and computer science. Also, while the role of the library and its relationship to plagiarism prevention efforts was not specifically explored in this work, it may be worthwhile to examine in future research. Finally, other future research could examine the effect of plagiarism accusations on enrollment, retention, and progression. Dalton State College has a lower-than-system average retention rate, so this investigation could be useful to the institution, but with the recent decline in college enrollment ("Fast Facts"), this trend may take on additional significance for more institutions.

Conclusion

This research project examined of how student writers handle points of transition that require them to integrate into new composing contexts, which may initially be achieved through imitating others. Imitation is an unconscious human behavior that has a long history of use in pedagogy, but current beliefs about how to use others' intellectual property mean that if student

writers fail to correctly use academic citation standards, they may be accused of plagiarism, which can take up a significant amount of time and effort for instructors and institutions. Furthermore, not all behaviors labeled as plagiarism are the same in degree or intent, and some may actually represent productive attempts to engage in scholarly discourse.

One composition theorist whose work was integral to this project is Rebecca Moore Howard, who wrote twenty years ago that, to help students learn how to use others' work appropriately, "our own pedagogy needs reform. Big reform" ("Forget" B24). Pedagogy has great potential for turning cases where students lack the intent to deceive into opportunities to learn. While Howard and others, including the Dalton State College interviewees in this study, agree that instructors should pursue blatant cases of plagiarism (Watson 84-85), distinguishing between intentional violations (Howard's "plagiarism") and those that represent a lack of understanding allows for opportunities to "better honor students and attain more sound pedagogy" (Watson 88).

This project may inform a more nuanced approach to plagiarism reporting and handling by contributing to the understanding of the frequency and nature of plagiarism at one institution. Its findings may offer value to other schools who wish evaluate whether the periods of transition between composing contexts correlate with higher rates of plagiarism reports, to explore instructor attitudes about plagiarism that inform the handling and reporting of plagiarism, and to critically examine cultural beliefs about intellectual property that represent a barrier to the use of imitation in composition pedagogy.

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE CHATTANOOGA

APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA INSTITUTIONAL

REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM

Institutional Review Board
FORM D: Application for Exempt Designation

INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCE:
By submitting this protocol, I attest that I am aware of the applicable principles, policies, regulations, and laws governing the protection of human subjects in research and that I will be guided by them in the conduct of this research.

Title of Research:	The Pedagogical Situation of Plagiarism in College Composition

	Name	**Department**	**Email**	**CITI Training Completed***
Principal Investigator	Amy Burger	English	spn271@mocs.utc.edu	☒
Other Investigator				☐
Other Investigator				☐
Faculty Advisor	Jenn Stewart	English	jenn-stewart@utc.edu	☒

A.   Anticipated dates of research project: Start: 10/01/2020   End: 12/01/2020
Note that your project will be designated as complete on the end date specified here, unless a continuation form is submitted to the IRB prior to that date. No research activities may take place under a completed IRB protocol.

B.   Funding:

   Anticipated source of funds, if any, including UTC Research Grants
   Grant Start Date: *mm/dd/yy* **Grant End Date:** *mm/dd/yy*

C. EXEMPTION CATEGORY REQUESTED:
2. Educational tests, surveys, interviews, public observation

PLEASE REFERENCE THE EXEMPTION CATEGORY DEFINITION SHEET AND EXEMPTION CATEGORY DETERMINATION FLOW CHART FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE IN DETERMINING THE CORRECT EXEMPTION CATEGORY.

D.   Purpose/Objectives of Research:

The purpose of this research project is to investigate faculty and student attitudes toward plagiarism.

E.   Methods/Procedures:

This project includes data analysis and Human Subject Research in the form of semistructured, non-recorded telephone interviews with participants. The data analysis draws on anonymous records of courses in which plagiarism was reported. Dalton State College, the study site, has approved this project and provided permission both for the data analysis and interviews.

E.1. Do the methods include in-person contact (i.e., direct presence in the same physical location) between research team members and study participants?
☐ **YES***   ☒ **NO**
If YES, complete Form P: Pandemic Risk Evaluation, available at utc.edu/irb/forms.

F.   Subject Population:

F.1.   Approximate number of subjects: 20
F.2.   Select any vulnerable subjects included:

☐ Children (under age 18)*

☐ Prisoners (as primary study population)**

☐ Individuals with impaired decision-making capacity***

☐ Economically or educationally disadvantaged persons***

Children are <u>excluded</u> from Category 3 and may only be included under Exemption Category 2 if the investigator does not participate in activities being observed (no surveys or interviews).
**Prisoners cannot be included in an exempt study <u>except</u> "for research aimed at involving a broader subject population that <u>only incidentally</u> includes prisoners."*
***Eligible for exemption, but may require special safeguards.*

F.3.   Describe the subject population and the recruitment method:
The subject population is faculty, students, and staff at Dalton State College. They will be recruited by email and selected because they were involved in a plagiarism report.

G. Informed Consent Process:
Participants will be asked to read and sign an Informed Consent form prior to participation.

H. Privacy/Confidentiality:
H.1. Will the identities of the subjects be kept anonymous or confidential?
☐ Anonymous *(unknown to researcher and unknown to the public.) If anonymous, please jump to section J.*
☒ Confidential *(known to the researcher, unknown to the public)*
H.1.a. <u>IF CONFIDENTIAL</u>: Will data be collected that, if identities of the subjects were made public, could reasonably put the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement or reputation?
☐ Yes *(If yes, complete section I.)*
☒ No *(If no, please jump to section J.)*

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c.   Limited IRB Review

Please complete only if you answered "Yes" to question H.1.a.

Exempt categories 2(iii) and 3(iii) require that the IRB complete a **LIMITED IRB REVIEW***, which ensures that there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and maintain the confidentiality of data.*

I.1.   What provisions are in place to protect the confidentiality of sensitive information about individuals?

Click or tap here to enter text.
I.2.   Discuss how data will be stored and when it will be disposed of.

Click or tap here to enter text.

I.3.   List the names of all individuals who will have access to research data.
Click or tap here to enter text.

J.   Attachments: *Select all that apply*

☒   Research Instruments (e.g., questionnaire, survey, list of potential interview questions)
☒   Informed Consent Letter or Information Sheet
☒   Permission to use existing data
☒   Permission from research site
☐   Grant proposal narrative & annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure (funded research only)
☐   Form P: Pandemic Risk Evaluation
☐   Other: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

Signatures:

Amy Burger	10/6/20
Principal Investigator or Student	Date

*Faculty Advisor (for student applications)	Date

* If submitted by a faculty member, electronic (typed) signatures are acceptable. If submitted by a student, please print out completed form, obtain the faculty advisor's signature, scan completed form, and submit it via email. Only Word documents or PDF files are acceptable submissions.

Important Reminders:

- ***Training Requirement***
  - As of January 1, 2017, all investigators conducting research with human subjects are required to complete the Human Subject Research Basic online training course through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) prior to receiving IRB approval.

- Visit http://www.utc.edu/research-integrity/institutional-review-board/training.php for more information.

- All student applications must be either signed by the faculty advisor then scanned and emailed, OR emailed directly from the faculty advisor.

- Allow at least 2 weeks for IRB processing from date of submission.

- Applications must be filled out completely and clearly in order to receive review.

- Although the IRB may determine that a project is exempt from full-scale IRB review, it must still conduct a modicum of review ("exempt review") to ensure compliance with the ethical principles embodied in the Belmont Report: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. The IRB retains final judgment as to whether a full-scale review by the IRB is required.

- Exempt status does not mean that the investigator is exempt from informed consent procedures. Signed consent should be obtained whenever the identity of the subject is known and there are no reasonable circumstances that would prohibit it.

- You may not begin your research until you have received an official exemption designation letter from the IRB.

Submit all applications by email to *instrb@utc.edu.*

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Informed Consent
The Pedagogical Situation of Plagiarism in College Composition

The purpose of this study is to gather information about the experiences of faculty, staff, and students at Dalton State College in relation to plagiarism. You are invited to participate in this research because you are presently employed by or enrolled as a student at Dalton State College, and you are at least 18 years old.

This study will be conducted by phone, and will not be recorded. The interviewer will take notes of the conversation. It will take approximately 1 hour to complete. You will be asked to answer some questions about your background and experiences with plagiarism at Dalton State College.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. You may skip any questions that you prefer not to answer. In the event of problems resulting from participation in the study, psychological treatment is available at the DSC Counseling Center located in the Ken White Student Health Center (Health Professions 266, telephone 706-272-4430).

You understand that this study is not designed to help you personally, but that the information gained from this project will contribute to our knowledge of students' experiences with plagiarism at Dalton State College. I will make the results of this study available to interested research participants.

Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The only list that associates your name with your participant number will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will have access to that file. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator's office and will be seen by the investigator only during the study and for three years after the study is completed. When completed, this research will be published in a manner that will present only summary results of our findings – no individuals will be identified. Identifiers might be removed from the information, and after such removal, the information could be used for future research studies or distributed without additional informed consent.

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

You may ask questions of the researcher about the research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate or during the research. You may also call the researcher at any time, office phone 706-272-4459, or contact the researcher's faculty advisor Dr. Jennifer Stewart at jenn-stewart@utc.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Dr. Susan Davidson, the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, UTC Institutional Review Board, at 423-425-5568 or instrb@utc.edu. Additional contact information is available at www.utc.edu/irb.

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the researchers or with Dalton State College. Information collected from

participants who elect to withdraw from the study will be used unless participants indicate in writing they would like their de-identified data destroyed.

This research project has been approved by the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Institutional Review Board IRB#: 20-115.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate, having read and understood the information presented. If you so desire, you will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Signature:	Print name & date:

Amy Burger, Principal Investigator   Office: (706) 272-4459 Email: aburger1@daltonstate.edu

APPENDIX C

EXERPT FROM CODE OF CONDUCT

APPENDIX C: EXERPT FROM CODE OF CONDUCT

a) Engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by the course instructor in the course syllabus or classroom directions

b) Cheating

1.Use, or attempted use, of any unauthorized assistance or sources in preparation for or while completing quizzes, tests, examinations, and other course assignments

2.The acquisition, or attempted acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member or college official

3.Selling, giving, lending, or otherwise furnishing material, or the attempt to do so, which contains the questions or answers to assignments or examinations without the permission of the course instructor

c) Plagiarism

1.The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without clear acknowledgment

2.The unacknowledged use of materials by another person or agency engaged in selling papers or other academic material

3.The use of previously submitted work without acknowledgment on a subsequently submitted academic assignment

APPENDIX D

EXCERPT FROM CODE OF CONDUCT

APPENDIX D: EXCERPT FROM CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Allegations of academic misconduct, including those which could result in the sanction of suspension or expulsion will proceed through the disciplinary process outlined below.

2. In cases of a student being found responsible for a violation of academic misconduct, the faculty member teaching the course is responsible for assigning any course-related sanctions, which can include but are not limited to mandatory completion of an assignment, reduction in grade, grade of zero (0) for the assignment, or failure of the course. The faculty member determines course-related sanctions based upon the situation and course syllabus.

3. Academic misconduct cases should be reported as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Once reported, the Academic Misconduct Process allows the student to have another party, not affiliated with the course, hear the alleged violation(s). The process will also result, when necessary, in non-course-related sanctions, such as educational workshops and assignments, and/or disciplinary warning, probation, suspension, or expulsion. Based on information gathered during the investigation, as well as the outcome of the hearing, the hearing officer may support the course-related outcome(s) assigned by the faculty member and/or recommend other course-related outcome(s) to the faculty member.

4. When an alleged violation of academic conduct is submitted, a hearing officer will contact both the faculty and the respondent to gather all information available, including but not limited to incident reports, course work, the course syllabus, and complainant, respondent, and/or witness statements. Based on the information gathered, the hearing

officer will decide if there is enough information to charge a student with a violation.
Charges are only warranted when a preponderance of the evidence is found.

a. If a student accepts responsibility for the specified violation(s) the hearing officer can determine and assign non-course-related sanctions. The process in which responsibility is accepted and sanctions are assigned is considered an administrative hearing. The outcome of the administrative hearing cannot be appealed. Only the non-course-related sanctions assigned can be appealed by a student after an administrative hearing.

b. If the student does not accept responsibility, the student can choose for the hearing officer to resolve the case or for multiple hearing officers in a student conduct panel to resolve the case. Resolving a case means determining if the respondent is responsible or not responsible for the charge and assigning non-course-related sanction(s) if a decision of "responsible" is reached.

c. Following a hearing, the respondent shall be provided a written decision via College email of the outcome and any resulting sanctions, details on how to appeal, and a summary of the information in support of any sanction.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- How, if at all, do you address plagiarism in your classes?
- How much time does plagiarism take up?
- Are there different types of plagiarism?
- Do you report all the cases you discover or suspect?
- How do you decide which cases to report?
- Have you observed any trends in when plagiarism is more likely to happen?
- Why do you think plagiarism occurs?
- How has Dalton State College been different from your other experiences?
- Has your perception of plagiarism changed over time, and if so, how?
- Do you think there are pedagogical techniques that can reduce instances of plagiarism?
- Do you use Turnitin? Do you review the results?

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