

Topic of Discussion: Ethical Issues/Role of Education

Globalization and Plagiarism: The More Some Things Change, The More Others Stay the Same.

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Technology with globalization has changed the way writing is taught and learned at the American University in Cairo. As a blessing, students now have access to multiple databases and online texts that a decade ago would have only been considered an educator's fantasy. The administration in the University's Writing Program has acknowledged this phenomenon and has created a new program that takes advantage of the latest technological resource.

Unfortunately, the curse of technology has transformed the way students plagiarize as well. University professors are now becoming familiar with internet paper mill sites that offer students a chance to download free essays and to cut and paste them into their own work under their own name. Also, these "cheater" sites offer students a chance to order custom essays with one-of-a-kind papers produced by emailing a scanned assignment page and a credit card number.

What AUC professors might not be aware of is the local paper writing underworld in Cairo, where "tutors" write essays for students for a minimal charge. Students have informally claimed that up to 50% of AUC's undergraduates use these "paper writers" at one time or another during their college career. The following research to be presented looks in-depth at both these issues.

First of all, an assignment was written and presented to English 101 students in Fall of 2002 dealing with internet paper mill sites. Students were asked to analyze one of the more famous cheater sites "Schoolsucks.com" and determine whether or not the site is a threat to the integrity of the American University in Cairo. In other words, would AUC undergraduates find this website a source for plagiarism? Students uncovered the audience and purpose of the site and came up with some surprising results that would be of interest to AUC faculty.

Secondly, a freshman 102 student in cooperation with Writing Program faculty established a secret relationship in fall of 2002 with a local "tutor" (paper writer) and had a custom paper (multiple drafts) written for the paltry sum of 100 Egyptian pounds. The technology of email and attachments has made the relationship all too easy. This presentation will reveal an analysis of the essay and offer a glimpse into Cairo's term paper writing network. In conclusion, what AUC's faculty can do in response to this alarming trend is considered.