Lesson 4: What is plagiarism?

This lesson will take two 45 minute class sessions

Preparing to Teach

☑ Read the complete lesson.
☑ Post lesson outcomes.
☑ Make copies of Handout 1 for each student.
☑ Create your own handout of the school rule on plagiarism for your school district.
☑ Make copies of Handout 2 for each student.
☑ Make “Should be allowed” and “Should not be allowed” signs for the continuum strategy.
☑ Make copies of Handout 3 for students playing the role of school board members.
☑ Make enough copies of Handout 4 for the rest of the class.

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will focus on the issue of plagiarism. They will discuss school rules and they will organize a school board hearing on the topic of plagiarism.

Outcomes

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define plagiarism, cheating and intellectual property
- Critically analyze school rules on plagiarism
- Analyze problems in the application of school rules
- Describe and evaluate consequences for school rule violations.
- Identify and explain the connection between intellectual property and plagiarism.
- Identify resources to assist with research on plagiarism.

Handouts

- Handout 1: “No student or staff member shall commit plagiarism in the Jacksonfield Schools”
- Handout 2: Cheating in School: Should There Be a Rule? (Each student gets a copy)
- Handout 3: School Board Member Preparation (Each student participating as a School Board Member gets a copy)
- Handout 4: Preparation for Interest Groups (Each student who is a member of a special interest group gets one copy)

Community Resource People

You might want to invite a lawyer specializing in school law and/or intellectual property law to serve as a resource. A resource person with experience in the enforcement of school rules within your school district or a member of the school board would also be good resources. Send a copy of the lesson when confirming the date and location of the class.
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Web Resources

- http://easybib.com/

National standards

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Students develop positive attitudes toward technology uses that support lifelong learning, collaboration, personal pursuits, and productivity.

Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures.
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Day 1

Think, Pair, Share (5-7 minutes)

1

Have each student draft a short definition for intellectual property and plagiarism. Then have each student turn to a person nearby and share their ideas. The pairs should develop combined definitions based on their thinking.

Write the three concepts across the board and record student ideas. This should be a review of the words in Lesson 1.

2

Ask students to turn to the student nearby and discuss the connection between these two concepts.

Intellectual property—Refers to creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, confidential information, and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce. Intellectual property includes patents, trademarks, trade secrets, and copyrights.

Plagiarism—Copying of another person’s idea/work and claiming it as your original work.

Invite students to raise and discuss the issues that connect these two concepts. Possible ideas for discussion could include:

- Reviewing the definition of intellectual property it seems like most information is protected by copyright, including information on the internet.
- You can misuse copyrighted material pretty easily.
- Learning how to correctly cite/credit materials so that you can use ideas to support your original thoughts in a paper/research project is important.
- The internet is packed with copyrighted materials.
- Plagiarism can be a mistake—not dealing with citations correctly or it can be deliberate.
- When you hand in an assignment with your name on it—is it supposed to be your work?

Questions to discuss:

- The definition of plagiarism seems clear but what are the boundaries between plagiarism and citation?
- Can I have someone proofread my papers?
- Brainstorm a list of ideas/guidelines that students feel would help with the problem of understanding plagiarism? (might be handy to develop a list of do’s and don’ts regarding plagiarism) (You might want to keep this list so students can add/change some of their ideas as they learn more information)
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3

The following strategy is designed to involve students in thinking and discussing plagiarism in a school setting.

Pass out copies of Handout 1: “No student or staff member shall commit plagiarism in the Jacksonfield Schools.” Read the story aloud as the class follows along.

Ask the following questions:
• What does this rule say?
• Why did the school board pass this rule? What is it designed to do?
• What is the intent of this rule? What does the school board want to accomplish with this rule?
• Will everyone understand this rule? Is it clear to all?

4

Place the signs “Should Be Allowed” and “Should Not Be Allowed” on opposite sides of the room.

Inform the students that they are going to have an opportunity to interpret the school rule. You will probably want to post and discuss the Take a Stand Rules.

<table>
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<th>Take a Stand—Rules</th>
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<td>1. You will be asked to stand under a sign and to explain why you have chosen to stand there.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Wait for your turn. Do not interrupt. Raise your hand if you want to speak.</td>
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<td>3. Only one person may talk at a time.</td>
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<td>5. You may move at any time. Be prepared to give your reasons for moving.</td>
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<td>6. There is no single right answer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Listen carefully to what others say. When asked, be able to tell other reasons or ideas you like best.</td>
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If you feel the situation is allowed, stand on the side of the room with the “Should Be Allowed” sign. If you feel the situation would violate the rule, you should stand on the side of room with the “Should Not Be Allowed” sign.

Students should form a continuum between the two signs based on their opinion. Explain that your position on the continuum at either end or in the middle or part way along determines your position on the issue. Each student should be prepared to explain why they are standing in the position that they have chosen.
Look over the scenarios and choose several for class discussion. You will probably not have time to do all fifteen.

5

Read a scenario and invite 5-6 students to stand on the continuum based on whether or not the activity described should be allowed under the school rule.

Lead a discussion on the differences in the decisions and why the students think these differences occur. Let the students that differ give some of their most compelling arguments for their decision and see if other students can respond.

• Does the rule need to be rewritten? What, if anything, needs to be changed?
• What is an appropriate penalty for violating this rule?
• Does the intent/motivation of the person make a difference?
• Should the penalty be written into the rule?
• How does the rule affect your everyday life?

6

Handout the copies of the real school rule on plagiarism for your school district. Students have probably seen this rule in the school rules handbook that they receive at the beginning of each school year. Does the school rule seem clear? How does the school handle enforcement of the rule? Why is this important?

Have the resource person comment on the school rule. Be sure to point out to students how decisions like this one are made in their community.

Summary/Debrief

1

For discussion:

• Is the school rule clear?
• Does the rule need to be explained and discussed? What needs to be changed?
• What is an appropriate penalty for violating this rule?
• Should the penalty be written into the rule?
• How does the rule affect your everyday life?
• What are some dos and don’ts regarding plagiarism that we could use as a guide? (Note: This question was asked in the beginning of the lesson and now would be a good time to revisit the brainstormed list and see if students want to make any additions/changes.)
Day 2

Review and Preview

Ask students to review the definitions of intellectual property and plagiarism.

Ask students: “Why are we looking at the problems of plagiarism in a discussion about intellectual property?”

Two major goals of intellectual property law include:
- to protect the rights of inventors and creators
- to encourage the development of more creative inventions and works for the benefit of the public.

Mock School Board Hearing

1

Give each student a copy of Handout 2: Cheating in School – Should There Be a Rule? Have students read the handout and be sure to check for understanding. This also could be read aloud and followed by a short discussion.

2

Explain the mock school board hearing activity to students. Tell them about the following roles:

School Board Members: Give each student a copy of Handout 3: Preparation for School Board Members. School Board members will be selected and they will conduct the hearing. They will call on the presenters and make a decision about the issue being raised. One board member is to be elected by the group as committee chairperson. One person will be the recorder and another person will keep track of time. The recorder must keep a record of the proceedings and of any proposed recommendations.

Interest Groups: Give each student a copy of Handout 4: Preparation for Interest Groups. These will be groups of 3-5 students. Each group will present their position to the school board on the topic. Many different points of view should be represented, as many perspectives as are real in the community. Each group will choose a presenter for their presentation to the School Board.

3

Organize students into small groups. Move the groups to specific areas of the room. Discuss the tasks that are outlined on the handouts. Tell students how much time the groups will have 12 minutes. Then identify each group and give them the appropriate handouts.

After the groups have prepared for 12 minutes ask the school board to conduct the hearing.

1. Chairperson convenes hearing. Chairperson outlines the purpose of the hearing.
2. Chairperson calls presenters to present their issues, opinions, point of view about the issue.
3. Board members ask the presenters questions about their presentations.
4. Once the presenters have been heard, the school board should review the testimony, discuss the problem, and make recommendations on what their next step(s) will be. (3 minutes)

Congratulate the students on the role play.

Summary/Debrief
Discuss the role play:
• How did the students feel about the rule? What arguments made the most sense? What arguments did not make sense?
• Brainstorm student recommendations for the school rule.
• Brainstorm a list of ideas that you learned during this activity.

Follow-up Assignment
Draft an opinion paragraph describing what you think should be done about the suggested rule. Should it be changed? If so, what changes would you make? How would you involve the community in your thinking?
Jacksonfield is a lovely mid-sized community with three high schools. In the last year, people in Jacksonfield have become increasingly concerned about ethics and values. They have been discussing ethical challenges particularly those presented by an increasingly computerized world. The Jacksonfield school board has the power to develop rules for the school district. At a school board meeting last week they passed the following rule—“No plagiarism in the Jacksonfield Schools.”

1. Ethan researches his own authentic paper, yet copies another writer’s title word for word for the paper.
2. Lee was researching for a project and copied information directly from the internet and book resources without citing the information.
3. Aria is entering a photo contest and submits a copyrighted picture from a National Geographic magazine.
4. Marita rewords and reorganizes her essay after finding a previously written essay on the same topic before handing it in.
5. Ronald finds some very good internet sites with key information for a report he is doing. He paraphrases the information and integrates it into his paper.
6. Kyle uses one of the computers in the library to download six songs.
7. A student gives an oral presentation on a business plan for a Business class, and uses information from the business plan of an actual company’s website.
8. Marko adds statistics into his paper from a legitimate website. He does not cite the information.
9. Liz takes notes during a lecture by her teacher and uses the information to create an introduction to a paper she is writing.
10. One of the middle school principals submits a plan for improving reading in her school and it is discovered that parts of the plan have been copied from the plan of another school district.
11. Alex’s science fair project has developed a couple of problems. Alex has found solutions to those problems on the internet. He has adopted the changes recommended on the internet sites and now his project is working.
12. The Jacksonfield prom committee is fundraising for the prom. They are selling Hershey candy bars but they have changed the wrappers and call candy Tiger Bars for the school mascot.
13. During study hall, Sophia watches a recent movie on her mp3 player. A friend transferred the movie to her when her class was using the computers in the library.
14. A teacher hands out three photocopied chapters from a book for students to read for class next week.
15. The cheerleading squad used the tune from a popular song and developed some new Jacksonfield lyrics. They performed the song over the public address system during morning announcements.
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Handout 2 – Cheating in School: Should There Be a Rule?

Assume that you live in a town where the school system is without a rule about cheating and plagiarism. In your town there has been a recent problem with cheating in one of the high schools. National surveys show an estimated two-thirds of all high school students admit to "serious" academic cheating, and 90% say they cheat on homework. Today the local school board is holding a hearing on cheating and plagiarism.

The Board is considering the following school rule:

A grade of zero will be given in any instances of cheating and/or plagiarism.
Cheating/plagiarism will be considered grounds for disciplinary action. High School students who are found to be cheating/plagiarizing will not be promoted.

You also know the following background information:

- An estimated two-thirds of all high school students admit to “serious” academic cheating, according to a 2007 national survey from Rutgers Management Center in New Jersey.
- According to Donald McCabe, founding president of the Center for Academic Integrity at Clemson University, 64 percent of all students engage in one of three of the most serious cheating behaviors — copying from another student's work, using cheat notes or helping someone else cheat. (21st Century Cheating, Scholastic Parents, Scholastic.com, 8.8.08)
- High school students are less likely than younger test takers to report cheaters, because it would be “tattling” or “ratting out a friend.” (Center for Academic Integrity at Clemson University, 21st Century Cheating, Scholastic Parents, Scholastic.com, 8.8.08)
- According to the Educational Testing Service, many who have engaged in cheating cite the following as rationales: It’s a victimless crime; It's o.k. to many if you don't get caught; it has its own language (using shortcuts, whatever it takes, everybody does it, part of life); it makes up for unfair tests or lack of opportunity.

The following groups of concerned citizens are preparing to testify at the hearing:

- **Students**: They realize that cheating could be a problem but they want to make sure that the rule can be understood and that students will know what type of behavior can get you into trouble. Also they are wondering if all cheating should be treated the same.
- **Parents**: They believe that there is cheating in the schools and want to make sure that the system is fair for all students. They are concerned about the long term impact of identifying students who cheat.
- **School Administrators**: They believe that there is cheating and want to make sure that the message is clear to all that this will not be tolerated. They are worried about the reputation of the school district.
- **Teachers**: They feel that this is an educational opportunity to talk about the “big picture” ethics issues. They feel that the district should design an ethics campaign with cheating and plagiarism as key components.
Handout 3 – Preparation for School Board Members

You and your team have been assigned to play the part of school board members for the upcoming hearing about cheating and plagiarism.

Before the hearing, you and your team will have 12 minutes to prepare. Use this time to:

1. Discuss each of the interest groups that will testify before you and what you predict will be their main arguments. As you discuss each group, make a list of questions you might like to ask them.

Note: Unless this activity included extensive research time for the interest groups, please be considerate of the fact that your fellow students did not have much time to prepare, so go easy on them.

Write your questions for the interest groups below:

- Students:

- Parents:

- School administrators:

- Teachers:

2. Choose a chairperson who will run the meeting. This person will choose the order of the presenters and be in charge of the discussion at the end of the testimony period.

Choose a timekeeper who will help the chairperson and interest group representatives stay on time. Each group will have 2 minutes to present its information and 1-2 minutes to answer questions from your group (the school board.)
Handout 3 – Preparation for School Board Members (cont).

3. The chairperson calls the hearing to order, states the purpose of the hearing, and announces the order and time limits for each presentation.

   Each presenter is called to present a statement for two minutes, followed by questions from members of the school board.

   During the hearing, all members of your group are entitled to ask questions, but the chairperson must call on them first (and be mindful of the time.)

   After all the interest groups have presented their testimony, your group should take a vote about whether the rule should be adopted or perhaps it needs more work. Each member of your team should be ready to give
Handout 4 – Preparation for Interest Groups

You and your team have been assigned to play the part of ________________ for the upcoming school board hearing on cheating and plagiarism.

Before the hearing, you and your team will have 12 minutes to prepare. Use this time to:

1. Discuss the viewpoint of people in your interest group. Brainstorm a list of arguments your group might want to make as you testify before the school board. Then decide on the strongest three points your group wants to make.

2. Discuss the arguments you think other interest groups will make on this issue. Decide how you can respond to their criticisms or points of view.

3. Select one or two students from your group to present your “testimony” to the school board. These students should be prepared to make a 2 minute presentation and then to answer questions for a period of 1-2 minutes.

4. If time permits, your spokesperson(s) should practice their presentation.