How to Detect & Prevent Plagiarism in the Online Classroom

A Magna Online Seminar presented on May 17, 2011 by Errol Craig Sull. He has been teaching online courses for more than 15 years and has a national reputation in the subject, about which he has written and conducted workshops.

In the seminar, you’ll learn key methods for fighting online plagiarism, including:

- How to minimize plagiarism in the online secondary classroom
- Factors behind student plagiarism
- Two forms of online plagiarism
- What to do about plagiarism once it occurs

Editor’s note:
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Hello, and welcome to Magna's online seminar How to Detect & Prevent Plagiarism in the Online Classroom, co-sponsored by Magna Publications and Online Classroom. I'm Rob Kelly, editor of Online Classroom and today's moderator. Thanks for joining us.

Before we begin, I'd like to point out a few things about how this seminar works. If you have a question or comment for today's presenter, you can enter it in the chat Q&A box at the bottom of your screen, and the presenter will respond throughout the presentation, and you can send in your questions or comments at any time.

This seminar also includes handouts. If you haven't already printed them, click on the handouts box on the left of your screen, and then click on handouts, and a pdf will open. If you experience technical difficulties during the presentation, please call our customer service staff at 800-433-0499, extension 2.

And now I'm pleased to introduce Errol Craig Sull. Errol Craig Sull has taught online courses for more than ten years. Currently an online composition instructor, he has developed online teaching activities that are in use at more than 300 colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada.

He was a 2005 recipient of the Dell Teacher of Excellence Award and is a columnist for Online Classroom. Welcome, Errol Craig Sull.

Thank you very much. Welcome to everybody out there. We are going to be talking about a problem of which we are all too familiar, plagiarism. And in the 16 years that I've been teaching online, I have come across many, many, many instances of plagiarism. And the new wrinkle in this presentation is an area of plagiarism that is growing by leaps and bounds, and that is the for hire person online, person hired specifically to write essays.

And the reason I mention this is because I have a little bit of inside information I'm going to be sharing with you. I was approached by one of these companies, a couple years ago, and asked to join them in writing these essays. Well, I turned them down, of course, but not before I learned much info that I think can help you. I know it's helped me along the way, and I believe it can help you as well.

Now you'll notice on the agenda, the agenda mentions six strategies to detect both copy and paste essay for hire plagiarism. Well, I decided to add some, so I've got 11. And when it says seven steps you can take to prevent both copy and paste essay for hire plagiarism, I have ten. And then there are five suggestions for handling students who do and did plagiarize.
So, with this being said, I'm going to go on to a very interesting little statistic here, and the statistic is this. Nearly 80% of all students admit to having plagiarized at least once. That figure is expected to reach 90% by 2015. It's an amazing figure when you think about it. And, of course, the primary culprit in all this is the Internet. There is so much information available, as you all know, where students easily can take info there.

Now, what's causing this rise in plagiarism? It's not simply a case of students who want to get a better grade, but it's also the pressure of having so many responsibilities, time being short, much pressure put on people to get a degree so they can get promotions, and things of this sort.

What we need to remember in dealing with plagiarism is that as we approach our students in the classroom, the students much need to know how plagiarism can follow them into the workplace, and I want to show you this as we go through.

Now, as Rob mentioned, as we go along, if you have any questions, please let me know. Later on in this presentation, there's going to be an opportunity for all of us to contribute. There may be much that I know on this subject, but I am only one person. And while there is much that I have acquired on this subject, I don't know it all, and never will know it all. Of course, none of us will ever know it all. So we're going to have a chance to contribute later on in the presentation.

Now, as you know, there are three types of plagiarism that I mentioned here that we're going to deal with. Number one is going to be our ability thwart it before it begins; number two, detecting it; and number three, dealing with it when we find it. Let's find out how good you are at detecting plagiarism.

We're going to put up two pieces identical writing. I want you to tell me which one has plagiarized. You don't have to type anything in, just make a guess. We're going to put these up, and we're going to see two different kinds of plagiarism, two different, rather two items that I want you to determine for yourself which one is plagiarized, which one is not, and then we're going to go over the reasons why one is plagiarized and why one is not.

Take a few minutes to look at this, find out exactly what is wrong here, and then we'll go back and determine what we can do to prevent this in the beginning.

Now, while you're doing it, nobody of course likes someone to talk while someone is involved in an activity, but I don't want you to think that I've run away. So let me just mention this. We must keep in mind that when
we're talking about plagiarism, there are students who plagiarize by accident.

Many people forget about this in the online classroom. Many people assume that if a student has plagiarized, it is done purposefully, and that is often not the case. And we need to keep this in mind. How one deals with this, of course, is a determination only you can make.

Now, we've seen A, and after you've had a chance to look this over, we're then going to go on to the second example.

Rob Kelly: And let me just add that these examples are in the handout packet. If you're in a big room and you can't read it on the screen, you can look at your handouts.

Errol Craig Sull: That's even easier. That's even easier. Why is one a great example of plagiarism and the other is not? Which one is real and which one is not? We will find out. Take a couple of minutes, look it over, and then we're going to come up with the answer. And by the way, what you are looking at, whatever is plagiarized here, is a real piece of plagiarism. It ain't something I made up. And there's an interesting history behind it that I will tell you.

[making sounds]

Why is one piece plagiarized and the other is not, and which is, A or B? When we are finished looking it over, we'll then go over the answer and the reason, the reasons for the answer.

Okay. I think we probably have had the opportunity to look at both of these, ta-da. Okay. Now we're going to go on to which of the two was plagiarized. The answer is A, yippee.

Now, this is the most difficult kind of plagiarism to spot. It's the kind that I mentioned at the beginning, a paper created from scratch for the student. But here's what gives it away, and I'm sure most, if not all of you . . . these.

Now notice, if you take a look toward the bottom of A, you're going to see this phrase is repeated twice, which is the greatest. Now, I know you're going to say, this is very common in many students' papers, and it is. What you need to look at is that what I'm about to show you in this example of plagiarism, each item by itself does not say, hey, this was plagiarized. Together, they become very suspicious.
And this was a paper that was created by an essay for hire, created from scratch. So these are the things you need to look at. Writers for hire tend to use the same phrases to save time. In fact, many of these writers for hire actually have a list of phrases, and they'll simply use the phrases, they'll copy and paste them from a list they have on their computer. So be on the lookout for that.

Number two, Auerbach, Jackson, and Riley, they were given as a citation, but they're actually NBA coaches, National Basketball Association coaches. It says here that the speaker is breaking up periodically. Okay, I don't know why that is. Hopefully that will be corrected. I apologize for that.

Is it still breaking up or is it coming across clear now? Let's see what happens. I want to make sure that everybody can hear me okay. Let's see. Clear on our end, okay, good, good, good.

Notice the point that I make here after Auerbach, Jackson, and Riley. Thank you. Great. Many online writers for hire gamble that few educators will check the references, and 95% of the time they are right. If you think about it, when you say is there any way you can point to the source, to the source of what? Somebody typed in, is there any way you can point to the source.

Okay, I'm going to get a little bit more info in a moment. The source. Documents you show. The documents I show, one of them is from an essay of awhile ago that I'm not going to use the student's name, certainly, but it was submitted by a student, and it was taken from an online writing for hire. If that's what you're talking about. If that's what you're talking about. Hopefully that's what you meant. Documents, okay, fine.

Now, next, remember this. Many of us who write, and many of us who teach writing, or any course, it makes no difference what the course is, by the time we get down to a student's references, often don't take the time to check the references. Yet if you check the references, very often that can be a giveaway as to whether or not this is something that the student created or it was created by somebody else.

What else gives it away? Obviously, 2018 is put down as a citation date, and that's correct, that's incorrect. This is 2011. Online writers for hire often toss in poor grammar, punctuation, typos, etc. to give the impression of an imperfect paper. Same problem in B, but fewer red flags, so likely, more likely a student error.

So be on the watch out for this as well. It's simply is something we have to deal with, it's something nobody wants to deal with. People would rather
have their teeth pulled out without any anesthetic than having to deal with plagiarism, but it's a fact of life.

And lifted directly from Google, employment is expected to grow more slowly in hospitals, healthcare's largest industry, than in most other healthcare industries. Google is a search engine of choice for online writers for hire, 98% of the time. Fact.

When I was asked to join this group, there was a tremendous amount of info I get, garnered from them, this is one, and it's been shown again and again and again in other articles. It's easy, it's quick, and these writers immediately use Google. So a good little search in Google will often get the information that these writers used.

Now notice, again, there are two types of plagiarism. There is that which is copied from a pre-existing work, directly or indirectly, without giving credit, and there's that created by a writing for hire service from scratch, a growing market and more difficult to detect than the first.

Okay, what can we do? The more we can prevent it, the less we need to detect plagiarism. So what I want to do is take a look and present you with some really cool and effective ways to keep plagiarism in check. Now many of these I'm sure you already do, but a reminder is always good.

And there may be some new wrinkles in here of which you were not aware. I just want to make certain that, up front, we give the students as much information as possible so they in fact can be aware of the consequences of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

So how to prevent plagiarism. Ben Franklin once remarked that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And Erasmus, a 15th Century Dutch essayist and theologian, once stated a prevention is better than cure. They possibly could have known about plagiarism.

So, number one, let's get the students attention. Let them know you're going to actively be detecting plagiarism. Inform of the consequences. And today's students see so much in plagiarism as blah, blah, blah, blah. Put students on notice.

Now let me lump these all together and why these are important about getting students attention. We forget there is much that we read in the papers. There is much that is posted in college courses online about how to prevent plagiarism, how to deal with it, APA sources, MLA sources, and other things like this. But until we make an active notice, say, hey, let's look at this, students often will gloss over it. They'll forget about it.
And so we need to let them know that we're going to be actively involved in this. It's like a little thing saying, uh-oh, uh-oh, somebody is going to be watching out for this, and not just a case of there's something there that, eh, it exists and maybe yes, maybe no.

Informing them of the consequences. Now each school, of course, has its own consequences of plagiarism. Each instructor has his or her own consequences for plagiarism. Whatever these are, make certain the students know about them.

And the last point, because the students do see so much and hear so much about it, when they hear it from us, we're taking something that basically is two dimensional and making it three dimensional. We're making it come alive, and that's what we want. We want them to know that we, in fact, are aware of plagiarism and we're not going to tolerate it.

Number two. Now, number two, and you'll notice on your handout, of if you haven't printed it out yet, I have several websites that have a thorough listing of well-known personalities who have plagiarized. Here's a partial list. Helen Keller, Stephen Ambrose, the author, historian, Martin Luther King, James Cameron, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Michael Bolton, Ann Brown, Michael Jackson. It continues, George Harrison, Jason Blair.

Jason Blair, you may remember, was a New York Times reporter who really first brought plagiarism front and center several years ago when he was exposed for having written many articles that turned out to be plagiarized.

We have T.S. Eliot the poet, Alex Haley the author, Osama bin Laden, former terrorist, Maria Carey, songwriter, and Madonna the singer. And the list goes on and on and on and on.

Why is it important to let students know about this? Because students need to know that no matter how high and mighty somebody might be, no matter how well known somebody might be, these people are, in fact, people, and they plagiarize just like students. So if these folks at that level can be caught, imagine how easy it is for students to get caught.

But by posting one or two of these websites or just these names, students, again, are made more aware of the consequences, because what happens, the lesson. Reputations get tarnished, careers ruined, monies lost as a result of plagiarism. And one or more of these has happened to each of these people that I just went over.

Number three, is it common knowledge or a citation. Now, in the handout, I have several websites that give great info on showing the difference
between common knowledge or citation. Students need to know this, because students often don't know what makes common knowledge.

We know, for example, that all folks breathe oxygen. Einstein was a genius. This is considered common knowledge. But then there are grey areas as well. The more students know about this, the more students will, A, probably err on the side of caution and want to over cite, which is fine. Better to over cite than to leave something uncited and have that student open for plagiarism.

But in my experience, there is little that is done in explaining common knowledge versus citation to students, and they really need to know the difference. Just pointing on information about plagiarism and giving students information on what makes APA, what makes MLA, etc., that's great, but they also need to know what is common knowledge versus citation. If they don't, they're going to fall into this mistake.

Four, teach how to correctly cite. Now that's one of those duhs. Of course. But let me tell you why this is posted. There are many schools where information on how to correctly cite, in whatever format, is listed in the course, it's just there. Students are suggested to go to it. It's in their texts. Students are told, go see your text, pages xxx to yyy.

But again, when it is simply there for students to go to, and we say to the students, go to it, again, it's that two-dimensional approach. However, if we take more of a proactive approach, post info as I mentioned, help students learn a skill they will need beyond the course.

Again, what's the ultimate purpose of our teaching? Certainly not to end with a grade for the students. It's so the students can learn whatever information, whatever subject we're teaching them, English, chemistry, criminal justice, economics, the list goes on, whatever, that they can use this information in what I call the real world of work.

And so for students to understand why citation in the workforce is important becomes important. It gives them an added look at why citation is important. Of course, it presents you as an instructor who cares his students get it right. Again, important. You want that engagement. You want that student rapport.

So the more they know that you're reaching out to them, by showing them what can be done with citation, why it's important, beyond the course, the better. And obviously this provides a necessary tool for the students.

So, again, merely throwing APA on and throwing a couple of pieces of information about citation/plagiarism won't be enough. The students need
to have you proactive in there, and they need to understand how it links into the real world, and then they become a bit more aware of how to correctly cite.

Require up-to-date research. This is a big one. Now paper mills, as I mentioned, they often use older sources. They, many online writers for hire, as I mentioned, use Google, and they don't pay attention to the dates of research. All they care about is that research is available. And requiring research no more than five years old puts up another hurdle for students. This way, students have to do a little bit more searching to make certain that what they're putting in there is current.

Now, obviously, we know that from any student, we don't want research that's quite old because new developments can occur, but also we want our students to understand the proper way to research. By giving them a few more obstacles that they have to go through, it makes it ever the more important for them to do their own research, because these, again, are things you're telling them, I'm watching for, I'm watching for, I'm looking out for. So require up-to-date research.

Number six, again important and often overlooked, show students how to use quotes. Now, as I mentioned here on the slide, many students don't know how to integrate quotes into a paragraph including proper citation. Many students believe if they put a quote down with just quotation marks, that's fine, and they can have it listed in their work cited page or their references page, and they've cited it.

But what did they forget? They forgot a citation. Technically, even though the quotes are there, somebody, I know professors who do this, can ding them and say, ah, you plagiarized, you plagiarized. And there are students who don't even put quotes in. Often, this is not taught. This is not taught. So it's important that students know how to use quotes, how to integrate them. Again, another item that tells the students, I'm watching for this. That means you need to do your own work. I'm watching for this.

Now, obviously, when students copy and paste, they'll put the quote right in there, oftentimes forgetting about the citation. The essay for hire folks, many times they will use old quotes. They'll have a listing of quotes, and they'll divide them up by sections and, based on the subject they are writing, they will use a quote.

So often, when you have a paper, for example, in your course that is written on the same subject, and you begin to see the same quote popping up and up and up, the same quote, this is a little red flag saying, this paper or at least part of it may have been done by a writer for hire. I've seen too many papers like this.
Okay, number seven, show students how to paraphrase. Probably of all the points that I have listed and will list, as I mentioned, there are 11, this is the one that is least talked about with students, and yet it's probably the one grey area.

Remember this, when we talk to students about citation, students simply have the information in there, and then they have to know how to do the citation. They don't have to change anything, except they need to put in the citation. When the students are doing quotes, the same thing.

Here, we actually have to show them how to change wording, and many folks don't know how to do that. Many folks kind of gloss over or just forget about paraphrasing. But students need to know what it is, how to do it, and how to cite it.

Someone from George Mason typed in, are there any slides coming on DE, and I don't know what DE means. So perhaps you could give me a little bit more explanation so I could answer your question, because I don't want to ignore anyone.

And be certain the students know what style citation require. For example, APA, MLA, CMS, etc.

Now, what I would like to do is, for those of you who have a pen, I want to give you a website. This is a website that has a thorough listing of what type of citations are required for what fields. Here is the website. I'll repeat it twice. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/585/02. I'll repeat that again. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/585/02.

Rob Kelly: . . . distance education, if you type it on the . . .

Errol Craig Sull: I'll be happy to. Why didn't I think of that. Here it is, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/585/02. Let me make sure that's right, and it is. Okay. That's it. This will give you a very thorough look of what kind of citations are required for what kind of subject. And there are many more citations that are up there.

Let me go on to number eight. I'm still trying to understand, are there any slides coming on distance education. Okay, I still don't understand exactly what's being asked here, on distance education.

Okay, show plagiarism checking software. Now, many schools use turnitin.com. Whether you use turnitin.com or others, when you post a screen shot of what you're using, often there is bright, there are bright colors that are used, and the bright colors are enough to tell the students, hey, this thing really works. I'm not going to plagiarize.
Remind students you'll be using the software if you do, and, if available, require students to submit the papers. There are some places where, some schools where every student paper is automatically submitted to a turnitin.com type of plagiarism checker before it even gets to the instructor online. So this is another thing. And many times students can just submit it on their own to see how much they plagiarize.

Move on. Number nine, require revisions. Again, these are all ways to prevent plagiarism up front. Any paper needs drafts and revisions before final submission. If copied, it's difficult to submit a draft. Additional drafts will cost a student more money and time if that student is an essay for hire person, and it becomes another obstacle.

So that's why the purpose of revisions. Again, it makes more work for us, perhaps, but if we really have a problem with plagiarism or want to prevent it, this is another obstacle, and it cuts down on the amount of plagiarism, especially with students who hire folks for hire, because it costs them more money.

Two more, two more items yet to go. Require a journal of writing process. If students know they will need to discuss their research, how they arrived at their topic and thesis statement, and problems they encountered, they will be less inclined to submit non-original work. Because now this means that the students have to go through the entire process that led to the paper they are submitting. And when students don't do their own work, the often have no idea as to what this is, what the writing process is all about.

Ah, are there any laws against writing for hire? Are there consequences to the writer? Well, you probably know that there are many, many websites that offer writers for hire. And the caveat to this, just about every organization that has a write for hire will say, we're simply taking your money, we're writing a paper, we don't know what the purpose is. Be like somebody going out and hiring somebody to ghost write a book. Nothing illegal about that.

Now the fact that a student that has taken this and submitted it for a grade, the writer for hire and the company can say, hey, I didn't know. So for someone doing that on the other end, no, there is no law, and they cover themselves on it. If there were a law, there would be very few if none of them. People have made movements about doing this. But right now, there are no consequences to the writer. The writer is covered.

And I can assure you that every one of these companies has a lawyer, and every one of these companies has gone over what their legal rights are, what they can and cannot do, and how they can do it legally.
Last one on this, vary the audience of major assignments. Require a different audience for each paper, require a specific vocabulary structural approach and research for each audience. This can't be found through papers on the Internet. It's more time consuming and expensive if the paper is bought from a essays for hire writer.

Now, obviously, you don't have to use all 11, but with that being said, some of these, if not all of these, will prevent barriers and also give students information on why they should not plagiarize and making it much more different for them to plagiarize.

Okay. We've gone through the first thing, how we prevent plagiarism. Now, how do we detect plagiarism? It's in the classroom. No matter what our efforts are going to be, it's going to be there. It's going to be there. No matter how many filters you put in a room to get rid of dust, dust is going to be there. 99.99% means there's still one tenth of one percent.

So let's take a look at some ways of detecting plagiarism. Now remember, a teacher has always been a mixture of Socrates, Helen Keller, Confucius, Horace Mann, Galileo, Booker T. Washington, and Ian Ran. But now teachers must add Sherlock Holmes, Indiana Jones, and Wyatt Earp to that mixture, because we must detect plagiarism. No matter how successful one might be in reducing instances of student plagiarism, students will plagiarize. There are several tried and true and new approaches to detecting this.

Now, I'm going to be putting up an item, another activity, and you're going to see two passages. I want you to determine which of the passages is plagiarized, and there are two questions I want you to answer based on the passage written by a student.

So we can have that up. Here we go. Take a look at these two. We're going to decide which one of these is plagiarized and which one is not. Which one could be called plagiarized, which one could be not. And once this, you've had a chance to look at this, I'm then going to ask two questions.

Actually, while you're doing this, I'm going to throw out the question. Why is one of these plagiarized, and what is it about it that should be added to make it not plagiarized? Very simple thing, a very simple thing, but it's left out all the time.

Okay, we've had a chance to look at that. Now, okay. The two questions. Again, if you think about it, there were two items that were posted. The second one, the second one had no in text citation. It had no in text citation. And let's see if the two questions are coming up. But I've already
asked the two questions. I've already asked the two questions, so let me move on here, okay.

No citation. And, whoop, there's no citation. Now, this is what I want you to do. Here's where we all get involved. Here's where we all get involved. I want as many people as possible, in the chat, I want you to jot down five methods for detecting plagiarism in student essays or assignments. Please submit them in the chat room. A master list that are different from mine I'll be distributing to each of you with any leftover questions. And this will be done, obviously, after the presentation is over, I'll be compiling a master list.

So I'd like you to take a few minutes, and I'd like you to start typing and putting in anything for detecting plagiarism, and this is before I tell you mine. Just throw them in there, throw them in there, as many as possible. Start typing. Jot down five methods for detecting plagiarism. Just throw them all in.

Now, while you're doing that, oh, they're coming, they're coming. Keep going. Keep going. This is great. Ah, keep going. I love it. Ah, keep going. Throw them in, throw them in. I don't care if there's everybody typing the same one, as long as we get them going. Yeah, changing font, wording different from previous assignments, Google search, Google search, Google search.

Turn it in, Google random sentences, word choices . . . change in writing style, moving the mouse over the text look for hyperlinks, yes, ESL mismatch. Great. Ah, I love them. Keep going, keep going. Different fonts, grammatically incorrect, orally explain what they learn, get writing samples, phrasing, properties of Word document, repeated text. Love it. Different styles of writing.

Now, while you're still typing those, I'll maybe mention this. Obviously, in the course of the time we have, I couldn't jot down every method for detecting plagiarism. What I'm going to be giving you are major ones that can help. And again, I'll be using these in combination with mine. So let me go on, while you're typing those on, keep on going until you run out.

Number one, a tell me about yourself essay. This provides an example of a writing style, grammar, punctuation, spelling, proofreading errors, and layout approach. You can ask about course and post-college goals. Can tell if a student does know or is winging it because writers for hire are want to wing it. This makes students think. It gives you a quick look at a student's writing before you even make an assignment. So this can give you something to compare the student's writing against.
Number two, discussion threads are shadow plagiarism checkers. I don't know if anybody here has used this, but if you use discussion in your courses, these are great plagiarism checkers. Notice the three points I make here. Number one, discussion threads ask for mostly spontaneous posting so students are less likely to pay others, but it does happen sometimes.

Two, go over suspective students discussion postings. They live forever, as we know, in the classroom. That's one of the beauties of online teaching versus face-to-face teaching. We have the students' words, and they stay there. Ah, they're still coming. Keep on typing. I love it. Nice trail of a student's true writing style.

Now, we pick up a bunch this way. And here's a suggestion. This is a really cool little trick to do. If there's a student in your class whom you suspect of plagiarism, and you do use discussion threads, go over and copy that student's threads, some of the student's threads anyway.

Just take the student's threads, put them on one piece of, one blank computer sheet, and compare that to the writing of the student. See what you can pick up. Often, you're going to pick up items that will tell you immediately if a student has written his or her own paper.

Note the student's suspect, the suspect student's post for frequency, for tone, for time, and sophistication. And as I mentioned, compare and contrast the posts for hints of a pseudo student. It does happen once in awhile.

Not often yet, but once in awhile, a student will actually hire a writer for hire to not only do a student's paper, but also will give that writer for hire the student's password and, in essence, ask that person to take the course for the student. So the more you get to know about what to look for, the more you know how to detect plagiarism.

Number three, now many of you typed this in, using Google and other search engines. It's a quick means of checking student's work, obviously. It doesn't take you very long at all, just copy and paste it right in there. And as many of you know, many turn up immediately.

Now, not only use Google, but Google Scholar as well. More students now are turning to Google Scholar because they believe that in Google Scholar they can found citation that works, that are a little bit more sophisticated and, therefore, will make their paper sound so much better. But many of them just list it right up, put it in, and, again, don't give proper citation. So not only check Google, but Google Scholar, because more and more students are using Google Scholar.
Third point, type one to two sentences then enter. Many use Internet content, either whole or in parts. And spot-check papers for Internet text buried in the content. Save the URL if you find copy text. That’s obvious. That’s obvious.

So I'm sure all of you are doing this now, but I simply want to list the major ones. I've seen so many others that have come up here. It's going to be a great master list that we have, I'll put together.

Next, note the change in voice, vocabulary, and approaches. Many are not sophisticated enough to integrate plagiarized portions into their own writing. Now, this is a sure giveaway, and often, if you've ever had a group assignment, and students are not really good at integrating the different voices in a group, you can immediately tell where one person has stopped and another person picked up.

The same thing happens when students copy and paste, the voices are different. This results in sudden obvious changes in vocabulary, sentence structure, voice and flow, a nearly certain sign a student inserted material that is not his or her own.

Ask reveal questions. In a live phone chat, ask questions such as, very interesting point you raised in your paper, or what made you decide on that topic. Or something like, you really had good writing in portions of your paper, but I'm curious why other parts read almost as if they were written by someone else. Could you explain this.

Now this, of course, is putting a student on the spot, means you have to call the student. But it's amazing, when you have a suspect student, how many of them will answer the question, very interesting point you raised in your paper, what made you decide on the topic, uh, um, because the student was not expecting that question. The student was not expecting that question.

Students who choose writers for hire will give that writer for hire a subject area, or even a topic, that was given by the instructor, the professor, and then say, okay, here is your money, you're on your own, do it. So the student has no idea why he or she chose a topic because it's left up to the writer for hire.

The other one has to do with the writing process and why other parts read almost as if they were written by someone else. Could you explain this. Now, if there's a logical explanation, that's fine. But more often than not, there isn't. What we're trying to do here is detect plagiarism, and you're asking this question not accusing the student of plagiarism. We don't want to do that. We want all our information all solid proof, all evidence.
So here you're saying, again, you're putting the student on the spot saying, ah, could you tell me exactly how do you explain this. I don't understand. It's like two people wrote the paper.

Number six, we continue with the questions. Your research was excellent. I found passage after passage that showed you used the Internet extensively, but you have no citations. Why? Now why do I like using the phone for this? Because if I type this to a student, a student has time to think about it. A student may even ask somebody else to type in the answer. But with the student on the phone, the student does not have time to think about the answer.

Now here is where you've gone the extra mile, you perhaps have not used something like Turn It In, so you don't have that kind of proof, but you have just kind of a gut feeling and you have other red flags, and now you're talking to the student. By asking the student, you're putting the student on the spot.

Last question. You aren't accusing the student of cheating, you ask focused questions. Begin with positive, narrow in on problem. Begin with the positive and narrow into the problem, ask follow-up questions. And it is rare when this does not work.

Ah, I'm sorry, there's a question. In an online course, do you call the student out private . . . thread? Oh, never, never in a thread, for two reasons. Number one, you don't want to embarrass the student, ever. If you were working, and you did something wrong, you wouldn't want your employer to call you out in front of other employees, even if you're dead wrong.

Number two, there can be legal ramifications. Always do this in a private e-mail to the student. And also remember FERPA. That is the federal law that tells us we cannot give a student grade in e-mail. So there are things we can do on the phone with students we can't do in e-mail. But please, do it privately. Don't ever do it in the thread so everybody else can read it.

Number six, have plagiarism software ready. I mentioned this earlier. Most effective in checking for material that is copied, not custom created by an essay writer. Many schools subscribe to fee-based software, make it available for students and/or faculty at no cost. Already mentioned that.

Number seven, customized essays often become stock essays. The initial custom paper is more difficult to detect as it's not the student's own work. Many end up as stock papers from essay mills that can be found on the Web. And check any student's work, ideally all essays, with plagiarism software. Again, here's where the essay for hire person can get tripped up.
Eight, save student e-mails. When students send e-mail, it is nearly always the real student's registered in your class that are writing. Save these to check the student's writing style, errors, and voice against any papers. And by the way, if you send the student any e-mails that deal with plagiarism, make sure you save your e-mail and the student's responses to cover your own rear end and for legal purposes.

Number nine, use the egos of custom essay for sale writers against them. Many writers for hire are frustrated writers. The style, the voice, the vocabulary, and the flow of the person hired is not a student. Sophistication stands out in stark contrast to real students' writings and discussion posts. It's another neat way to trick up the writer for hire.

And lastly, note repetition of the same errors. These are errors included, and I gave you an example earlier, they're included to give the impression of a not so perfect essay. Repeating errors can give the impression of being signature errors of the real student. If errors you pointed pop up again, the student may be purchasing an essay.

So for example, if you had pointed out a mistake to a student, and the student makes this same mistake, and it's an obvious mistake, it's a little red flag. It may mean the student just didn't pay attention. That's always a possibility. But it also could mean the student is plagiarizing, and you need to look for other red flags.

Now let me mention something before I go on to how to deal with plagiarism in the minutes remaining. Keep in mind, again, the student may be doing something accidentally. We always have to keep that in mind. We don't want to punish a student if a student in genuinely making an accident. We are here, of course, to help the student learn.

Now how to deal with plagiarism. I've only listed five items. In each university, there are going to be additional items that the school has, this is what has to be done. These are some general items on how to deal with plagiarism. I'm sure you're aware of them, but I want to point them out anyway.

Number one, know and use the plagiarism detection programs and/or protocol of your school. That's the umbrella over everything. Whatever your school offers, everything falls underneath it. Everything I mentioned in this presentation falls under the umbrella of what your school's protocol is. That's the number one way to deal with plagiarism.

Number two, e-mail the student asking about plagiarism in an upbeat, non-accusatory style and tone. And notice upbeat, non-accusatory style and
tone. And let me take you back for a moment to a slide here, when I was asking questions. This one.

You had really good writing in portions of your paper, but I'm curious why other parts read almost as if they were written by someone else. Could you explain this. This is what I mean by non-accusatory. So it's important that we note that.

Number three, if plagiarism is accidental and a first time, and I've stressed this a few times now, allow the student to redo the assignment. Learning is more important than punishment. Now, obviously, each person here, each person viewing this, has to make his or her own decision as to how you're going to interact with the student when the student is plagiarizing accidentally.

My approach is simple. I want that student to learn. I only want to punish when a student is so overboard with plagiarism that it warrants a punishment. But if I can help that student learn, and help that student understand how to cite properly and why plagiarism is wrong, I'm going to allow that student to redo the assignment. That is just moi. That is just moi, but that is a suggestion on how to deal with this form of plagiarism.

Number four, if plagiarism is purposeful or accidental, but not the first time, sanctions are in order based on your policy. Now, obviously, if it's accidental, you're still going to be talking to the student about it. You're still going to be giving the student information, reminding the student where to find info in the course.

But if it happens more than once, it's, the second time, first time it's shame on me, first time it's shame on you, second time it's shame, shame on me then it's shame on you. And so we're giving a student one chance, something didn't work out, now sanctions are in order.

And last item that I have here is remind the student of long-range effects of plagiarism and use specific examples. Now when I say use specific examples, there are so many examples to be found, and one thing I would like you to do, that really works well, and this is a way to get your students involved. Make a discussion thread, or simply make it as a small, little writing assignment, no matter what the subject is you're teaching.

Ask the students to give them examples of how plagiarism in the workplace could be harmful to someone. Students often have not thought about it. They have not thought about plagiarism in the workplace. Many students have experience plagiarism in the classroom, if not in your classroom, another classroom. If not in college, in high school, or they've
heard of somebody. But when you talk about plagiarism in the workplace, you don't hear it as often.

Now I showed you that long list I had. So this is a great exercise. This is really a good exercise.

Now we have a few minutes left, and, remember, three ways to kill plagiarism dead, post plagiarism prevention tools, know how to detect plagiarism, take a proactive yet teachable moment approach in dealing with plagiarism. If you have any questions, I'm happy to help you out. Here is my e-mail address. Drop me an e-mail. My involvement with you doesn't simply end because we're ending in a few minutes. I am more than happy to help you out. I've got much, much more information that I can offer you.

If you have a situation that comes up, and you don't really know what to do or you want to run it by me, drop me an e-mail. You have any questions now, please type them in. And if you notice, there's a survey here. Let's see, okay. I thought somebody had typed in a question, but somebody did not. I already answered that.

Rob Kelly: . . . question for you.

Errol Craig Sull: Whoops, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Rob Kelly: I have a quick question for you. You mentioned using the thread discussion as a gauge of students writing. I think often students view that as a less formal type of writing. So given that, what sort of guidelines do you give students, do you have certain rules that you have in the way they post to a threaded discussion?

Errol Craig Sull: No. You don't want to give the students guidance, of course, unless that's something, a requirement of you or of your school. But what you can determine is by looking at certain phrases that the students use again and again, we become comfortable with the way we write. We tend to use certain phrases, even if we're writing in a more formal style.

The students who plagiarize are going to be students whose writing is a little bit more on the lazy side. So you're going to see a stark contrast in their phraseology, in their spelling, in the way they put sentence structure together. Even though it's not as formal, you will note a difference.

I hope I answered the question, Rob.

Rob Kelly: Yeah. Okay. I don't see any other questions coming in. Any final thoughts, Errol, before we close here?
Errol Craig Sull: Yeah, yeah. Let me just mention this. What I've talked about is something, for the most part, is obvious to many folks, if not all folks, who teach online. Many of the suggestions I offer are suggestions of which you're already aware. However, I've also offered new information based on this new and up and coming writers for hire. And I hope that together you understand that all of these can cut down on plagiarism up front before the student even does plagiarize.

And when a student does plagiarize, I hope I've given you more info to help you detect it. We want to kind of eradicate it. And to use an old commercial, we want to kill it dead. We want to kill it dead.

So thank you very much for being here. I hope I hear from each of you. And as I mentioned, I'll be more than happy to help you out with your questions. Thanks again for being here. Thanks again for attending.

Rob Kelly: Thank you, Errol, and thank you for attending today's seminar. Your campus, as Errol has mentioned, has received an e-mail evaluation form from us. Please fill it out and tell us what you think of today's program and what programs you'd like to see in the future. Complete information about our upcoming seminars and Online Classroom is available at www.magnapubs.com. Thanks again for joining us, and have a great day.