Prevent Cheating in Distance Education

Prevention is best. Thus, planning is vital.

Here are some suggestions:

Require students to participate in discussion groups. Keep the log and review writing styles of students.

Telephone students randomly during the semester and have the student answer an unannounced oral exam or question them about the progress of their project.

Assign work due frequently throughout the semester.

Limit the time to take an online test. With limited time available, there is less opportunity for the student to look up information, cal

Require students to take proctored exams.

Ask students to provide a writing sample at the beginning of the semester.

Give periodic quizzes during online chat sessions.

Require students to use a camera on their computer desktop for discussions and exams.

Develop a database of test questions and give different questions to different students.

Consider alternatives to tests or use multiple methods of measuring performance, mastery, and skill. For example:

- o Give the students group projects to do, then have the students grade themselves, others on their team, and other projects. Projects could include:

    ess

    Have the students provide a presentation as either a web site or PowerPoint presentation and post them to the web.

    Case studies

    Portfolios: samples of a variety of materials

    Games

    Puzzles

    Research projects

    Taking tests by teams instead of individually

    Peer collaboration; peer assessment

- o Use short answer forms built into case studies and readings. If the testing standard is multiple choice, T/F, short answer, or essay tests, try the following:

    When developing an online test, post it and make it available for only a few days.

    Limit the time on the test

    Test more frequently to establish a "track record"

    Limit the number of retries/or no retries at all, depending on the objective of the test

- Allow the students to choose a topic for a project or essay that relates to the student's interest and experience. Have the topic or production relevant to the student's real world work and life experiences.

- Use self-help quizzes that are interactive and give immediate feedback. Hints may be provided based on the goals of the course. In addition, give immediate scoring feedback and allow the students to track their progress during the course.

- Peer Assessment: Rubrics are a great way for students to assess themselves as well as their peers. Let students use the grading rubric as they develop their assignment. Have class peers use the rubric to grade their fellow classmates. Use a system where every student has a code name and the other students do not know which of their peers is grading their project. Have several anonymous students grade the same project using the rubric.

- Using the grading rubric, or other assessment tool, develop a peer review process. There are also sites available that will help you develop this kind of interactivity. Use different media types, video, or animation to work with all learning styles.

- Use the discussion forums to facilitate, monitor, and track individual participation and collaboration on group projects. Observe writing styles and sample the messages to see the quality of their work and their insight to the topic.

- Let students post personal information, develop their own web page, or other method to introduce themselves to the other students in the class.

- At the beginning of the course get a description of their job and how the subject relates to that job. Require specific details. On the final, have the students write a plan for how they will apply what they learned in the course.

- Use videoconferencing facilities to observe learners as they take the test.

- Develop discussion questions and have the students discuss the issues. Group the students (or allow the students to develop their own groups). Have one student moderate each week of the course.

- Limit online classes to a maximum of 20 to 30 students or break up large classes into smaller groups for purposes of forum discussions and collaborative project groups.

- Provide prompt feedback to online or emailed inquiries. **Very Important **

- If your school uses a course management system like Blackboard, WebCT, or eCollege, etc., assessment and testing is built into the software.

- Some students may be more motivated to do an assignment if they can learn more than the content alone; for example, how to use PowerPoint, desktop publishing, HTML editors, etc.

- Develop a project that could be useful to their job and earn them recognition at work, or create a resume portfolio.

- Interaction and communication lines need to be open and continuous. Instructors should address student concerns as soon as possible. If there is regular conversation going on, it is less likely that the student will cheat. In addition, the instructor will be able to see inconsistencies in behavior. There will be a track record available to review in case the instructor suspects plagiarism.

- Internet courseware packages have logs of times and dates of students logging onto the system. If a student does not log on frequently, the instructor can discuss this with the student and find out why. A couple of features that are included in the package are a proctor ID/password system for testing situations and random question banks for tests.

- Simulations or Games: Role-playing complex situations, such as a case study, keeps students anonymous and gives each student the needed information. Provide a background to all of the students. Have real life participants add information to the situation so students can make decisions based on the content of the course.

Prevention Policies

Review policies related to Academic Integrity and incorporate that into your syllabus.

Teach students about plagiarism. Don't assume that they understand the concept of intellectual property and documentation of material. Explain that there are different levels of copying someone else's work, but it's still cheating. Show the students examples of plagiarism.

Explain proper citation and "fair use" guidelines. Differentiate between collaborative work and academic dishonesty. Give students clear expectations for a collaborative project.

Let students know that you know about the term paper mill sites. Take the students to one of the sites. Get a paper and analyze it.

Develop a contract and have the students sign it.

Advise students that you plan to use a plagiarism detection service.

Do not allow last minute change of topic.

Discuss the consequences of plagiarizing.

Change topics from year to year.

Teach students to critically evaluate information that they find on the internet.

Restructure the Assignments

Make assignments clear with specific expectations. Do you allow collaboration or not? What kind of research to do you require?

Give a list of specific topics or unique and unusual topics such as current events on a specific question and/or specific goals of the class. Try to ensure that the topics are of interest to the

students. Make the assignment unique to the student or year (for example family history, current events, personal response to an event).

Assign paper length < = 6 pages. Most paper mills have papers > = 6 pages long.

Provide a bibliography for the students so that they know where to begin the research. Require an annotated bibliography early in the writing process. Compare final bibliography with earlier list.

Outline clearly the research and writing process. Specific guidelines will help the student complete the assignment and prevent plagiarism.

Request photocopies of sources used to write the paper. Have students attach their personal research notes.

Require specific components in the paper. For example, "The paper must make use of two Internet sources, two printed book sources, two printed journal sources, one personal interview, and one personally conducted survey." Require the use of one or more specific articles or books you name or provide. Have the student incorporate information you provide.

Require an abstract of the paper. The student will have a hard time writing a synopsis of a paper that came from a paper mill.

Require a personal interview with an expert or authority.

Focus on the "process" of the writing. Have the students write a thesis statement, bibliography, outline and notes and hand these in during the semester. Link writing assignments to specific learning goals for the course and explain the relationship to students.

Set a series of due dates throughout the term for various steps of the term paper process, such as the rough draft-then keep the draft. Have the students provide a continuing context for student work, including shorter papers, research proposals, and oral reports. Establish deadlines throughout the semester for submitting topics, working bibliographies, outlines, and rough drafts.

Require references to be up-to-date. Require one or more references written within the last year.

On the day you collect the papers, have the students write an in-class essay about what they learned from the assignment. What did they have trouble with? Require oral reports of student papers. Ask students questions about their research and writing process after the paper is completed.

Remember due process and student confidentiality if you need to make a plagiarism charge. Follow the policies and procedures of the school.

What do you need to look for in a paper?

Very obvious signs of plagiarism:

> Is the formatting different from what you require? MLA or APA (or others) mixed styles of citation. Mixing quotes such as straight quotes and curly quotes.
> Labels left at the end of papers ("Thank you for using this web site"), title pages stapled to web printouts (with dates and URL in the corners), title pages claiming the paper is by

Jenny Jones when subsequent pages say "Smith, page 2," and papers with whiteout over the previous author's na