

Turnitin.com: Alternative Approaches

Possible Alternatives

1. Instructor Attention: This isn't actually a substitute for Turnitin.com. Turnitin is merely a supplement to instructor attention. There is no substitute for the time and attention of a good teacher, and teachers who take the time to get to know their students' writing will be much more effective at catching and/or preventing plagiarism than any mechanical device.
2. Unique Assignments: The more specific an assignment, the less likely students are to plagiarize. The less an assignment resembles assignments from past semesters, the less likely students are to find friends to loan them old papers.
3. Google: Before Turnitin, there was the simple search. Instructors often Google phrases that sound suspicious to see if they find online matches.
4. Free Plagiarism Checkers: Sites such as www.plagiarismchecker.com/ and www.webmasterlabor.com/tools/checker/ allow for cross-checking essays with websites.
5. SafeAssign: Built into Blackboard, SafeAssign runs plagiarism checks similar to those done by Turnitin.

Issues

Complaints against Turnitin include everything from encouraging lazy teaching methods to establishing adversarial student/teacher relationships to violating the students' intellectual property rights. Turnitin has been sued on the issue of intellectual property, but they won the suit.

For more information, try these links:

<http://cyberdash.com/plagiarism-detection-software-issues-gvsu>

<http://cccip.org/pds>

Conclusions

1. Turnitin is a tool and only a tool. It can be used toward all of the negative purposes critics warn against. It can also be used as an effective teaching tool.
2. Advantages of Turnitin:
 - a. It searches a wider range of databases than similar products reviewed for this presentation.
 - b. Built into Blackboard, it is also easier for both students and instructors to use.
 - c. The Grademark feature is a time-saver for instructors and provides an effective means of giving feedback to online students.

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This handout is available to download at www.teacherlytech.net.

3. Pedagogical training is as important as technical training in adopting new classroom tools like Turnitin.

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