

**IN YOUR OWN WORDS: IDEOLOGICAL DILEMMAS  
IN ENGLISH TEACHERS' TALK ABOUT PLAGIARISM**

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(English and Education)  
in The University of Michigan  
2014

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## **DEDICATION**

To Jennifer, my wife and best friend, who inspires me,  
and  
To Phoebe and Elizabeth, who show me what is possible.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*“It is also important, if you've had a conversation with a peer or a professor who has helped you substantially in establishing your ideas on a given text, that you cite that conversation at the appropriate point in your essay. (e.g. ‘My ideas about Macbeth derive in part from a conversation with Professor Jones.’ The citation can be more specific than this, depending on the level of detailed assistance you received.)”*

*—University of Michigan English Department Memo on Plagiarism*

My ideas about plagiarism, my ways of thinking about language and teaching, my attitudes about researching and knowing, and my understanding of what it means to be a scholar derive in part from many conversations with Anne Gere, Lesley Rex, Anne Curzan, and Barry Fishman.

My ideas about what a great teacher is derive in part from my experience with John Baynes, Peter Marchant, and Gary Wiener.

My ideas about why this project is important come from my students in my classes who taught me about the true objects of learning.

My ideas about how to write, how to shape rough ideas into polished prose, how to persevere when feeling overwhelmed, and how to believe in the work I am doing derive in part from Staci Shultz, Hannah Dickinson, Stephanie Moody, Tim Green, Danielle Lillge, Zak Lancaster, Moisés Perales Escudero and the other members of the Joint Program of English and Education.

My ideas about graduate school and friendship, of collaboration, of publishing, and of thinking grand thoughts derive in part from late-night conversations about writing and debates about baseball with Christopher Gerben.

My ideas about the importance of family derive in part from my parents John and Carol Engel, and my siblings Pete, Chris, and Tracey Engel.

And lastly, and most importantly, the ideas that I could do this at all derive in large measure from Jennifer Griggs and Phoebe and Elizabeth Engel.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I have told the following story before. I have used my first encounter with plagiarism at the University of Michigan as a cautionary tale, as an illustrative example, as a humorous story, and as an introduction to academic work. Sometimes I have used the same words in the same order; sometimes I just offer my readers the highlights. It is telling that I recycle this story to talk about plagiarism. Stories are our means of making meaning in the world.<sup>1</sup> Storytellers use the dilemmas within the narratives to create tension and to develop character. Audiences focus on the choices of the protagonist to explore their own thoughts and feelings about difficult issues. We need the tension in order to invest ourselves in the telling and to imagine ourselves in the similar situation.

Sometimes listeners will look puzzled and wonder why I had a moment of hesitation in the middle of my story. For some, my course of action as the instructor seems clear. My student plagiarized; I should penalize him. But I didn't feel that it was that easy. Even when I retell the story some years later, I still attempt to find the right words to capture that place between what I knew and what I did, between what I thought and what seemed right. This project studies those types of moments of hesitation when teachers talk about plagiarism. While many people can look from outside the classroom and assume that plagiarism is a problem that is easily identified (plagiarism detection software) and policed (zero-tolerance), the teachers that I talked to and my

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<sup>1</sup> This project focuses, in part, on the narratives teachers tell about their experiences with plagiarism. *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* defines narrative as "a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change" (Herman, Jahn, & Ryan, 2005, p. ix). The literature on narrative is fraught territory filled with broad claims such as Barthes's (1977) statement that "narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself" and Hayden White's (1980) declaration that "[t]o raise the question of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture, and, possibly, even on the nature of humanity itself." Pekka (2006) warns us that "life may not be shaped as a narrative, after all. Or it is not only a narrative. It also involves indeterminacy and oscillation between boring routine, repetition, and singularities, some of them pathetic and even heart-breaking." And so, I work to explore the ways in which teachers tell stories about the remarkable and also the ways in which teachers talk about the routine and possible.

own experience in the classroom highlight that teachers' challenges with plagiarism in the classroom are much more complex and dilemmatic. This project aims to give a voice to those challenges. Rather than pointing out these dilemmas as deficiencies or instances that reveal a lack of conviction within the teachers, the goal of this research is to acknowledge and name these dilemmas so that educators have a way of talking about them in order to better navigate the challenges.

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It was the last student conference of a long week, and I had just a few minutes between the end of the scheduled time and when I had to catch the bus. In my small windowless office Brent<sup>2</sup> and I adjusted our chairs so that we could both see the paper at the same time. I was tired. Brent didn't seem too excited about being stuck talking about his essay with his English 125 instructor for a thirty-minute required conference. We were going over his draft of a short essay in which he was to reflect on something he had learned in another course through two different voices: the personal and the impersonal. We were using Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff's (2000) textbook, *Community of Writers*, and the assignment was focused on exploring two different styles of writing about the student's experience in order to develop the writer's individual voice.

The piece seemed to wander a bit, so I started out by asking him about what genre he thought the piece was, and where it might "live" outside of the assignment. He replied that it might be a "Wikipedia-type article." I remember thinking to myself that it wasn't even good enough for a Wikipedia article, but I told him that we should look at an actual model, so as to see what elements Wikipedia had (evidence, a sense of organization, and a direction) that his paper lacked.

I wanted to give him specific examples of ways to fix the piece and still make it to my bus in time. As I logged onto my computer and turned the monitor toward him, he quickly mentioned that it might be more like one of the articles at the back of *Time*. I pulled up Wikipedia and typed in "digital divide," the topic of the lecture from one of his classes. As I glanced at the article, I noticed the first sentence of his essay was very similar to the first sentence of the article. I started to tell Brent that we needed to talk about how to cite sources when I saw the second and third sentences. I had stumbled across an example of plagiarism while in the presence of the plagiarist (see *Figure 1*).

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<sup>2</sup> All the names of participants and places that follow are pseudonyms.

I could hear myself saying, “This is bad. This is really bad.” I wanted to hear an apology or hear some sense of contrition in his explanation. Instead, I heard excuses. Many excuses: he wasn’t taught how to cite, he didn’t have a handbook, he was taught how only to cite literature, he thought it was common knowledge. I walked down the hall and made a photocopy for myself and sent him off to rewrite, or perhaps to re-right, his wrongs.

Brent’s Essay	Wikipedia
<p>The term digital divide refers to the gap between those with regular, effective access to digital and information technology, and those without access. It includes both physical access to technology hardware and, more broadly, skills and resources which allow for its use. Groups often discussed in the context of a digital divide include socioeconomic (rich/poor), racial (white/minority), or geographical (urban/rural). The term global digital divide refers to differences in technology access between these different groups.</p>	<p>The term digital divide refers to the gap between those people with effective access to digital and information technology, and those without access to it. It includes the imbalances in physical access to technology, as well as the imbalances in resources and skills needed to effectively participate as a digital citizen. In others worlds [sic], it’s the unequal access by some members of the society to information and communications technology, and the unequal acquisition of related skills. Groups often discussed in the context of a digital divide include socioeconomic (rich/poor), racial (white/minority), or geographical (urban/rural). The term global digital divide refers to differences in technology access between countries. (n.p.)</p>

*Figure 1. Comparison between Brent’s Essay and the Wikipedia Entry on Digital Divide*

(I’ve always assumed that Brent copied his essay from Wikipedia. The actual original source of the text, however, is more difficult to track down. For example, using the first fourteen words of Brent’s essay as a query in Google reveals over 2,500 hits, some of which cited Wikipedia and others use the text without any indication of source. The fourteen words that start Brent’s essay are first found in the April 17, 2007 edit by a user named “Dialectric.” Since then the entry has over 1,000 edits in its history. So while I assume that Brent copied the text from some online source, it is also possible that he never knew that the text was found on Wikipedia. He could have appropriated the text from another site that either preceded Wikipedia or took from Wikipedia.)

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I'm sure it wasn't the greatest moment in my career as a teacher. I could have grabbed the paper and marched down to the Director's office and made a formal complaint. But that didn't feel right. Here was a teachable moment if there ever was one, and the stakes of the assignment were low: it was a draft of an exercise that wasn't going to be graded. Yet, I was stuck on the dishonesty of the student's work. I know it wasn't the highlight of the Brent's experience in English 125. He avoided me after class for several weeks and seemed to be even quieter in class.

What this encounter did for me, however, was to indicate how slippery a grasp I had on the concept of plagiarism. I knew the University of Michigan English Department memo on plagiarism (Whittier-Ferguson, n.d.), which spelled out seven variations of plagiarism and a range of penalties for violating the policy. I had read Rebecca Moore Howard's (1999) insightful exploration of the discourse of criminalization of patchwriting and the problems of the conflation of disparate literacy practices under the umbrella term *plagiarism*. I had a long history of teaching at the high school level filled with amusing stories of student foibles and my clever detective work to uncover their transgressions. Yet, sitting there in that windowless room with the offending paper on my desk, I was in a bind: As a first year writing instructor, I felt I was called to be on the front line of defending the university from the invading hordes of plagiarists. At the same time, I wanted to help Brent be successful in his academic career at the university. Or, perhaps more accurately, I was working with an institutional definition of plagiarism that didn't always reflect what I experienced in the classroom. I had to navigate what composition scholar Peter Elbow (1983) calls the dual roles of the writing teacher: the "obligation to students" as well as the "obligation to knowledge and society." Seen in this light, instructors are often forced to choose between guiding the plagiarist back into the fold, and focusing on the transgression in the text and punishing the student in order to protect the integrity of the academy.

In addition, I was aware that there was more going on than just a question of similarity of texts. In what seemed to be a straight-forward case of plagiarism, I was confronted with a host of questions about textual appropriation and ownership, about the various forces that shape our writing and writing instruction, and about the codes and conventions that seem to be challenged by digital spaces. Was this cheating or just ignorance? I had assigned the essay in order to learn a little more about the writer. What could I infer from Brent's piece? I was concerned about how

my colleagues and advisors would see me: perhaps as a victim, as a bad teacher, or as a fool? What was it about this interaction that was so unsettling?

I was also struck by the similarities between my interaction with Brent and my previous experience with teaching at the high school level. There, I had discovered several examples of plagiarism, although none exactly like Brent's case. Because of the size of the high school where I taught, I was able to develop relationships with students that extended beyond the classroom and the school year. I would see these students and their parents around town; I would teach several members of the same family. Yet, despite this familiarity with the students and the community, I was just as puzzled by these cases of plagiarism as I was by Brent's actions. Why did my reaction to plagiarism feel the same at the high school level as it felt at a larger public university? As a high school teacher, I had often warned students about the increased consequences of getting caught plagiarizing at the college level. What message was I sending to my students?

It is these types of questions that, in part, drive this dissertation, as well as an understanding that the answers do not fall easily into the binaries that the questions, and our discourse surrounding plagiarism, might indicate. Thus, the purpose of this project is twofold: 1) to acknowledge and identify the various—and sometimes dilemmatic—ideologies that high school English language arts teachers hold regarding plagiarism and writing instruction through a careful examination of their talk about plagiarism, and (2) to give language to the challenges that these conflicting ideologies about plagiarism have on teachers' writing instruction, namely those related to authorship, ownership, and community,.

In order to better understand how teachers work through competing ideologies and challenging questions, I analyzed the transcripts from four rounds of in-depth interviews I conducted with ten of the members of the "Hopkins High School" English department. The members of that English department described the hard work to prepare their students to be successful at the college level—nearly all of their students go on to post-secondary education and a good number enroll in highly selective colleges and universities. These teachers held advanced degrees and some were published authors. This was a school where the teachers were already having discussions about writing and about plagiarism with their students and with each other. The teachers were asking students to write complex arguments and conduct research. This is a highly successful school by any number of measures; students were being well-equipped for

their college first-year writing courses. Yet, these teachers struggled with how to prevent plagiarism and what to do when they discovered examples of it in their classroom. They wondered aloud how the shifting landscape of the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom would present new challenges for teaching students to use sources appropriately. They asked if their teaching approaches and ideas about plagiarism matched up with what I was seeing at the college level. They were eager to think deeply about plagiarism even when our conversations raised more questions than they provided answers.

In this dissertation, I argue that teachers are often confronted with what Michael Billig, Susan Condor, Derek Edwards, Mike Gane, David Middleton, and Alan Radley (1988) have termed *ideological dilemmas*, or the practice of holding contradictory beliefs simultaneously in everyday thinking. These internal arguments are generative rather than detrimental because they allow individuals to think actively about what they know. These ideological dilemmas come into play in the discourse surrounding plagiarism and the ways in which plagiarism challenges writing pedagogy. While recent scholarship in the field of composition studies has pluralized the definition of plagiarism and reframed plagiarism as a variety of disparate literacy practices that need to be understood in context, this work has not found significant traction in high school English language arts classrooms. Instead, calls for increased detection and stricter enforcement of plagiarism have been taken up in the general discourse of secondary education to combat what is seen as an explosion of digitally-mediated plagiarism. In fact, recent quantitative studies and frequent articles in the popular press have painted a bleak picture of increasing rates of cheating and a lack of academic integrity among students (see, for instance, Gabriel, 2010; D. McCabe & Katz, 2009; Pérez-Peña & Bidgood, 2012). Little work, however, has been done on how secondary English teachers *talk* about plagiarism and how this talk reflects the dilemmatic and social nature of the teachers' ideologies. This project aims to address the need for an in-depth exploration of high school English teachers' talk about plagiarism that will reveal not only how teachers understand their students' appropriate use of texts but also how teachers construe their students' writing practices in general.

In this chapter, I introduce the study, situating it among conversations in secondary English Language Arts (ELA) writing studies, namely (1) the dominant thread of scholarship on plagiarism in the ELA literature that focuses on prevention and detection, and (2) the long-standing—but less consistent—move to challenge this work as incomplete by offering new

frameworks to understand plagiarism. These conversations are often set up in opposition to each other; that is, teachers can either prevent plagiarism by altering their curriculum and (more recently) adopting plagiarism detection software, or teachers can address plagiarism through a redefinition or reconceptualization of the act of plagiarism. Together, these approaches detail a landscape that offers conflicting frames for teachers for understanding plagiarism. Through a review of the past 100 years of *English Journal* articles that mention plagiarism, I present one possible outline of the various frameworks about plagiarism. I then offer up the construct of the *ideological dilemma* as a way to understand better the challenges ELA teachers have in navigating between theoretical camps while responding to the contextual forces in the classroom. Next, I draw upon a review of *College Composition and Communication* scholarship on plagiarism to propose a productive lens through which to analyze these ideological dilemmas. Finally, I conclude by mapping out the remaining chapters of the dissertation, previewing the implications of each.

## THE ELA SCHOLARSHIP ON PLAGIARISM

In order to map out the place of plagiarism in the professional conversations in English Language Arts and identify the major frameworks used by practitioners to discuss plagiarism, I examined 100 years of articles in *English Journal*<sup>3</sup>, a journal published by the National Council of English Teachers. While the journal is not read by all English teachers, it can be seen as a record of the types of conversations that occurred within the profession over the better part of the last century. The JSTOR database of *English Journal* (1912-2008) yielded 218 results for the search term “plagiarism.” This result was combined with an ArticlesPlus search for articles published from 2009 to 2011 for a total of 233 hits. Once indices, tables of contents, ads, and erroneous hits were eliminated, there were 160 articles that contain at least one reference to plagiarism in the body of the article. The first article that mentions plagiarism appeared in 1914, and in 2011 there were seven matches: two articles with plagiarism as its primary subject, one mention in an editorial, and references in four additional articles. *Figure 2* displays the number of articles with references to plagiarism that were published per ten-year period. While there is

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<sup>3</sup> The journal was officially *The English Journal* until the second issue of 1965 when a new cover design eliminated the word *the*. In order to avoid confusion, I will refer to the journal as *English Journal* for its entire publication history.

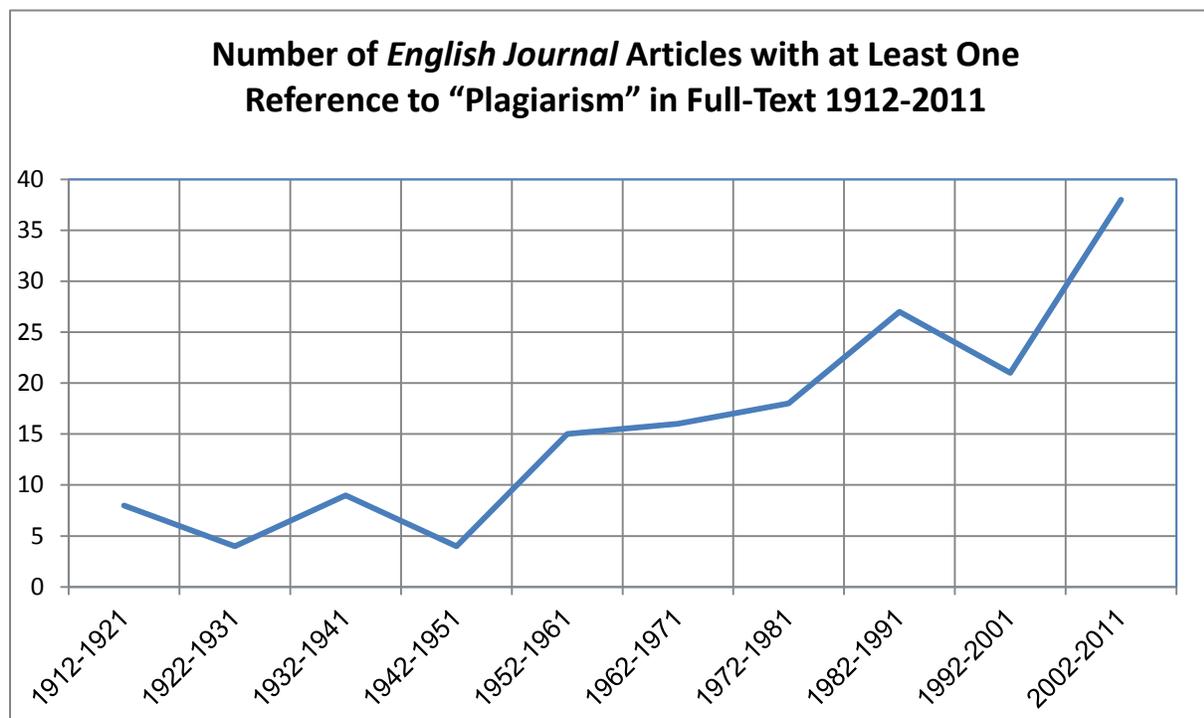


Figure 2. Number of *English Journal* Articles with at Least One Reference to “Plagiarism” in Full-Text 1912-2011

an overall increase of references over time, with nearly a third of all references in *English Journal* occurring in the past twenty-five years, the topic of plagiarism has always been part of the conversation. There are two main types of frameworks that appear in the literature. The first is the more dominant—a depiction of plagiarism as a character fault, a criminal offense, or an ethical violation. In this framework, plagiarism is an affront to traditional notions of authorship, ownership, and community. A smaller proportion of the articles present different approaches that challenge plagiarism as a transgression. These articles attempt to expand definitions of plagiarism and/or offer examples of writing that problematize these notions of plagiarism. In the section that follows, I present an examination of these two types of articles in order to describe the conflicting arguments the articles in *English Journal* has offered to English teachers over the past century.

The first mention of plagiarism is found in 1914, when Edwin L. Miller, the Principal of Northwestern High School in Detroit, Michigan, delivered a paper to National Council of Teachers of English, in which he argued for a method to teach both literature and composition in the high school. Drawing from his own experience as an educator, Miller advocates a series of

eight separate semester-long classes: one course in grammar, three or four classes in oral and written expression with “intensive study of imitable masterpieces,” and the remainder in literature, which would also include “much speaking and some writing.” He concludes by highlighting one important “by-product” of his method: “It renders plagiarism not only impossible but unattractive, for who cares to steal when he owns the earth and everything that’s in it” (Miller, 1914, p. 512). The benefit of reorganizing the high school curriculum and separating the teaching of literature and composition, Miller posits, is that students will not have a reason to plagiarize. They will not have to steal ideas and words because the students will not be in competition with the greats of literature, and they can invent whatever they want. Miller sets out the stakes of change: “This is a matter of importance, for, unless we English teachers are unusually wary, we are likely to think we are getting what we are not.” Students will most likely attempt to deceive their teachers unless their teachers are vigilant. The necessary moves to prevent plagiarism are at the institutional level. As with several of the earliest examples of references to plagiarism in *English Journal*, his article relies on an anecdote as evidence:

I well remember one of my own earlier experiments...I required each of my pupils to write an original sonnet. When they were handed to me I discovered that they could be classified in three groups. The first consisted of productions that were indescribably bad. They were without form and void; i.e., they were written in defiance of the plainest rules of prosody, grammar, and common-sense. The second group consisted of some of the noblest sonnets in the English language. The boys and girls had stolen them *verbatim et literatim*, though not usually *punctuatim*, from Wordsworth, Milton, Sidney, and Shakespeare. In the third group there was only one sonnet. This had appeared anonymously some years before in an obscure journal, and the guilty author, as Frenchmen, janitors, and Professor Lounsbury say, was “me.” I put all of the rubbish into the wastebasket, marked the boy who had given this signal proof of poetic taste 100, and from that day to this have done my best to lead an honest life. (p. 512)

What is notable here, and what is common to a large portion of the literature, is the framing of plagiarism as a crime. For Miller, student writing is either bad or stolen. And those who plagiarize either steal incompetently from the masters or steal unwittingly from their own teacher (who published anonymously.) The discovery of the plagiarist is painfully obvious or ironic to the teacher. The students are positioned as not only amateur writers but amateur thieves. The tongue-in-cheek punishment allows the teacher to highlight the students’ foolishness by giving the one plagiarist full-credit on a worthless assignment that ended up in the trash. While it might not be effective teaching strategy, it does make an engaging story, and one that we can imagine

was told several times to the delight of other English teachers. Miller's description of plagiarism as a crime will resonate in the issues of *English Journal* that follow and is representative of many of the articles of the first fifty years.

A counter-discourse, however, can be seen just as early in *English Journal*. A year later, Carolyn Gerrish (1915), in a surprisingly forward-thinking article about the potential for using film to help teach composition, tells an anecdote about a student who writes a story that is much better than his perceived ability. When the teacher inquires about the source of the ideas, the boy replies, "Oh, yes, it is my own work. I saw it in the moving pictures, but I wrote it up myself" (Gerrish, pp. 226-227). For Gerrish, this use of the new medium as the source of the ideas of the composition is not quite plagiarism: "The boy had fulfilled in an unexpected way the demand to write up something that he had himself observed." The copying of the ideas from the movie does not seem to meet Gerrish's definition for plagiarism. Instead of being plagiarism, it is an "unexpected way" of using the student's own experience of viewing the film. Later in the article, Gerrish tells the story of a high-achieving student whose composition on India "seemed to leave no doubt as to plagiarism"; further investigation revealed that the student "had translated into words the views of the topography of India, together with those of the life of the Indian people, in town and country, temple and bazaar, all for a background for an original story of marked aptness and power" (p.227). Again, the student has used his or her own experience of viewing the film as the raw material for the composition rather than copying the content. Because the moving pictures don't contain words per se, Gerrish sees the students' use of the film as experiential rather than textual. That is, the moving pictures are more akin to a field trip than a novel. While these movies can allow students access to images and experiences outside their own environments, one of the typical means of discovering plagiarism has been compromised. Teachers can no longer assume plagiarism if a student's composition contains material that would not be readily available to the personal experience of the student. Gerrish seems to imply that, previously, if a student composition contained "unexpected" (or merely out-of-place) ideas or images, the teacher could accuse the student of plagiarism. With the additional access to new experiences through motion pictures, however, student compositions could now contain things that would have only been previously possible by using other people's words. Film destabilized the ways of understanding and detecting plagiarism, but in this new medium, Gerrish saw the possibility to expand student writing. While not explicitly challenging the standard definitions of

plagiarism, Gerrish's article indicates that from the first years of *English Journal* there have been voices that complicate a notion of plagiarism as theft.

Several of the articles from the first few decades of *English Journal* frame plagiarism as an issue of academic honesty. For example, in Edith E. Brander's (1931) article on character education, plagiarism is listed as just one of the topics students wrote about as part of a project. The list includes other fairly routine academic matters such "as honesty in home work, plagiarism, the duties and responsibilities of club members and of club officers, behavior in the auditorium during an uninteresting program, cheating during examinations, cutting school or classes, the treatment of school property, and treatment of Freshmen" (p. 748). In each of these examples, there is a direct connection between the student's character and his actions. That is, good students are honest and treat underclassman with respect. These students also avoid plagiarism in a similar manner because of their sense of right and wrong. In Harold J. Long's (1924, p. 349) "Are You Honest?" he relates a series of questions that he asks his students to assess their understanding of academic honesty:

Are you honest? If you saw a half-dollar on this desk and you thought no one was looking, would you slip it off into your pocket? If you were traveling on the railroad would you do your utmost to evade the payment of fare? Would you? Would you steal from the railroad? Would you steal another person's words? Sometimes it takes hours and hours—even weeks for people to write articles for publication. Their words, the product of much labor and thought, are exchanged for money. If you take over their sentences for yours, put them in your theme and indorse the theme with your name, you are stealing. Would you steal fifty cents' worth of sentences? Actual money, a ride on the train, somebody's individuality expressed in words what is the difference? The principle is the same.

For Long, plagiarism is the same as stealing and is worthy of the same indignation that he assumes everyone feels about purposely refusing to pay for a train ride. The effort of a writer is the same as the work of any laborer or the value of any service. Thus, to take a writer's words without credit is analogous to cheating the worker out of his well-earned pay. Of course, the analogy does fall apart if pushed too far, but the frame of criminality is still strong. Despite this threat of dishonesty, "ignorance can be dispelled by a teacher's painstaking and kindly interest. It is therefore our duty to talk kindly and frankly with our classes (never voicing the law with threatening mien); and to encourage candid opinion from everyone" (p. 349). The law must be voiced so that students can be enlightened about the proper way to use sources. While this speech will not be able to reform the "sneaks" in the class, Long feels this type of lecture is never

wasted time. For Long, the preventing plagiarism is about educating those students who are merely ignorant and suffering those students who are dishonest. Plagiarism prevention will only work with the honest students; those who are “sneaks” are going to commit the crime of plagiarism no matter what.

This notion of stealing is sometimes undercut by teachers’ work in the classroom. For example, Stolper (1938) offers a collaboratively written poem that challenges the students’ sense of individual ownership of the words. By writing quickly and anonymously, students generate a “parent source” that they can “borrow” from for the rest of the year. Stolper has “no way of knowing” if the images “belonged originally to the borrower,” nor is Stolper concerned. When the class writes as if they were “one mind,” the words and pictures in the poem belong to everyone.

Other writers offer specific teaching innovations to help address a specific problem in writing instruction. Penhale (1937) explores five new approaches to teaching oration that will minimize plagiarism. Grandy (1936, p. 375) argues that implementing a writing laboratory in advanced high school classes “forestalls plagiarism” by having students work under the watchful supervision of their instructor. The writers of these articles highlight how the by-product of their solution is a reduction in plagiarism. The writers tackle issues of motivation, invention, and revision. Due to the innovative teaching, the writers claim that the students will no longer want, or have the ability, to plagiarize. These types of approaches to preventing plagiarism assume that students, without proper education or training, will naturally lean toward plagiarism. With better pedagogy, teachers can steer students away from bad habits or lazy behaviors toward more honest writing. In these articles, the authors optimistically offer up their suggestions for ways to stem the tide of plagiarism. Through better assignments, teachers can work with individual students to keep the class on path to a more positive future.

A much bleaker picture is painted in September 1939, when an anonymous article appeared under the title “The Ghost Writer Explains.” In it, an English tutor and ghost writer for students describes how he writes themes for both high- and low-achieving students for between 50 cents to five dollars per essay.<sup>4</sup> He writes, “It may not be very surprising news, or even news

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<sup>4</sup> In 2010, an article appeared in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* with nearly the same revelation. In “The Shadow Scholar”(Dante, 2010), the ghost writer details the poor state of writing and writing instruction and offers examples of writing essays for hire. He places the

for that matter to most English teachers that a great deal of the written work submitted to them is not the work of the student whose name it bears” (p. 535). The ghost writer proceeds to blame the teachers for failing to provide clear prompts that are meaningful to the students. It is the fault of the teacher that they “are forcing sweet and honest and capable children to become deceivers and liars.” While earlier articles merely hint at external forces that intrude upon the student plagiarist and his teacher, this article unveils another layer of corruption and criminality—the ghost writer. The author of the article is attempting to justify his actions, but it is clear that the readers of *English Journal* do not condone his actions. For instance, in February 1940, Margaret Curtis responded,

No, it is not news to most English teachers that a great deal of written work submitted to them is not the work of the student whose name it bears. "The rather uncomfortable and embarrassing awareness that some themes are not original" has, as the author suggested, penetrated the minds of even the dullest teachers, disturbing their tranquility and sowing seeds of distrust and suspicion. And the contests, both national and local, that all too frequently seem to encourage plagiarism rather than creative effort, are for that very reason the bane of every English teacher's existence. But if plagiarism is an ugly offense that undermines the confidence that should exist between pupil and teacher, how much more insidious is the problem of the ghost writer and the student who resorts to him. (p. 129)

Plagiarism is a common and “ugly offense” that even the “dullest teachers” recognize. The ghost writer’s crime, however, is even “more insidious” than plagiarism. Curtis indicates her disdain for the ghost writer’s actions and explanations by alluding to Pilate’s jesting question to Jesus about the truth. Curtis does not provide solutions to the problem; rather, she questions the moral quality of the ghost writer. For her, plagiarism is omnipresent but profiting from plagiarism is an even more despicable crime. Even the best assignments cannot counteract the fraudulent behavior of a ghost writer.

Ten years later, a similar sense of the prevalence of plagiarism appears in Annette Cumming’s (1950) “An Open Letter to Teachers of English.” Cummings, a Junior College teacher, claims that 50% of research papers she sees have flagrant examples of plagiarism in

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blame of teachers who are failing to do his job and ends with an admission that he is leaving the business: “It is my hope that this essay will initiate such a conversation. As for me, I’m planning to retire. I’m tired of helping you make your students look competent.” Compare that to the 1939 article: “English teachers, you are really doing a great wrong to the average students in the average schools of America. It is not the parent, or friend, or hired writer, who writes the theme himself or herself, who is harming the student, it is you, his teacher” (p. 538).

them despite the instructor's "preach[ing] the value of intellectual integrity and the importance of truth in the scientific method" (p. 38). As with the majority of the twenty-five articles that mention plagiarism from the first forty years of *English Journal*, plagiarism is framed as an issue of omnipresent dishonesty or criminality, and despite what appears to be constant preaching, lecturing, and warning, students still plagiarize.

An emblematic example of the type of discourse about plagiarism in *English Journal* in the mid-twentieth century can be found in Elias Lieberman's (1956) anecdote about confronting a student, Lily, whom a colleague suspects of plagiarism. Lily is introduced to Lieberman as an "impossible" child who "uses her hair as a pen wiper... [and] pays no attention in class but keeps scribbling goodness knows what" (p. 410). Lieberman's colleague is certain that Lily is a plagiarist and, therefore, a liar. The colleague has turned to Lieberman due to his interest in poetry, hoping that Lieberman "could ... find out who really wrote [the poem]" (p. 410). Lieberman investigates by asking Lily about her composing process and by asking her to write another poem on a similar theme on demand. Satisfied with her results after 20 minutes, Lieberman asks the student, "Where do you get your ideas?" The story turns on Lily's response: "Why don't you ask the ocean where it gets its waves?" Lieberman then pronounces Lily the author of the poem, works things out with the colleague, and lets the reader know that Lily joined the school's Writers Club, improved her appearance, and eventually "her life subsequently followed a normal pattern of marriage and family" (p. 412). Three components are remarkable about this anecdote: the connection between Lily's appearance and her ethics as a writer, the description of the teacher's investigation into the plagiarism accusation, and the sense that plagiarism has far-reaching ramifications. At the start of the anecdote, Lily is both ill-groomed and a suspected plagiarist. She is disorderly in appearance and in writing habits. Her teacher claims that she would rather have "ordinary children in [her] classes, children who comb their hair, wash behind their ears and speak respectfully" than talented students who might succumb to the temptations of plagiarism. After Lily's talents are recognized and her behavior is deemed ethical, her appearance improves. The second element is the way in which the teacher's inquiry resembles a criminal investigation. He interrogates Lily. He sets a trap for her by asking her without warning to write a similar poem under controlled circumstances. His question to her about the source of her poetry feels like a question asked by a detective. However, in this case, the student is innocent and everything ends happily ever after. Lieberman hints, though, that this

ending is happy because Lily was talented and not a plagiarist. Like many of the articles of that time, there is a sense that plagiarism is not merely a classroom act but rather a sign of unethical behavior that extends beyond school and one that is a part of a (potentially) lifelong pattern. That Lily ends up happily married and a mother is further proof that she wrote that poem because she has the character to become a productive member of society. The author seems to indicate that if Lily were truly a plagiarist, she would have ended up in a less wholesome position.

The articles from the next two decades reinforce many of the same themes: plagiarism as a common ethical concern for high school teachers, plagiarism as a dilemma that could be addressed through better lesson planning or curriculum organization, plagiarism as the result of ill-designed writing contests, and plagiarism as the consequence of introducing the research paper at inappropriate grade levels. But most of all, the articles seem to focus on imaginative assignments, which also reduce or eliminate plagiarism. R.G. Martin's (1971) article, "Plagiarism and Originality: Some Remedies" marks the first year in which *English Journal* published an article that takes a more scholarly approach that attempts to explore the complexities of plagiarism rather than merely prescribing solutions. Martin (1971) provides a brief overview of the lack of scholarship by noting that the majority of English Methods textbooks fail to mention plagiarism and there had not been an article in professional journals that exceeded three pages in length between 1955 and 1970. Martin then outlines the problem facing English teachers (and English educators): "The problem, then, is not the simple one that teachers often dismiss as unworthy of serious attention and thought; nor is it the simple moral and 'legal' question best answered by harsh and immediate penalties to discourage other occurrences." The problem, Martin claims, is best addressed by looking at the opposite of plagiarism—originality—and he offers four remedies. The first involves changing the culture of the classroom. Instead of subscribing to the "widespread cult of 'self-expression,'" teachers should ask for work that is "relatively" original. The second remedy is to elevate the value of student work over plagiarized work; that is, to create assignments that demand the contextual knowledge that only the students can bring to the writing. According to Martin, this will prevent students from turning in work authored by other writers in other times and places. The third cure offered by Martin is to have a policy to return "fishy" assignments instead of failing them, and the fourth step is to have conversations with the class about plagiarism. Martin acknowledges that this requires "a sophisticated teacher and a mature class" because plagiarism is "actually a

very complex phenomenon” that affects students as well as teachers (p. 625). Rather than claiming that innovative assignments or well-structured lessons will prevent plagiarism, Martin posits that the complexity of plagiarism requires a multiple strand approach. Teachers need to address the culture of the classroom, through the ways in which teachers respond to potential plagiarism, the discourse between students and teachers about plagiarism, as well as the types of assignments teachers assign. Martin still sees plagiarism as an illness that needs multiple “remedies.”

The influence of Martin’s attempts to present a more complex description of plagiarism is not apparent. In the following eleven years, sixteen articles containing the term *plagiarism* were published in *English Journal*. These articles continue to reinforce the status quo of plagiarism as a simple case of dishonesty, immorality, or criminality. They address the “evils of plagiarism” (Palmer, 1980, p. 49), argue how plagiarism is a “built-in problem” of the research paper (Howell, 1977), posit that plagiarism is the result of dishonesty, sometimes ignorance or lack of self-confidence (Irmscher, 1977), and report positively about an essay in which “a teacher wrote an analogy comparing plagiarists and cockroaches because of their mutual stealth and repugnance to humans” (Stong, 1977). Plagiarism is constructed as an omnipresent problem of the English classroom caused by unethical behavior or poor pedagogy.

The 1980s see an increase in references to plagiarism and essays specifically about plagiarism. With this additional attention paid to plagiarism as a subject worth studying and not just a student behavior to prevent, articles such as Joyce Armstrong Carroll’s (1982) “Plagiarism: The Unfun Game,” Roger Sauer’s (1983) “Coping with Copiers,” Majorie Fink Vargas’ (1985) “Developing an Immunity to Sophomoric Plagiarism: Notetaking Skills,” and Doris R. Dant’s (1986) “Plagiarism in High School: A Survey” present a more complex framework for understanding plagiarism. Carroll (1982) offers a more etymologically connected definition of plagiarism as *personnapping*, which frames writing as an extension of the writer and the writer’s “sweat and agony.” Sauer (1983) announces that his “article offers no magic remedy” beyond the expertise the individual teacher brings to the situation. Diana George (1984) sees plagiarism as a problem of coherence. Vargas (1985) asks teachers to consider why students copy and indicates that the answer moves beyond simple laziness. Dant (1986) uses a survey administered to incoming college students to get a more accurate picture of the rate of inappropriate copying of high school students. While these articles are among other *English Journal* essays that continue

to mention plagiarism prevention as a by-product of innovative pedagogy, they do expand the conversation by recognizing the complexity of plagiarism. Rather than merely designing better assignments, these writers advocate for investigating plagiarism and its causes and effects.

In the last twenty-five years, *English Journal* has published more than one-third of all articles that contain references to plagiarism. The majority of these references are to the challenges of teaching the research paper. However, in the mid-1990s, with the development and spread of the World Wide Web, a number of articles began to link plagiarism with technology. For instance in Darsie Bowden's (1996) "Coming to Terms: Plagiarism," the article mentions Glatt Plagiarism Screening software ("a valid and sensitive measure of successfully discriminating plagiarists from non-plagiarists") in an endnote. Less than two years later, Huntington Lyman (1998, p. 59) declares, "The Internet, in contrast [to a book], presents a constant temptation to download a little-known source, change a few words, and complete a term paper in a matter of minutes," and Traubitz (1998) acknowledges that she "had to confront new issues raised by electronic plagiarism, develop and teach documentation format for electronic sources." The concerns about the research paper, debated for over 80 years in the pages of *English Journal*, now had a new wrinkle that would influence the ways that teachers would discuss plagiarism. The source of information used in a student's paper could now come from all corners of the globe. In "Oh, What a Tangled Web We Weave," Susan A. Gardner, Hiltraut H. Benham, and Bridget M. Newell (1999) attempt to deal with the uneasiness that the Web created in a manner that must have been common in many ELA classrooms by having students print hard copies of their digital sources.<sup>5</sup> In November 2000, Virginia R. Monseau, editor of *English Journal*, wrote in a special issue entitled "Technology and the English Class":

Technology can be a wonderful teaching tool, as the articles in this issue show us, but it can also present problems that we're not prepared to solve. Take plagiarism, for example. We've all heard stories of students lifting "cyberpapers" from the Internet and turning them in as their own. No guilt. No regret. The service is available, so why not take advantage of it? This "What? Me Worry?" attitude is concern in itself, but the easy availability of such material promotes academic dishonesty and makes our job all the more difficult. Good teachers know that there are ways to prevent or counteract this kind of cheating, of course, such as tailoring assignments specifically to what's being studied in class and/or requiring drafts of papers in progress, but the Internet is a seductive force that students find hard to resist, and we have to contend with that. (p.15)

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<sup>5</sup> In my own teaching, I remember asking students to turn in pages of printouts and photocopies in an attempt to make them attend to the source of their information.

Monseau echoes a common refrain: plagiarism is a temptation that students will naturally succumb to without the guiding hand of the teacher, and good teachers will design writing assignments that are specifically constructed to circumvent the siren song of Internet and its vast store of information. In addition, Monseau claims that there is something about the ease with which information can be accessed on the Internet that permits students to plagiarize without any nagging ethical concerns. She seems to imply that there is something about the Internet—different from the traditional print world—that changes how and why students plagiarize. In the dawn of the new millennium, Monseau warns teachers about the need to adapt to the new wired classroom.

Articles at the turn of the millennium capture this concern about what the Internet is doing to writing and writing instruction. Kim Ford (Hill & Ford, 2000), a new teacher, is already aware of the “horror stories of students downloading and printing research papers intact.” Not only is there a general anxiety about the use of the Internet as a tool to plagiarize, there also seems to be a concern over the ease and efficiency of the Internet: “In a space of two minutes, I watched a junior high student print out an online encyclopedia article, write her name at the top of the page, and announce, ‘There, my science report’s done.’” Likewise, Whiteman and Gordon (2001) wonder if the Internet’s benefits are overshadowed by its “ability to create non-thinking, non-reading patrons of plagiarism.” The promise of the wired classroom is tainted by the commercialization and commodification of information. Not only does the Internet bring the world to students’ computers but included in that world are the online paper mills and essay sites. Plagiarism has become another service that is made easier through the Internet. In response to this new kind of plagiarism, Atkins and Nelson (2001) celebrate the pilot use of a new plagiarism detection software system, Turnitin.com<sup>6</sup> and its simplicity and efficiency in combating plagiarism. This software allows teachers to “turn the tables” on the plagiarists and the authors claim a drastic reduction in cases at their high school. A sense of uneasiness is apparent with the introduction of the Internet into the ELA classroom.

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<sup>6</sup>Turnitin.com is online plagiarism detection software platform that compares uploaded student papers to a large database of online sources as well as other previously submitted student papers. After scanning the paper, Turnitin prepares an “originality report” that highlights any similarities between the student paper and the database. In addition to plagiarism detection, the service is often bundled with online content management software that allows teachers to assign, collect, and comment on student papers electronically. A much fuller explanation of Turnitin—and its implementation at Hopkins High (the research site of this project) —appears in Chapter Three.

More recently, *English Journal* has published articles that again emphasize the complexity of plagiarism. These articles highlight how plagiarism is socially constructed and situated in particular times and places. For instance, P. L. Thomas (2007) argues for the importance of teachers and students defining the key terms surrounding (and including) plagiarism, as well as the role of intent, genre, and conventions in order to discover where there are discrepancies. Rather than focusing on universal suggestions to improve writing prompts, Thomas encourages schools to attend to the qualities of their culture that support academic honesty. Barry Gilmore (2008), author of “Prompt Attention: What I Learned from the Plagiarists,” likewise questions the traditional focus on creating more specific prompts. He warns about simplistic responses and encourages learning from plagiarists by exploring how and why plagiarists copy. Teachers can create a classroom culture in which students can develop the critical thinking skills so as to move away from their dependence on prompts. Ebony Elizabeth Thomas and Kelly Sassi (2011) posit that a careful attention to the ways teachers and students talk about plagiarism can uncover some of important ethical considerations. By attending to the in-the-moment language, teachers can unearth some of the assumptions that both students and their teachers bring to conversations about plagiarism. Armed with this knowledge, teachers and students can then create more meaningful interactions around academic honesty and writing.

Over the 100 years of *English Journal*, articles that include references to plagiarism frame it as common concern of the English classroom, a concern that employs the images of criminality (kidnapping or stealing words, for example) or morality (cheating or laziness). Although there has been some movement in the literature to see plagiarism as a more complex and nuanced practice, by and large, these articles maintain the construction of plagiarism as a transgressive behavior that is best prevented through better writing pedagogy. With these conflicting frameworks in the literature, it is no surprise that teachers in the secondary setting can be placed in situations where they have contradictory advice and frameworks to choose from.

## IDEOLOGICAL DILEMMAS AND PLAGIARISM

Teaching is a complex practice that requires teachers to take up multiple positions and identities, and plagiarism is one of the many challenges that teachers encounter that often requires them to enforce institutional policy as well as teach their students how to navigate through the conventions of academic discourse. Composition scholar Peter Elbow (1983) posits

that good teaching requires teachers to “embrace the contraries” of teaching. On one hand, teachers need to be supportive and offer encouragement to their students as they develop as writers. On the other hand, teachers have a responsibility to act as gatekeepers and take a critical and demanding stance with their students. Elbow (1983, p. 334) claims that teachers must “make peace between opposites by alternating between them so that [they] are never trying to do contrary things at any one moment.”

While Elbow’s conception is useful, Michael Billig et al. (1988) offer a more nuanced and fruitful way to understand this aspect of teaching: *ideological dilemmas*. Rather than seeing teachers shuttling back and forth between contrary positions, Billig et al. provide a way of seeing the multiple, concurrent, and contradictory ideologies teachers can have. Ideological dilemmas are not limited to the educator; however, Billig et al. (1988, p. 46) single out the classroom as a site where the *lived* and the *intellectual ideologies* of teachers can clash:

Teachers’ ideological conceptions tend not to be so neatly packaged and consistent as those posited by theorists of educational ideology; similarly, the practice of classroom teaching tends not to be a straightforward realization of some such coherent position. Rather, ...teachers may well hold views of teaching, of children, of the goals of educational practice and the explanations of educational failure, which theorists of ideology would locate in opposed camps. And so also will the practical activity of teaching reflect principles that are propounded by what are held to be opposed ideologies. Further, it is not unknown for teachers to be aware of such contradictions, to feel themselves involved in difficult choices and as having to make compromises.

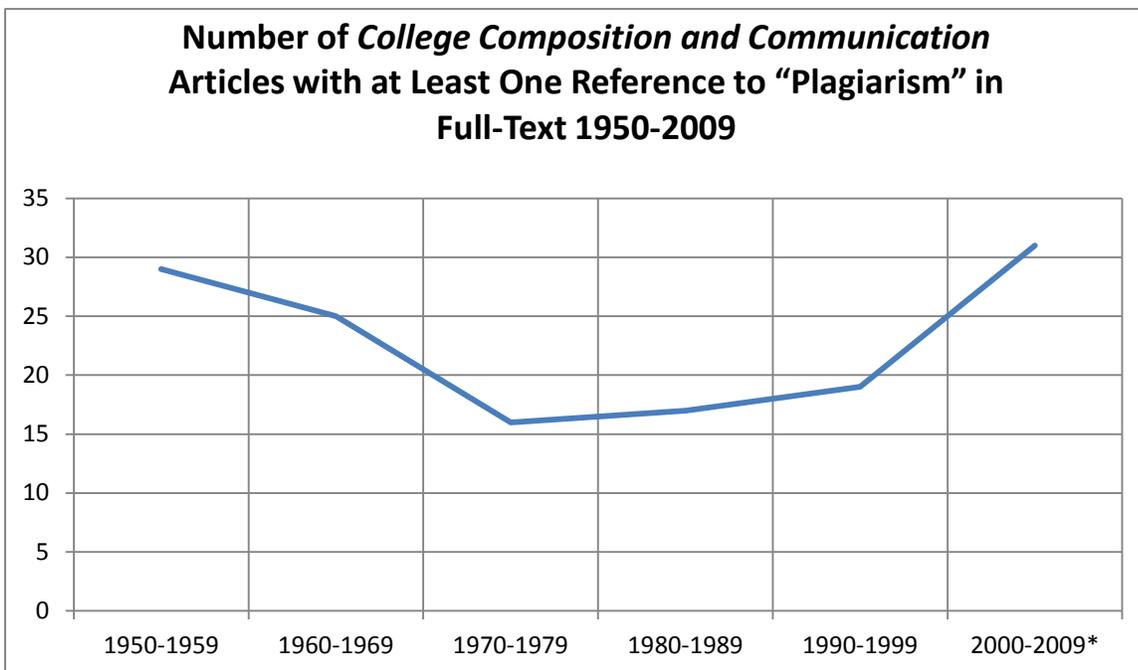
This is not to say that high school teachers are hypocritical or disingenuous. As Billig et al. (1988, p. 23) note, dilemmatic themes are embedded within “common sense,” not hidden or willfully ignored but contained “within layers of meaning of language.” In fact, it is the dilemmatic nature of everyday thinking that “provide[s] the possibility of argument and deliberation” (p. 19). It is through navigating between contrary ideal worlds that teachers make choices. Instead of merely subscribing to one ideological camp, teachers must work through the push and pull of competing forces and make compromises in practice. Using this lens to view the conflicting ideologies about plagiarism found in *English Journal* provides a productive way of understanding the high school ELA literature about plagiarism as an ongoing debate.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A much fuller description of *ideological dilemmas* appears in the next chapter.

## COLLEGE COMPOSITION SCHOLARSHIP ON PLAGIARISM

In order to provide a framework for thinking about the types of ideological dilemmas found in teachers' talk, I draw upon an examination of compositionist scholarship on plagiarism. In a review of *College Composition and Communication* articles about plagiarism from 1950, I pull three main themes: authorship, ownership, and community. While high school ELA teachers are not the typical audience for *College Composition and Communication*, the journal does provide a fruitful way of identifying the intellectual ideologies upon which high school teachers draw. While many of the articles in *College Composition and Communication* addressed the practical aspects of teaching writing, more recently the work on plagiarism has taken a more explicitly theoretical stance. That is, the current scholarship found in *College Composition and Communication* attempts to pluralize and interrogate our understandings of plagiarism. The juxtaposition of *College Composition and Communication* and *English Journal* is not designed to set up a simple comparison of the frameworks found within their pages; these two journals have different audiences and solicit different types of articles. Instead, by pulling three main themes from the college composition literature, I created a lens to apply to the high school setting.



*Figure 3.* Number of *College Composition and Communication* Articles with at Least One Reference to "Plagiarism" in Full-Text 1950-2009

Using the JSTOR search feature, I queried for the term “plagiarism” in the full-text of all issues published between 1950 and 2008. This search revealed 217 hits. Using the search engine on the CCCC site allowed for the inclusion of nine additional articles from 2009 and two each from 2010 and 2011. After removing tables of contents, indices, ads, and articles that did not contain references to plagiarism but were on same page as other articles that referenced plagiarism, there were 141 articles with at least one reference to plagiarism in the text. The distribution over the past sixty years is shown in *Figure 3*.

The number of articles containing the term *plagiarism* shows plagiarism has been a fairly constant concern for compositionists over the past sixty years, although the treatment of plagiarism has changed dramatically. In the 1950s, references to plagiarism are seen in conversations about writing instructor education and effective pedagogy for the teaching of the research paper. Similar to the articles in *English Journal*, the authors in *College Composition and Communication* bemoan the omnipresent nature of plagiarism and explore possible pedagogical interventions. After the 1980s, the articles reflect the “social turn” in composition scholarship, in which plagiarism is framed as a process in context that involves more than just the individual writer.<sup>8</sup> In addition, authors after the 1990s draw upon other conversations in composition studies, such as multiculturalism and postmodernism, to paint a picture in which plagiarism is more fully theorized and investigated as an object of scholarly attention as well as one of more practical consideration.

In what follows, I investigate sixty years of *College Composition and Communication* articles that reference plagiarism, highlighting the themes of authorship, ownership, and community. These three categories emerged as dominant themes in my reading of the literature. These themes provide a means for interrogating the various understandings of the core components of the writing classroom. Taken together, these three themes provide a means of expanding the ways in which we can see plagiarism. Rather than focusing on more static

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<sup>8</sup> While admitting that the starting dates for eras and movements are never perfect, I draw from Bruce McComiskey (1997): “In the mid 1980s, fueled by emerging debates about academic discourse, professional writing, and writing across the curriculum, scholars such as Patricia Bizzell, Lee Odell, and James Reither, among many others, began to question the individualism implied in previous articulations of the writing process, arguing instead that different institutional contexts for writing (academic, professional, disciplinary) require different writing processes.”

constructs of the student plagiarist, the plagiarized text, and the teacher, these three themes open up the possibility of multiple interpretations. While these three themes often were intertwined in the discussion of plagiarism, I present them separately to better examine their underlying ideologies. By using these flexible themes, I was able to explore the changing of these three notions of plagiarism over time.

## **Authorship**

In the first two decades of *College Composition and Communication*, authors acknowledge the omnipresent problem of plagiarism. While some articles describe plagiarism as more of a common nuisance, one of the “routine matters” that composition instructors face (Kitzhaber, 1955), others frame plagiarism as a more insidious concern in the composition classroom: an issue of “temptation” on the part of the student (“Writing assignments in literature courses,” 1957), a “danger” (L. Brown, 1958), and an “ever-present threat” (Schwartz, 1955). Regardless of how the authors characterize the severity of the problem, these essays argue that plagiarism is an occupational hazard of teaching college composition, and the research paper is at the center of their concern. In particular, these articles focus on the use of controlled resources rather than allowing students the freedom to choose their own topics and resources. At the heart of many of these articles is a sense that students are novice writers who need to have the temptation of cheating removed in order to learn the skills required of college composition. Students are positioned as incomplete authors who are incapable of making the appropriate choices to be granted the status of full authors without the mentoring of the instructor. For example, R. G. Baldwin (1960) describes one of the eight major types of freshman writers: the “C” student who either “has little real grasp [on the necessary writing skills] or...is criminally lazy.” The average student is one who is constructed as either incompetent or whose behavior is immoral and illegal. Baldwin claims this type of student is more prone to plagiarism than any other student. This student is markedly different from the top category of students who “knows the difference between the good and the shoddy and will not associate himself with the latter” (p. 114). Good writers are those who know right from wrong and quality writing from poor writing and are able to make the correct decision. In these early articles, there is a consistent notion that plagiarism is a choice of the individual student. Plagiarism is a corrupted enactment of authorship.

Bertha M. Kuhn's (1957) "Perspective on Plagiarism" is the first extended discussion of plagiarism in *CCC*. In this article, Kuhn centers her argument on two anecdotes about students cheating in her classroom: the instructor's accidental discovery of a student turning in an essay that was written by the student's sister and another student unknowingly copying directly from his notes without proper attribution. Using these examples as different grades of plagiarism, Kuhn frames plagiarism in terms of the larger issues of dignity and duty:

In thinking about plagiarism, unpleasant memories remind this instructor of the loss in dignity of the individual both student and instructor—the one accused of wrong doing and presented with the evidence, the other conscious of his obligation to do his duty for the sake of the other students in his class. In thinking about the offenders the writer reminds the reader that students are not just honest or dishonest. Gradations of guilt show here as elsewhere, and sometimes despite the seeming evidence, the student may be innocent of intentional plagiarism (p. 252).

While Kuhn allows for a continuum of plagiarism, it is a spectrum of unethical behavior. At one end there are students who intentionally plagiarize; at the other, those who still plagiarize but do so innocently. For any spot on this spectrum, some defect of the student writer allows for plagiarism to happen. Kuhn advises instructors to weigh the possible influence on the student's future before failing a student for plagiarism. She encourages instructors to meet individually with the student to determine where this offending piece of writing falls on the spectrum of guilt. She asks teachers to avoid handing failing grades to students for a single "offending" piece of writing (p. 253). In Kuhn's perspective on plagiarism, the student can sometimes unintentionally plagiarize and needs to have individual consultations with the instructor in order for both student and teacher to learn more about themselves and the writing. Kuhn sees plagiarism as an offense and a wrong that can cause "unpleasant memories" while highlighting the importance of the instructor's measured response to this offense. Here, early on in the college composition literature about plagiarism is the notion of the tight connection between plagiarism and the student's character. This article, and others like it, advocate that instructors must be mindful a developmental process of the student moving from student writer toward authorship.

The sense of plagiarism as a developmental problem of the student is best seen in Robert Palmer Saalbach's (1970) "Critical Thinking and the Problem of Plagiarism." In this article, Saalbach claims that plagiarism is a cognitive issue because "immature psychology lies at the root base of plagiarism" (p. 45). Saalbach argues that students need help to grow as critical thinkers so they will then move away from plagiarism because of their ability to take their own

stances on controversial topics. Instructors must position their students to seek “truth at all costs” in order help the “students to grow into an individuality that is all their own” (p. 47). With this developmental growth, a stronger sense of self will eliminate plagiarism. As with Kuhn, plagiarism and the student’s sense of self are tightly intertwined. It is when students know themselves that they will avoid plagiarism and become an author.

## **Ownership**

Other authors present a sense of plagiarism as a question of acknowledging ownership. Dorothy S. Brown’s (1975) “The Perils of Plagiarism” uses a transcript of a port-mortem discussion of a library research paper by a class of college freshman. The students struggle to figure out what exactly plagiarism is. In their conversation, they express frustration with the lack of clarity in the conventions of citation and limits of plagiarism.

MARY: I wish somebody would teach us what plagiarism is.

CAROL: I do too.

DORIS: I always thought that plagiarism was taking something from a book and not docu ... not footnoting it or nothing.

SUSAN: Just taking it word for word.

ALICE: It's taking somebody's work and saying that it's yours.

DORIS: Well, that's the same thing.

ALICE: That may not necessarily be taking something from a book. It's taking what somebody said—making it part of your own idea. It ends up being your idea, in the long run, but still....

MARY: Well, like me and Carol, we footnoted it, we quoted it....

CAROL: That's right. We did everything.

MARY: We did it that way, but yet it was plagiarism. And we had to do the papers over.

CAROL: I had to do mine three times. (p. 206)

The students continue to point out different moments in their papers that were marked as plagiarism, adding to the growing list of unapproved activities that required the students to rewrite their essays. The students describe the frustration of trying to do things the “right way” until the instructor approves of their paper. Brown concludes that “apparently my attempts to explain plagiarism (along with the related topics of summarizing, paraphrasing, indicating direct quotations, and documenting properly) were equally unsuccessful” (p. 207). While Brown mentions the practice of documentation and integrating sources, the students focus on the ownership of the text. That is, they talk about whose words and ideas they used, how they

marked the different parts of their essays as someone else's ideas, and how they attempted to make things their own ideas. The students wrestle with the conventions of textual ownership.

*College Composition and Communication* articles also begin to acknowledge the tensions in writing with the spread of computers in the late 1980s. One way in which computers change writing is by highlighting the commodification of text. For example, Gerald Grow (1988) explores the effects writing with computers has on both the writing process and product. He notes that the computer has made "self-plagiarism" much easier, especially in the workplace: "Being pragmatic, professionals often reuse blocks of material from previous reports. A good writer can do this well; but a less accomplished writer easily succumbs to a clumsy kind of self-plagiarism" (p. 218). For Grow, there are lessons to be learned from professional writers, who are able to reuse their own words without committing plagiarism. Students should be instructed on how to write in the "real world," which includes drafting on the computer. Grow is concerned, however, that "[c]omputers seem to tempt people to substitute writing for thinking." By writing instead of thinking (and not using writing to think), people are merely shuffling around words, and with this movement of text, the possibility of plagiarism is much higher. While the computer makes the mechanics of writing easier, according to Grow, it makes thinking harder for writers.

The *College Composition and Communication* literature of the 1990s began to attend more seriously to the notions of intellectual property and college writing. In Andrea Lunsford and Susan West's (1996a, p. 399) "Intellectual Property and Composition Studies," the authors highlight the ways in which the "traditional notions of authorship, intellectual property, and commodified knowledge inform work in the academy, and much about public and private middle- and high-schools as well." Lunsford and West call for compositionists to "reimagine new systems of value" and to confront the growing public conversations about intellectual property. Articles such as this one encourage a rethinking of the traditional constructs of the writing classroom. As Lunsford and West write: "The time has passed when teachers of composition and communication could ignore debates about intellectual property, if indeed we ever should have" (p. 383).

## Community

The articles from the 1980s begin to reflect the field's growing concern about the social nature of writing. While most of the references to plagiarism are in reviews of textbooks (e.g., Bell, 1981; Eden, 1986; Rank, 1987), a few articles highlight the shift to a framework that attends to the social component of plagiarism. In Alice Drum's (1986) "Responding to Plagiarism," she advocates a more "holistic" approach to preventing plagiarism, namely that "plagiarism involves a student, an instructor, and the structure within which the two interact" (p. 242). Drum claims that one of the myths about plagiarism is that it is not about the professor of the course. She argues that because plagiarism is more of a pedagogical issue than a legal one, it must involve the instructor and the assignment. Drum still advocates for a pedagogical intervention to plagiarism; however, she is more concerned with the interaction among the various forces in the classroom instead of thinking that a top-down approach can prevent students from plagiarizing. This shift, while minor in Drum's essay, marks the beginning of a larger shift in the college composition scholarship about the importance of community with regards to plagiarism.

A more dramatic change can be seen in the 1990s with a number of articles that begin to redefine plagiarism. In Liz Hamp-Lyons' (1993, p. 397) review of Leki's *Understanding ESL Writers*, she notes how the textbook offers

a number of very important insights that, though they may seem obvious to some, are not obvious to all composition teachers. These insights can really help teachers understand and help their students—for example, the fact that "plagiarism is a culturally-determined concept and that repeating the ideas and the words of respected betters (such as those who are already published) is highly valued in many cultures."

In this review, Hamp-Lyons implies that some instructors might not be aware that different cultures have different conceptions of plagiarism. With classrooms filled with students who are of an increasingly diverse population (Hamp-Lyons writes that that is "almost all of us"), the composition instructor needs to realize that there is not a single definition of plagiarism. Later in the decade, A. Suresh Canagarajah (1997) posits that "minority communities possess traditions of cultural appropriation and resistance" (p. 173) and alludes to the practice of "voice merging" (p. 187). Together, these articles reveal an understanding of writing practices that emerge from other cultures that may appear to be plagiarism from a Western point-of-view. Irene Clark (1993) and Nancy Maloney Grimm (1996) both mention plagiarism in their discussion of writing

centers creating a larger sense of community that extends beyond the classroom. What is common to all of these articles is a growing attention being paid to how writing—and by extension plagiarism—is contextual and cultural. With these other spaces and genres, the traditional notions of plagiarism are challenged. The authors of these articles attend to the communities from which the writing emerges.

The literature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in *College Composition and Communication* continued the emphasis on the social component of plagiarism and the ways in which this pluralizes plagiarism as an act. For example, Karen Valentine (2006) writes that plagiarism is something “people do with reading and writing,” not just a formal feature of text. And as an act, it is something that happens in a particular time and place as an interaction among people. Valentine claims that plagiarism is a literacy practice, one that takes into account the “participants’ values, attitudes, and feelings as well as their social relationship to each other and to the institutions in which they work” (89-90). By shifting the focus from a purely textual matter to one that involves the social context of the production and reception of texts, Valentine creates a sense of agency for the writer who appropriates text. The plagiarist can be an author. Lyon (2009, pp. 235-236) asks who owns writing in an increasingly global world: “As higher education becomes increasing transnational, our theories—theories of ownership, author, intellectual property, plagiarism, pedagogy, difference, act, and identity—will become more fluid and tentative” (235-6). It is interesting to note that Lyon includes plagiarism as something that can be “theorized.” The movement in the literature is away from constructing plagiarism as a formal feature of a students’ paper to one in which plagiarism is a historically-situated, culturally-defined, complex interaction among participants.

In addition to the conversations in CCCs, there is a growing body of composition scholarship from others who see plagiarism as a context-specific, historically-situated literacy practice. Rebecca Moore Howard’s (1999) ground-breaking work, *Standing in the shadow of giants: plagiarists, authors, collaborators*, explores the historical construction of authorship and plagiarism. Howard encourages compositionists to attend to a wider range of issues when thinking about plagiarism and authors: “For plagiarism, finally, is not a feature of a text. It is an action that involves both reader and writer. It *must* involve both reader and writer; and it must involve context, as well; for actions do not take place in some atemporal ether” (1999, p. 164). Other compositionists provide ways to see the various forces in plagiarism beyond merely

textual similarity. For example, Candace Spigelman's (2000) insightful exploration of constructs of ownership in collaborative writing groups reveals how "ownership is a function of time, talk, and authority" (p. 5). Amy Robillard (2007) argues for a recognition of the emotional response of the reader. Johnson-Eilola and Selber (2007) offer inclusion of *assemblage* as a legitimate form of composition that can challenge the traditional binary of plagiarism and originality. Through *assemblage* they see a means to reframe writing from an emphasis on performance to one that highlights "action or effect in context" (p. 375).

Authorship, ownership, and community have been interrogated and complicated over the past sixty years in the college composition literature. Together, this scholarship provides a robust theoretical lens that constructs plagiarism as a multi-faceted, context-specific literacy practice. This body of work provides this study with the language for talking about the *intellectual ideologies* that teachers have about plagiarism. Although the participants in this study were not regular readers of this literature, their talk revealed some of the same questions and tensions that the college composition scholarship addresses. The richness of the literature on plagiarism complemented the complexity of the teachers' talk.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study began with my interest in the stories that teachers told about plagiarism. As a former high school English teacher, I had listened to colleagues tell about their encounters with plagiarism. I had told my fair share of stories, as well. When I came to the University of Michigan, I was not surprised to hear college composition instructors relay similar tales of plagiarism. It seemed that it didn't take a lot of experience in the classroom before a graduate student instructor had some sort of story to tell. What struck me about these stories is how the speakers seem to use similar language to describe the events. Students were stealing and cheating. Instructors interrogated their guilty students until they confessed to the crime. Plagiarists were lazy, stupid, or worse, incompetent and indifferent. Yet in other stories, and in these teachers' classrooms, writing was described in ways that seemed to contradict what appeared to be a state of continual crime and punishment. Why was it that plagiarism seemed to challenge teachers' understanding of writing and writing pedagogy? How could teachers have what I thought were contradictory ideas about their classroom?

I decided to focus on how high school ELA teachers navigate through their complex and sometimes contradictory ideologies about plagiarism and writing pedagogy. Thus, the project's orienting question is *how do high school ELA teachers make sense of their experiences with and understandings about plagiarism through their talk?* In particular, I was interested in the discursive choices teachers made when talking about plagiarism. I wanted to investigate the ways in which teachers talk about plagiarism away from the occasional moments in the classroom when the teacher directly engages with discussions of plagiarism with their students or the difficult-to-capture moments of discovery of student plagiarism or subsequent confrontations with the student. In looking at the discursive choices teachers made when talking about plagiarism outside the classroom, I would be able to explore the layers of meaning in the language they used and to identify the ideological dilemmas teachers have in their constructions of plagiarism. Driving the project are three primary research questions:

1. *What discursive moves do teachers make when talking about plagiarism?*
2. *How does teachers' talk about plagiarism indicate ideological dilemmas concerning authorship, ownership, and community?*
3. *How do teachers navigate these ideological dilemmas about authorship, ownership, and community?*

This project seeks to validate the challenging work that teachers do in the classroom by highlighting the dilemmatic positions teachers find themselves in and allowing teachers' voices to be heard about these positions. This study looks to examine the ways in which teachers work through the various ideological camps and institutional forces to teach their students about writing, research, and academic honesty. In doing this, I bring into contrast the complex networks of relationships in which plagiarism is embedded. In highlighting the various dilemmas that teachers face, I am suggesting that teachers need to surface the inherent tensions that constitute our current understandings of plagiarism. These dilemmas also offer up a site to engage in conversations about the various writing practices that are central to academic success.

The findings from this dissertation offer new insights for thinking about plagiarism and the complex relationships between literacy practice and instruction for both the field of writing studies as well as teacher education. In this project, I argue that teachers can introduce examples of these ideological dilemmas in their classroom and model what they do to evaluate and assess authorship and textual ownership. Teachers can be aware of the social components of plagiarism

and how a sense of community—both within the school and among the English department teachers— shapes and is shaped by plagiarism. In addition, giving attention to the nature of these ideological dilemmas can provide teacher educators a way of addressing the difficult choices that beginning teachers face as they first encounter plagiarism in their classrooms. By providing a framework that allows for competing and conflicting ideologies as a way of engaging in debate and critical thinking, teacher educators can help enable new teachers to better navigate between intellectual and lived ideologies surrounding plagiarism and writing pedagogy.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

In Chapter Two, I explain the theoretical framework for the study, examining the key concepts, terms, and analytical approaches. In particular, I set out how my social constructionist stance on language, my understanding of plagiarism as a literacy practice, and the lens of ideological dilemmas as a social act work together to inform and direct this study. I identify and explore three key themes of plagiarism scholarship—namely, authorship, ownership, and community—and argue that we can better understand the complex network of plagiarism, writing, and schools by examining these constructs. Chapter Three introduces the study by setting out the study design, context for the study, and origins of the project. I describe the research site and participants. I then present my process of data collection and analysis. In addition, I provide a rationale for this study’s ethnographic approach. Chapter Four explores the dilemmatic ideologies of authorship that my participants have. I outline five major constructions of ideologies of authorship that emerged in teachers’ talk about plagiarism: the *Romantic*, the *apprentice*, the *professional*, the *school-based*, and the *exploratory*. I demonstrate how these ideologies of authorship display contrasting and sometimes contradictory constructions about authorship, and I posit that these ideological dilemmas have implications for classroom writing instruction when the curriculum and policies assume a single construction of authorship. Chapter Five focuses on the issues of textual ownership in the teachers’ talk. I show how several factors contributed to these dilemmas, in particular the teachers’ reverence and privileging of printed texts over digital texts and the use of a quasi-legal framework for textual ownership when discussing plagiarism and writing pedagogy. Chapter Six presents data on teachers’ talk about community, in particular the sense of community among teachers within the English department at Hopkins High. I argue that the interaction among teachers is an important force to consider as

we think about the social component of plagiarism. Throughout the dissertation, I make connections between my findings and teaching of English Language Arts. However, in Chapter Seven, I focus entirely on the value of this research for writing pedagogy and explore the implications this research has for college composition and teacher education.

## CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

**Kate:** *And, you know, I went home that day and stormed around my house and kicked everything I could that wasn't a child [laughter] 'cause I felt like a big stupid fraud in front of my whole department because I caved.*

*You know, we've been toeing the line; that's it, you got to stand strong, you got to – and, you know, I'm looking at this kid who's a disadvantaged kid to begin with, and what am I teaching her by not graduating? And at the same time, what am I teaching her by letting her graduate?*

*So I felt like the biggest scam artist ever where I'm sitting there saying well, this is what you have to do, you have to give 'em a zero, they have to – and then when push came to shove and it's graduation and everybody's staring at you, you know, what are you going to do? Do you worry about the kid? Do you worry about your reputation? Do you worry about the integrity of the program? So we're all teachers, and I think we all end up going with like the human solution every time we can, which is probably stupid. But, you know, sitting around talking with everybody about it, we were grading Regents exams when it came up, and everybody's like well, you have to fail her, right? She can't graduate.*

*And I'm sitting there going well, technically. And, you know, I'm the stupid boss lady [Laughter]. So what I do is, you know, precedent setting. And I don't like it that, you know – it's unfortunately, not as much of an exact science as we would like it to be because we're dealing with people. We're not dealing with business proposals and data entry and all kinds of other stuff. We're dealing with little kids.*

*So I think that's where no matter how many policies and safeguards we have in place, we're still going to run into the human element where we have to sit down and make decisions. And that's when talking to each other and being around the office and trying to figure it out together helps. But, you know, I had to walk back in this room, and everybody's like well, what'd you decide? And I had to say I'm a big wimp and I caved in. The kid's going to graduate.*

## INTRODUCTION

At the heart of this project are the words that the teachers at Hopkins High spoke during my interviews with them. Across nearly 16 hours of conversations, these teachers talked with me about their experiences with plagiarism, their reactions to hypothetical cases, and their writing pedagogy. They told stories about the students they taught. They relayed their thoughts about the challenges of teaching writing. They mused about the grey areas of plagiarism. As the preceding

transcript illustrates, teachers' talk about plagiarism is a rich site of multiple understandings of plagiarism and complex ideologies. In telling me about the end of her semester, Kate is doing more than just reporting the details of her experience with plagiarism. Through her talk, she is making sense of the situation, pulling from discourses about plagiarism, working through some of the conflicting forces in the educational setting, and making discursive moves to frame the student's behavior and her reaction in ways that help to organize and explain these separate pieces as a coherent narrative. Her talk is situated in the particulars of the local environment while at the same time it is informed by conversations and conventions of other places, situations, and times. For Kate, this case of plagiarism isn't just about similar texts, a purely textual matter; it also reflects the social relationships between the student and her, between the department and her, between the student and the school, and between the school and the teacher. And her talk is where some of the work she does to understand and navigate the complex terrain of plagiarism is happening and visible.

This project is driven by the idea that a close investigation of plagiarism in social terms can help us address the challenges of teaching about plagiarism. In this chapter, I set out how my social constructionist stance on language, my understanding of plagiarism as a literacy practice, and the lens of ideological dilemmas as a social act work together to inform and direct this study. By identifying the ways teachers talk about the challenges surrounding three key themes of plagiarism scholarship—namely, authorship, ownership, and community—I argue that we can better understand the complex network of plagiarism, writing, and schools. Armed with this knowledge, we can then enact writing instruction that attends to the social complexity of plagiarism.

Over the past thirty years the sociocultural turn in literacy and composition studies has reconceptualized the ways we think about writing, context, and ideology (Gee, 2010). Instead of focusing solely on the individual, new literacy studies reframes literacy as something people do with language rather than simply a product constructed from language. In addition, this action is seen as deeply situated within particular historical and social contexts. By examining literacy within this context, new literacy studies have emphasized the importance of such forces as institutions, home lives, communities, social conventions, and popular literacy practices to literacy events and practices. This turn has allowed scholars a lens through which to examine the complexity of literacy, seeing these actions as more than neutral set of skills. The sociocultural

turn has brought into sharp relief the multiple ideologies that are in play. That is, when people perform certain acts with and through language, they are enacting practices that are shaped by (and shape) sets of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

This project emerges from this tradition by investigating plagiarism through this social lens. In this chapter I explore the social components of talk, plagiarism, and ideological dilemmas highlighting how they work in concert in this study. Then, I draw from the literature cited in Chapter One to explore the ways I understand the three themes that I use in my analysis, namely, authorship, ownership, and community. Finally, I describe how this approach contributes to the existing conversations about plagiarism in the ELA setting.

## TALK AS SOCIAL

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how there has been a long-standing concern about plagiarism in both the high school ELA and college composition literature. Much of this scholarship on plagiarism focuses on the policing and prevention of student behavior through the design of better pedagogy. While many of the articles published in *English Journal* and *College Composition and Communication* argue that teachers should talk to their students about plagiarism, these articles often present this talk as primarily warnings and veiled threats rather than framing talk as dialogic and socially situated. In their collection *Critical Conversations about Plagiarism*, compositionists Donnelly, Ingalls, Morse, Post, and Stockdell-Giesler (2013) note that this traditional approach to combatting plagiarism through designing better assignments has failed to eliminate the general anxiety about plagiarism (for both teachers and students) and instead call for critical conversations to explore the complexity of plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a complicated concept, one that has much to do with cultural notions of authorship and the ownership of both language and ideas, and it functions in a variety of sometimes contradictory and often mysterious ways. It is not something that can be avoided simply, the way one might avoid speeding by keeping an eye on the speedometer. Understanding plagiarism is, therefore, a complex process—one that requires deep, critical thinking and discussion about writing, about developing one's own ideas while responding to and incorporating the ideas of others.

Donnelly et al. highlight the importance of the interaction in this conversation. It is not merely about telling students about the dangers of plagiarism; instead, it is about working with students to understand and explore the “cultural notions” that are shaped by and shape plagiarism. Through this work, students and teachers can better understand the complexity of writing and

attribution. This present study aims to contribute to that conversation through the careful and thoughtful exploration of teachers' talk about plagiarism. I contend that without a better understanding of the language choices that teachers use when talking about plagiarism and writing pedagogy (and the underlying ideologies that are reflected in these choices), the best-planned curriculum and scholarship about plagiarism can seem misaligned with teachers' intellectual and lived ideologies. This disconnect can then undermine the instruction in the classroom.

Thus, this project begins with my participants' talk about plagiarism. I use the term *talk* to mean the social language-in-use of teachers in my study. Although this project pays careful attention to the specific words individual teachers say, I am more interested in the social components of talk. I draw from the work of discursive psychology, whose theorists posit that "participants' conversational versions of events (memories, descriptions, formulations) are constructed to do communicative, interactional work" (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 16). That is, "talk performs *actions*" (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001, p. 162). And that action is a dynamic, generative, interactive, and social practice (Erickson, 2004). This study situates itself in Erickson's two-part claim that "the conduct of talk in local social interaction as it occurs in real time is unique, crafted by local social actors for the specific situation of its use in the moment of its uttering, and...the conduct of talk in local interactions is profoundly influenced by processes that occur beyond the temporal and spatial horizon of the immediate occasion of interaction" (p. 197). Talk responds to and emerges from the immediate situation—in the case of this study, the questions I posed during the interviews. But what these teachers talked about is also influenced (and influences) forces that extend beyond the interviews, such as the professional conversations about plagiarism or the institutional policies about academic honesty.

Similarly, I draw upon the notion that language is dialogic and heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981). Language is a living and responsive thing that draws from previous utterances and shapes future utterances. The words we use are not drawn from an abstract storehouse; they are always repurposed from previous speakers, who have used those words for different intentions. Bakhtin (1981) claims that

the word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's "own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language... but rather it

exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (p. 294)

This circulation of language reveals the ways in which talk is shaped by and shapes other discourses. The language of an individual teacher at Hopkins High does not arise in a vacuum and was not isolated to that single utterance. The metaphors and stories teachers tell are filled with words that have already been used for other purposes by other speakers. Indeed, the words on the page in a student's essay are not entirely owned by the student. They are appropriated and adapted.

My belief that our utterances “half someone else's” is part of my own intellectual ideology about language. On one hand, I see the open circulation of words and texts; I understand that my utterances are colored and shaped by my own social and historical moments. I am a little uneasy with the construct of originality. These words cannot be mine entirely. And yet, in my lived ideologies about language, I frequently talk about the texts that I created, about my ideas and my own turn of phrase. I expect other writers to acknowledge which words are theirs and which words come from another writer. I navigate between these two ideologies—the intellectual ideology that accepts language as a fluid, ever-changing, shared resource and the lived ideology that understands language as the fixed expression of one's ideas. It is in this negotiation that I see the challenges of responding to plagiarism. Rather than seeing textual ownership as an either/or proposition, I argue that it is the active debate between these ideologies that allow teachers to make decisions about where the boundaries are that circumscribe appropriate literacy practices. This decision-making is made within and through social processes.

By investigating teachers' talk, this project explores the social components of plagiarism. Rather than framing plagiarism as merely a textual feature located only on the page, I look to teachers' talk about plagiarism in order to investigate the social aspects that make plagiarism a literacy practice, to investigate the multiple voices and influences that shape their talk and the ideologies they hold. Central to this study is the notion that teachers' talk is not merely an act of reporting or putting into words their thoughts and experiences. Talk is dynamic and generative. Teachers use talk to construct meaning, to challenge ideas, to debate the appropriate response to an event, to make sense of the dilemmatic landscape of plagiarism.

In both my experience as a teacher and as a researcher, I am aware of the ways in which the local talk of the classroom pulls from the discourses of the department and the school when

individual teachers appropriate examples and methods of talking from their mentors and peers. In addition, I've seen how teachers are influenced by the latest professional development or journal article that is circulated around the department. This influence doesn't always move from the global to the local, however. This project is a testament to the ways in which individual teachers' voices can reverberate beyond their classroom in an attempt to shape the discourse surrounding plagiarism. While the current climate in education reform has made it more difficult for individual classroom teachers to create curriculum which is tailored to their local situation, the social nature of talk dictates that their ways of speaking must be attuned to the local conditions in order to be effective. More broadly speaking, this social component to talk also extends to the institution of education. Lesley Rex (2010) claims that

[e]ducation—teaching, studenting, learning, failing, achievement, progress—exists as a network of social structures socially generated, maintained and altered. Even seemingly freestanding aspects of public education such as curriculums and classrooms are fundamentally social in how they operate. These social phenomena are deeply ideological in the sense that dispositions, beliefs, values, and desires are implicated in their creation, sustenance and transformation. (p.5)

I would add that how teachers talk, both in the classroom and outside the classroom, is also deeply ideological and significant to understanding how schooling operates. Thus, this project pays particular attention to the ways in which teachers' talk in and through the other social structures found at Hopkins High.

One aspect of teachers' talk of interest to this study is teachers' use of stories about plagiarism during the interviews. While my project is not exclusively a narrative analysis<sup>9</sup>, I draw from Catherine Kohler Reissman's (1993, pp. 4-5) assertion that "informants' stories do not mirror a world 'out there.' They are constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive." That is, stories are not merely the neutral reporting of events that the participants have experienced. Instead, these stories are acts of meaning-making by the speakers, whose discourse contain meaning not just in the content but also in the manner in which they deliver these ideas. In addition, the stories teachers tell about plagiarism can be important pedagogical tools. As Rex, Murnen, Hobbs, and McEachen (2002, p. 792) have shown, "stories articulate, affirm, and strengthen teachers' interests and values." While this project looks at the stories teachers tell outside of the classroom, several participants echoed

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<sup>9</sup> A fuller description of the methods of this project is found in Chapter 3.

Kate's statement: "I think I will— without, obviously, using names, I think I will absolutely cite the issues that came up this year when I introduce Turnitin to my students, especially the freshmen. But even the— you know, the Junior Honors kid and say, 'Listen. You don't have options. This is how this is going to [be]...' —and I'm sure as hell using it for creative writing this year, too" (Rnd 4). The stories teachers tell outside of the classroom are quite likely to find their way into the classroom, either directly or by shaping the ways the teachers talk about and react to plagiarism. Thus, while this project does not investigate how teachers talk about plagiarism *in* the classroom, their talk about plagiarism during the interviews is important as it shapes and affirms teachers' understanding about plagiarism, which then has an impact on their teaching.

Another avenue of exploration in this study is the investigation of the metaphors that teachers use in reporting plagiarism. The works of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Billig and MacMillan (2005) and Litman (2008) all argue that the use of metaphors shapes the speakers' understanding of the issues. While Lakoff and Johnson argue that the conceptual mapping of metaphors can become weakened or blurred through use, creating language that is no longer taken to be metaphorical, Billig and MacMillan claim that speakers can resurrect "dead" metaphors and repurpose that language for a variety of rhetorical purposes. Of interest to this study is the ways in which teachers used metaphors, both resonant and "dead," to describe the practices surrounding plagiarism. For instance, in a number of interviews, my participants talked about their decisions whether or not to "nail" students who plagiarized. Here, teachers were using metaphorical language that seems to have lost its sense of the juxtaposition of apprehending a criminal and the act of fastening with small metal spike. None of the participants was interested in crucifying their students. These teachers were not advocating corporal punishment for plagiarism. And yet, the language they were using pulled from this discourse of crime and punishment. Similar to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) examples of metaphors of argument as war—metaphors that color the discourse even if they don't rise to the surface as specific comparison--these blurred metaphors about plagiarism appeared throughout interviews. In other instances, teachers used metaphors about plagiarism that seemed to be more strategic. Teachers rhetorically constructed figurative language in an attempt to describe plagiarism in a novel way. For instance, one participant described plagiarism in a student's writing as an inaccurate "portrayal" of the student. Here the teacher evokes an image of writing as an artistic

representation of the writer and plagiarism distorts or falsely depicts the writer. In both cases the teachers' talk about plagiarism used metaphors to help describe complex notions: in the case of "portrayal" the speakers' attempted to capture the relationship between authorship and representation, and in the example of "nail," the teachers expressed some of the challenging emotional reactions to plagiarism (anger and the desire to apprehend the criminal). In addition, the use of metaphors allows participants to express dilemmatic beliefs. Speakers can present conflicting notions through metaphors: teachers can use violent images of "nailing" plagiarists, indicating some sense of wanting to exact punishment from the plagiarist, while still using language that isn't immediately read as angry because "nail" is also used in more positive connotations such as *nailing an audition* or *nail down the details*. This project investigates the various layers of meaning in metaphors in order to better understand the ways teachers talk about plagiarism.

#### PLAGIARISM AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE

This project builds on the idea that plagiarism is something people do with writing in a particular historical, social, and cultural context (Howard, 1999; Howard & Robillard, 2008; Valentine, 2006). Thus, I follow Rebecca Moore Howard's (1999, p. 164) claim that "plagiarism, finally, is not a feature of a text. It is an action that involves both reader and writer. It must involve both reader and writer; and it must involve context, as well; for actions do not take place in some atemporal ether." In addition, I align myself with Kathryn Valentine's (2006, pp. 89-90) argument that our understanding of plagiarism must take into account the "participants' values, attitudes, and feelings as well as their social relationship to each other and to the institutions in which they work." It is this social component of plagiarism—in particular the role of teachers in this system of relationships—that occupies the main thrust of the study.

A full history of the evolution of the concept of plagiarism is beyond the scope of this dissertation and has been successfully accomplished elsewhere by scholars such as Howard (1999), Kewes (2003), Macfarlane (2007), and Mallon (1989). Instead, I look at five instances of plagiarism in order to show how the concept is historically, contextually, and socially constructed: the website of Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection software company; the coining of the term by the Roman poet Martial; the contemporary poet Sandra Beasley's account of being plagiarized; the Lauder Affair; and the case of Yambo Ouologuem's novel *Bound to*

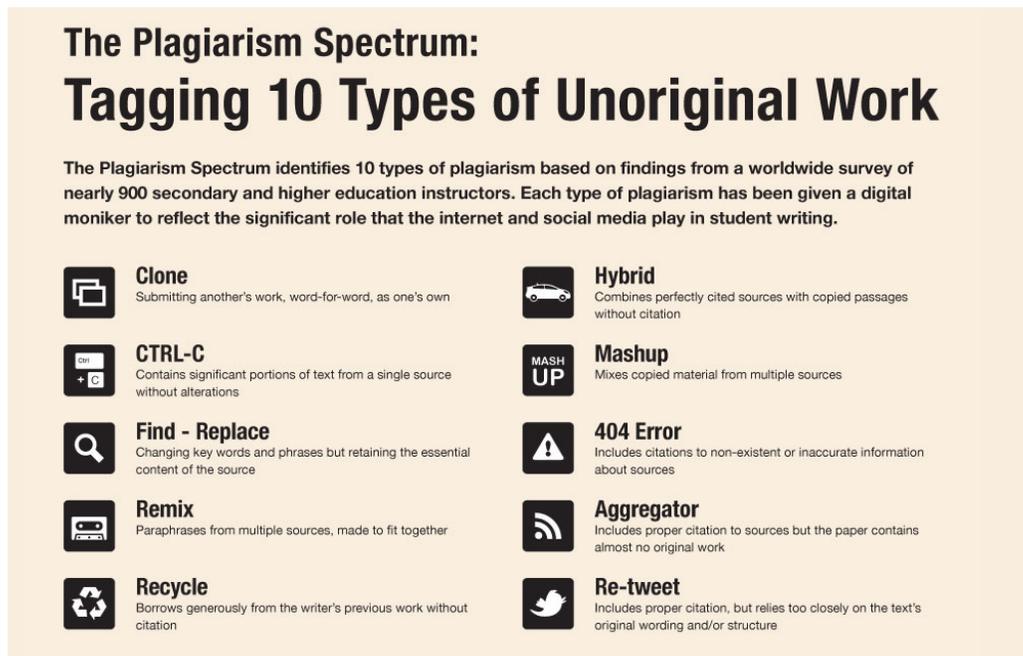
*Violence*. These five moments all fall under the general category of plagiarism, but a closer examination reveals significant differences in terms of the literacy practice they describe. I present these five moments not as a timeline of the changing understanding of plagiarism, but as particular moments in which we can see how plagiarism exists in those specific historical moments. More than just examples of interesting footnotes to a larger history of plagiarism, these five cases reveal the social complexity of plagiarism. If we ignore how plagiarism is defined and shaped by its context, we risk reducing plagiarism to a single type of ethical violation and eliminate important differences as readers and writers engage in a wide variety of literacy practices. Over 2,000 years separate Martial's epigrammatic cycle on plagiarism from the website of Turnitin.com, and it is a mistake to draw a straight line from the Classical poet to the plagiarism detection software maker. Although some, like literary critic Christopher Ricks (2002, p. 223), claim that plagiarism has always been a moral issue no matter how intellectual property laws and politics have changed over time, I argue that investigating plagiarism as a literacy practice that is embedded in a particular socio-historical moment provides a more robust lens to understand the complexity of plagiarism.

In the section that follows, I investigate these five historical moments where an accusation of plagiarism was leveled at a writer. In order to illustrate the complexity of plagiarism, I describe the details of these moments, highlighting the importance of the contextual forces surrounding the claims of plagiarism. I begin with Turnitin.com, an online plagiarism detection service, in order to highlight the ways popular constructions of plagiarism, despite the fears of the Internet and social media, resist a sense of the social. I then explore how the other moments were about much more than merely textual similarity. I end by offering a set of observations that bring in strong relief the social components of plagiarism.

### **Turnitin.com: Resisting the Social**

Turnitin.com is a paid service that allows teachers to upload students' writing in order to compare it to a large database of websites, academic journals, books, and other previously submitted student papers. In addition to its plagiarism detection service, Turnitin.com provides electronic grading and peer-editing tools. The site is popular among schools, with Turnitin.com claiming that it is used at over 10,000 educational institutions. As part of an educational component to the site, Turnitin presents several white papers on plagiarism and other resources

for instructors. One of these resources is the “Plagiarism Spectrum,” which identifies ten types of plagiarism and ranks these in terms of prevalence and seriousness (see *Figure 4*). Here, Turnitin adopts “internet and social media” terminology to describe different types of plagiarism. Students are guilty of creating “unoriginal work” through remixing, cutting-and-pasting, or re-tweeting. Despite the use of social media labels in this taxonomy, the focus is on the textual document and downplays the roles of the student, readers, or other writers. The list presents plagiarism as a recognizable textual feature and does not indicate any context-specific factors. The list uses social media terms but ignores the social elements of these practices. For example, the act of “re-tweeting” is cast as a simple citation error. The “mashup” is plagiarism of multiple sources, while the copy function (“CTRL-C”) is only from one source. The variable that is highlighted is the intensity of the plagiarism by the individual. It is interesting to note that in 2008, Turnitin.com published a similar list of types of plagiarism that used terminology that placed more attention on the student. For example, types of plagiarism included “The Ghost Writer,” “The Self-Stealer,” “The Misinformer,” and “The Resourceful Citer.” In this list, the students’ role in the plagiarism is more pronounced and the digital aspects of plagiarism are absent. Not surprisingly, both lists focus on the types of plagiarism that Turnitin.com is designed to detect. Plagiarism detection software like Turnitin.com is able to identify short strings of similar characters. While the exact algorithm is not public knowledge, Posner (2007) reports that



*Figure 4* The Plagiarism Spectrum from [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org)

Turnitin is able to increase its sensitivity as the number of matches within a document increases. This, of course, has led researchers (and students) to investigate ways to circumvent plagiarism detection software (PDS). Gillam, Marinuzzi, and Ioannou (2010) and Heather (2010) have demonstrated that Turnitin can be fooled by replacing Latin characters (a, e, or o) with similar looking Greek (o) or Cyrillic letters (a, e) or creating nearly invisible layers of text. In these cases, plagiarism has become reduced to similarities in Unicode, the computer code that allows for the encoding and representation of digital text. At this level of analysis, the actual meaning of the text is unimportant. Instead, plagiarism is when the digital fingerprint of a text bears some similarities to some other document previously captured in a database.

It is understandable why educators might subscribe to Turnitin.com's construction of plagiarism. Turnitin simplifies plagiarism to an issue of textual similarity. It offers a digital solution to what is seen as a growing digital problem. Even as it attempts to embrace the social elements of writing through its PeerMark features that allow students to peer-edit each other's papers, Turnitin.com reifies the notion of plagiarism as a textual crime of the individual.

The typology of plagiarism that Turnitin.com represents, in a way, returns us to the metaphorical work started by the first-century Roman poet Martial. Instead of seeing plagiarism in its etymological meaning of kidnapping, this list draws from the increasing digital nature of writing to frame plagiarism as a cybercrime. "The Plagiarism Spectrum" replaces a sense of plagiarism as human trafficking with a notion that plagiarism is a question of transferring data. Plagiarism in this case is not about the abduction of the anthropomorphized text but the inappropriate dissemination and attribution of bytes of data. The switch in language does not eliminate, however, the legacy of plagiarism as kidnapping. Thus, plagiarism in the twenty-first century can only be understood by looking both forward and backward in time.

### **Martial and Beasley: Kidnapping Words**

The *Oxford English Dictionary* ("Plagiarism," 2013) defines *plagiarism* as "[t]he action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own; literary theft." This notion of plagiarism as theft begins with the Roman poet Martial's metaphorical use of the term *plagiarism* (which typically referred to kidnapping of slaves or children) to inappropriate use of another's text. While this sense of plagiarism as theft remains, the social context of plagiarism changes the ways in which writers describe and understand the value of

what is being stolen. In the next section, I compare Martial's initial application of the term plagiarism in his epigrams to contemporary poet Sandra Beasley's essay in which she describes her discovery of being the victim of plagiarism. These two events demonstrate both how the notion of plagiarism has deep and lasting resonances and how the construct of plagiarism is deeply social.

In a series of epigrams, Martial complains that a rival poet has "kidnapped" his poems, has enslaved them, and is pretending that these words are his own. In epigram 2.20, Martial writes to his patron about the actions of a rival plagiarist:

Quintianus, I commend you my little books—that is, however, if I can call them mine when your poet friend recites them. If they complain of harsh enslavement, come forward to claim their freedom and give bail as required. And when he calls himself their owner, say they are mine, discharged from my hand. If you shout this three or four times, you will make the kidnapper [*plagiario*] ashamed of himself (as cited in Terry, 2007).

Classics scholar J. Mira Seo (2009) notes that the trope of publication as manumission was common in Roman letters but Martial was unusual in the way he described the commodification of poetry. By presenting poetry through both an economic and legal lens, Martial undermines the traditional notion of poetry as immaterial and an everlasting song. In this epigram, the speaker recommends his books of poetry to a patron, Quintianus. These poems are described as ones formerly owned by the speaker, who had earlier released them through their publication. The plagiarist ("the poet friend") then claims these poems as his own by performing them to an audience. Martial asks Quintianus to buy their freedom and then publically shame the plagiarist. As postcolonial scholar Marilyn Randall (2001) has pointed out, this is more than simply theft. The speaker's poems are described as freed slaves, and he treats them as property. Martial still maintains a claim of ownership, but they are poems that he has already "discharged." The plagiarist has some claim of ownership because of the possession (and perhaps the performance). Interestingly, Martial asks Quintianus to buy the poems, but only if the poems "complain of harsh enslavement." The public humiliation of the plagiarist is depicted as the climax of the confrontation, not the release of the poems themselves. It is unclear where the poems will go after they are freed a second time: will they return to Martial? Or perhaps they will find a new home with a better reader in Quintianus, who will recognize their true lineage.

Two key elements are worth noting. The first element is the way in which the poems are described. The poems are freed slaves, former possessions of the speaker. They are alive, and

they have the ability to speak, if only to “complain” about their treatment. The poems are not just objects. Yet, they are still less than fully human. The second element is the desire of the speaker of the poem to get revenge on the plagiarist through a public shaming. The speaker desires that the plagiarist be called out as a kidnapper. Martial’s focus in the epigram is about reputation—both his own and the rival poet’s—more than the text itself. The speaker wants the plagiarist to suffer for his crime of kidnapping.

Nearly two thousand years later, contemporary poet Sandra Beasley (2013) describes her experience dealing with a plagiarist named Christian Ward in an essay entitled “Nice Poem; I’ll Take It.” In this essay in *The New York Times Sunday Book Review*, Beasley recounts the acts of Ward, who had plagiarized several poets including Beasley. Like Martial, Beasley aims to publically shame the plagiarist. She calls him out by name and provides evidence of his crimes. Although Ward issued a formal apology in which he states that he has “begun to examine [his] published poems to make sure there are no similar mistakes” and wants “to be as honest as [he] can with the poetry community,” Beasley does not seem satisfied. She parses the words of Ward’s apology:

“Published,” it seems to me, suggests Ward is far less concerned about the core transgression than he is about the consequences of being caught. “Mistakes” suggests he still thinks of this as some errant drafting exercise, as if our poems are Mad Libs waiting for completion at his hand. And being truly “honest” dictates reaching out not only to the poets involved in your publicized thefts but to the rest of us whom you know to be waiting in the wings.

Beasley is dubious of the meaning of the words in the statement; Ward is a plagiarist and has already falsely used words, so why should he be trusted in his apology? Beasley points out that Ward seems to minimize the crime of plagiarism. She sees Ward using the poems as “steppingstones” for his career. She wonders if Ward thinks that the poems are fill-in-the-blank templates. Like Martial, Beasley sees the act of the plagiarist as theft. But instead of describing the poems as freed slaves, she describes the words of the poem as both an essential part of the poet and as something that nourishes the poet. She writes that her poem “August” that Ward published with minor changes as “July” was “a hard poem, the kind that rips you wide.” The words of the poem come from deep within the poet. These words are a piece of the poet. At the same time, Beasley describes the act of composing as a sensual moment of tasting the words in her mouth: “With every draft I read aloud, I tasted the words in my mouth. Salty, sweet, fatty, lean, velvet, metallic, mean. Mine.” For Beasley, Ward has stolen something more than just the

words on the page. His plagiarism is a much more intimate violation. By claiming that Beasley's poem is his own, Ward is stealing not only the expression of an idea but the experience that led to that expression. Beasley cannot imagine that the act of plagiarism can offer any sort of benefit to Ward. She asks, "What does it feel like, tasting words you've stolen? Like sand, I suspect. Sand that a man dying of dehydration drinks in the desert, never slaking his thirst." The nourishment that writing provides the poet cannot be duplicated when the words are stolen.

The juxtaposition of Martial and Beasley reveals that the notion of plagiarism as theft remains a strong metaphor for plagiarism. Although separated by almost two thousand years, the two poets express a sense of injustice at having their poems stolen. Both poets also want to publically shame the plagiarist in the name of justice. They appeal to a wider audience to make their case. However, the way in which they describe their poems is different. For Martial, the words are servants of the poet. The work that these words do is now in service of another master. For Beasley, the words are almost a part of her own being. When Ward claims them as his own, he is also claiming a piece of Beasley's life.

The layers of meaning in the metaphors we use to describe plagiarism are shifting and fluid. A contemporary of Martial might infer different tensions about the ownership and economic transaction surrounding texts and slaves than a modern reader. Likewise, the metaphor of plagiarism as the kidnapping of slaves resonates differently depending on the context. Martial and his contemporaries might see the heart of the injustice residing in the kidnapping. Current readers might hesitate at the description of texts as slaves. Thus, the metaphor of kidnapping, which still is powerful today, has not merely continued unchanged from ancient Rome to today. Layers of meaning are added and stripped away over time creating a concept that while appearing constant on the surface is complex and heteroglossic. Beasley's description of plagiarism still centers on a sense of theft as does Martial's, but her texts are not slaves. So while the injustice described might resonate the same to their readers, the ways in which the metaphor operates has shifted. Text is still seen as alive and something the writer owns.

## Lauder and Ouologuem: Claiming and Reclaiming Authorship

When the term *plagiarism* was introduced into English, it initially appeared as a legal term, *plagium*. It retained its denotation of kidnapping or “man-stealing.”<sup>10</sup> However, shortly after its appearance as a legal term, writers begin to pick up on the metaphoric use of literary theft.<sup>11</sup> The most common early uses of the term *plagiarism* in English refer to the act of taking credit for full works; the term is used to describe the publishing of another writer’s work under the plagiarist’s name, or in some cases, the actual theft of books from booksellers (Terry, 2007). It is not until later in the eighteenth century that *plagiarism* is used to describe the inappropriate borrowing of parts (words or ideas) from another writer (Terry, 2007). In the majority of these instances, legal overtones continue. And as a crime, the accusations against writers have often been presented as indictments. Those who make claims against the plagiarist often present their evidence in the court of public opinion.

In this section, I look at two accusations of plagiarism that were played out very publicly. In both cases, the public opinion shifted. The reputations of the writers initially were tarnished but then were rehabilitated. This change was not entirely about the textual similarities but rather about the political and social context in which these accusations were made.

In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, William Lauder, a Scottish Latin scholar, published a series of five essays on John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. In the first essay, Lauder notes similarities between Milton’s poem and other contemporary poems, as well as other Classical poems (Shawcross, 1995). Later, Lauder viciously attacks Milton as a plagiarist claiming that he intentionally masked the appropriation of modern poets: “His industrious concealment of his helps, his peremptory disclaiming all manner of assistance, is highly ungenerous, nay criminal to the last degree, and absolutely unworthy of any man of common probity and honour” (as cited in Loewenstein, 2010, pp. 237-8). Lauder’s essays set off a debate about originality, translation,

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<sup>10</sup> OED: “1577 H. I. tr. H. Bullinger 50 *Godlie Sermons*. II. iii. vii. sig. Kk.ii/2, ‘And yet manstealing is moste sharpely forbidden. Now they commit: the offence called Plagium [L. Plagium], yt is to saye, manstealing, whosoeuer do entice other mennes bondmen to runne from their maisters.’”

<sup>11</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word’s first appearance in English pertaining to writing is in Bishop Joseph Hall’s *Virgidemiarum* in 1598—in the form of “plagiary sonnet-wright.” Ben Jonson’s (1602) satirical play, *The Poetaster*, contains the line “Why? The ditty’s is all borrowed; ‘tis Horace’s: hang him, plagiary” (iv. iii. 96).

imitation, and plagiarism.<sup>12</sup> Many of these debates center on Milton's character and his place as an English author. In an ironic twist, Lauder was ultimately shown to have fabricated his evidence against Milton. In fact, some of the proof of plagiarism was culled from Latin translations of *Paradise Lost* (Goldgar, 2001). What is interesting to note are the ways in which Milton's defenders addressed the accusations. The Reverend John Douglas, for example, in his pamphlet *Milton Vindicated from the Charge of Plagiarism*, writes, "There may be such a thing as an *original Work* without *Invention*, and a *Writer* may be an *Imitator* without *Plagiarism*" (as cited in Goldgar, 2001, p. 6). Douglas does not deny the textual similarities between *Paradise Lost* and other poems. Instead, he creates a framework for seeing distinction between imitation and plagiarism. For Douglas, Milton did not have to make up new plots, characters, or lines of dialogue to be original. Instead, for Douglas, Milton improved on the works of the ancients by imitating the traditions, conventions, and bits of texts from the epic rather than creating something unrelated to the past.<sup>13</sup>

The Lauder Affair highlights the ways in which plagiarism involves more than just questionable text. In particular, not only are the author and the accuser of the plagiarized text situated in their particular historical moment but also the source material itself cannot be separated from its social, historical, and political context. What texts authors use as inspiration and what sources are incorporated into a work are not merely matters to be outlined in a style guide. Nor is it merely a simple connection between or repetition of texts. For many of Milton's

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<sup>12</sup> Christine Rees (2010), in *Johnson's Milton*, describes the complexity of a charge of plagiarism against Milton: "For *Paradise Lost*, of all texts, to be at the centre of a plagiary case seems peculiarly apropos. Central to the epic, and to its foundation myth, is the question of origins, and hence originality; authorship and rebellion against, denial and displacement of, authorship. Baines speaks of 'the central transgressive action of *Paradise Lost* with its original Satanic forger'. Satan, the 'first grand thief' (*Paradise Lost* IV. line 192) is the father of plagiarist, who not only copies the divine works, but also denies their source, In claiming his own originality, his self-authorship, he attempts to erase the authorship of God. Further, he enacts the root sense of plagiarist, a kidnapper or seducer, trapping Eve in his rhetorical net. Lauder's accusation of plagiarism leveled against Milton might appear to realign the author with his own Satan, an identification that eighteenth-century critics work hard to avoid by separating the demonic rebel from the divinely inspired genius. Viewed in this light, the outrage many readers over Lauder's apparent revelation that *Paradise Lost* is built on a lie is even more understandable." (p. 105)

<sup>13</sup> David Scott Kastan, in the introduction to a new edition of *Paradise Lost*, sees this relationship with the past as one based on transcendence rather than subordination: "...Milton invokes recognizable epic scenes and conventions not to claim his place in the tradition [of the epic] but to proclaim his superiority over it" (Kastan and Hughes xvi).

readers, his appropriation of classical texts not only was different from his use of contemporary ones but should have been different.

What sources are cited or not is more than just a question of honesty. Shirley K. Rose (1996) describes the academic citation as a “courtship ritual” that foregrounds the citation’s work of identification. The writer’s citations act rhetorically, which

builds her identification with both her readers and the other writers she cites in her text as she negotiates for a place in a relatively small and well-defined community. When she incorporates words, ideas, and conclusions which have already appeared elsewhere, she does not present these because they are unfamiliar to her readers so much as she presents them as a reminder to the disciplinary colleague of knowledge they presumably have in common. Thus the citation is a means by which the reader may identify more fully with the writer. The writer, by citing other literature, implies a narrative of the process by which she has arrived at her own ideas or new information, suggesting (perhaps with a hint of coercion), “this is what we already have believed, this is how I propose to challenge or further develop our belief, and you, dear reader, will believe this new way too.” (41)

While *Paradise Lost* is not an academic document, Rose’s lens of seeing citation as courtship ritual helps us see what happens when the social dance of citation is disregarded. The work that is done through citation is important and interpersonal. When a writer is accused of obscuring this narrative through plagiarism, these connections through acknowledgement and citation are strained. The accusation of plagiarism is not merely a statement of fact. It is an act that has political and social consequences.

First published in 1968, Yambo Ouologuem’s novel *Le Devoir de Violence* (translated into English as *Bound to Violence* or *Duty to Violence*) was hailed as original, radical, and authentically African. Ouologuem was the first African to win the prestigious Prix Renaudot and was heralded as the new voice of African writers. Ouologuem was a media sensation: He was a guest on the *Today Show* and his book was favorably reviewed by the *New York Times* and *Le Monde*. After the novel was translated into English by Ralph Manheim, however, accusations of plagiarism began to emerge. Similarities between Ouologuem’s novel and several other authors, most notably Graham Greene, were catalogued in article after article. The French publisher, Editions du Seuil, pulled the books from the shelves. Ouologuem retreated to his home in Mali. The attacks against Ouologuem became so intense that some critics questioned whether Ouologuem could be considered the author of any part of the novel at all. The novel went from original to criminal virtually overnight. Later, some scholars attempted to reclaim Ouologuem’s

reputation by situating the novel in terms of the larger issues of postcolonialism and postmodernism. In 2008, the novel was republished in *The Yambo Ouologuem Reader*. Christopher Wise, the editor and translator of this new collection, moves beyond the questions of whether the novel contains other unacknowledged excerpts of other texts and instead addresses the notion of the novel's originality:

Today, it is no longer possible to deny the *Le Devoir de Violence*'s literary importance. History has passed its verdict on the question of this novel's alleged lack of 'authenticity,' for no merely 'plagiarized' text could command so much sustained critical interest. The novel itself offers the best possible proof of Ouologuem's originality, an irrefutable testament to both his integrity as a man and genius as a writer. (Wise, 2008, p. viii)

Postcolonial scholar Marilyn Randall (2001) outlines this trend of the "shifting status of the 'plagiarisms' in *Bound to Violence*" claiming that "the 'plagiarisms' become, in postcolonial critical discourse, a legitimate act of revenge perpetrated in the colonizer: a contemporary enactment of the metaphor of plagiarism as (counter-)conquest" (139). In her chapter "Imperial Plagiarism," the construction of plagiarism moves beyond the surface level and includes questions of power and identity. Randall highlights Ouologuem's novel as a case of "the sociopolitical ramifications of the postmodern aesthetic of plagiarism" (131). By keeping the text in its social context and not viewing it as a fixed text, Randall is able to interrogate the implications of sociopolitical forces that drive the construction of originality. She does not look at the language of Greene's text and Ouologuem's text in order to prove originality. Instead, Randall sees Ouologuem's text as part of "a discursive strategy for gaining dominance in a struggle for cultural power" (139). In addition, Randall brings to the surface significant power relationships that are a result of the accusations leveled against Ouologuem, especially by Western critics.

The Ouologuem case raises interesting questions about culture, textual ownership, plagiarism, and authorship. Rather than framing Yambo Ouologuem as a literary criminal, many scholars now argue that his work was, like all writing, a political act. As a social practice, plagiarism cannot avoid the complications that occur when text is circulated across cultural and geographic boundaries. And as a social practice it is framed and interpreted through ever-changing critical lenses. As scholars re-imagine and re-theorize the processes and products of writers, the ways in which we can understand plagiarism also shift. What was once considered a work of genius might later be called unoriginal. What was once dismissed as plagiarism might in

the future be deemed meaningful protest. *Le Devoir de Violence* has been labelled as both plagiarism and as art. Yambo Ouologuem has been variously called a genius, a plagiarist, and an Islamic militant (Wise, 1999). He has been identified as an author and a criminal. This assignation of authorship in the Ouologuem case, like in the Lauder Affair, is not made in an ideologically neutral space.

## PLAGIARISM AS A LITERACY PRACTICE

I have demonstrated that plagiarism has always been an act that is deeply embedded in the particular social moment, from the economic forces implied in Martial's metaphorical use of plagiarism as kidnapping to the political forces that shaped and reshaped the reception of Ouologuem's novel. Plagiarism may be discovered through the similarity of words, but it has never been solely located in those words. It has far-reaching causes and reactions that reverberate across time and space.

Just as our common understandings of plagiarism seem to resist a sense of the social, a conception of plagiarism as a literacy practice can feel wrong. Often plagiarism is constructed as the opposite of writing. Whatever writing is, and whatever writing can do, plagiarism is seen as the direct opposite. Teachers often claim that we write to learn; no one but the most radical advocate plagiarism as a learning activity. Students might learn a lesson from plagiarism, but that is only from the corrective punishment of the teacher not the act of plagiarism. I am not advocating that we embrace, encourage, or celebrate plagiarism. Rather, it is important to see plagiarism as a literacy practice in order to investigate its complexities. Seeing plagiarism as merely *anti-writing* has not been a successful approach for schools and teachers. In this next section, I highlight two benefits of understanding plagiarism as a literacy practice: sponsorship and the influence of discourses.

### **Sponsors of Literacy**

It is uncommon to think about anyone gaining advantage from plagiarism. Even if students see a possible benefit (if they don't get caught) from plagiarizing, the concept of plagiarism is often constructed as a no-win situation for both students and teachers. In fact, plagiarism is often described as an act that robs students of their opportunities to learn or an offense that undermines the educational institution and cheapens the work the other honest

students do in the class. This framework fails to take into account the ways in which other actors both within and outside the educational setting are intimately involved in plagiarism. This project uses the concept of literacy sponsors as a way to capture the important roles that teachers, the school, and Turnitin.com play in the complex interactions surrounding plagiarism. Deborah Brandt (2001, p. 19) defines sponsors of literacy as “any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, or model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way.” As sponsors, teachers both attempt to suppress the literacy act of plagiarism, as well as encourage the literacy practice of academic writing. Likewise, the school works to regulate the types of writing students are able and required to engage in. Turnitin.com, as a company, needs to create a need for plagiarism detection software by highlighting the threat of digital plagiarism. By drawing attention to the qualities and quantity of plagiarism, Turnitin.com works to construct both the problem of and the solution to plagiarism. This notion of literacy sponsors allows me to attend to the ways in which plagiarism is a social act that involves other agents who have a vested interest in plagiarism and plagiarism detection. This is not to imply that these agents are nefarious actors hoping to turn students’ plagiarism into profit. (These types of forces are out there. For example, paper mills and ghost writers.) Instead, the notion of literacy sponsors opens up a pathway to understand the complex relationships between student, writing, and plagiarism.<sup>14</sup>

Mia Consalvo’s (2007) work on cheating in video games provides a complementary approach to thinking about the additional forces that act on the individual. Consalvo explores the flourishing industry surrounding videogames that provides players with an unfair advantage: Walkthroughs, cheat codes, and guides all provide solutions to the challenges of the game or means to circumvent the restrictions in the design of the game. Some of these cheats are sanctioned and promoted by the makers of the video games, and there is little consensus among

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<sup>14</sup> The term *literacy sponsor* is not without its limitations. As Anne Gere (2002, p. 285) points out in her review of Brandt’s book: “The virtue of the concept of ‘sponsorship’ is its capacious quality; a person, an institution, a social movement, and a variety of other entities can take on this definition. But that virtue also contains the liability of sometimes making it difficult to decide what a sponsor is not. The conclusion would be strengthened by some discussion of its capacity as an analytical tool.” The strength of the concept for this project is its ability to expand my investigation of plagiarism beyond the students’ text or the teachers’ definition of plagiarism. In order to delimit what is considered a significant and meaningful sponsor of literacy, I remain focused on the entities that are most immediate and powerful in shaping the discourse around plagiarism at Hopkins High: Turnitin.com, the administration, and the English department.

gamers about what aids are considered cheating (Consalvo, 2007). Similarly, plagiarism is situated within a network of agents providing assistance or policing this assistance. From websites like schoolsucks.com or cheathouse.com (online essay databases and homework sharing sites) to sparknotes.com (online study guides), all offer student writers ways of completing writing assignments that often violate teachers' definitions of original work. Applying Consalvo's work provides a way of seeing plagiarism as part of a culture and not just as an isolated act of the student writer.

I return briefly to the previous examples in order to demonstrate how intertwined in those acts (and accusations) of plagiarism were agents who enabled or suppressed literacy for some advantage.

### *Martial*

In Martial's epigrams, we encounter an example of a literal sponsor of literacy: the patron. Martial asks his patron not only for material support but also protection from libelous poets who have written under Martial's name (Saller, 1983). Quintianus is called upon to publically shame the plagiarist. It is the patron who has the social status and power in order to make the accusation of plagiarism more forceful. In this way, Quintianus is able to regulate who is able to perform the literacy act of plagiarism, or at least is able to enforce who can rightfully claim ownership of the texts. As Rome did not have copyright laws, it is left to the patrons to manage authorship.

### *Lauder*

Sponsorship also takes the form of providing a means and encouragement for the accusations of plagiarism. The Lauder Affair reveals the powerful role agents can take in these attacks, especially if the suspected plagiarist is a writer of some renown. William Lauder, a one-legged Scotsman<sup>15</sup>, was an outsider in the London literary scene. With the assistance of the essayist Samuel Johnson, Lauder was able to gain access to several publishing outlets. Lauder published his attacks on Milton in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, a leading monthly journal that had also published Johnson's work. With Johnson's encouragement, Lauder was able to propose a new edition of Neo-Latin poets, the same poets he accused Milton of stealing from. Lauder's

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<sup>15</sup> As a child, Lauder was struck by a golf ball and had his leg amputated.

claims against Milton were clearly influenced by political and economic motives: Lauder was interested both in tarnishing the reputation of Milton, whom he saw as an apologist for regicide, and in generating excitement for his own project (Marcuse, 1978). The Reverend Douglas, in writing his essay denouncing Lauder and his attacks on Milton, not only defends Milton's work but also asks for subscribers to Lauder's proposed books to renounce their support for the project. Once it was discovered that the claims were based on fabricated evidence, the financial backing for the book as well as the support for Lauder's attacks on Milton dried up. The attacks and counter-attacks quickly moved away from issues of attribution and citation and became personal. While some of Lauder's initial discoveries of the similarities between *Paradise Lost* and contemporary authors were legitimate and accurate, his attacks became more extreme against Milton. In Lauder's last published essay, Lauder calls Milton an "Arch Traitor and Rebel...a Murderer, and an Approver and Abetter of Murderers" (cited in Marcuse, 1978, p. 89). When the support for Lauder withered, Samuel Johnson ghostwrote an apology for Lauder in which "Lauder" renounces all claims to the "general Assertion that Milton had Recourse for Assistance to any of the Authors whose names I have mentioned" (cited in Marcuse, 1978). The Lauder Affair ends up as a curious footnote to the biographies of Milton and Johnson with layers of plagiarism and false claims that move the focus away from purely textual matters of plagiarism and begin to include issues of politics and economics. Johnson's sponsorship of both the literacy practices of Lauder and the assignation of authorship are both highly enmeshed in the political and social forces of the time. Early modern scholar Joseph Loewenstein (2010, p. 240) writes that "authoriality is not simply examined in the Lauder Affair, it is policed." Making accusations of plagiarism and handing out the consequences of practices deemed unethical or inappropriate requires a certain amount of power and control.

### *Ouologuem*

The literacy sponsorship surrounding Yambo Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence* reveals a similar set of agents—forces that supported the publication of the novel and forces that attacked the author as a fraud—but this time on a larger geo-political landscape. The plagiarism in *Bound to Violence* is not merely limited to the similarities of Ouologuem's novel to other texts. Instead, the plagiarism is a much broader act that incorporates other sponsors such as the critics and publishers of the novel. For instance, upon the release of Ouologuem's first novel, many critics

saw *Ouologuem* as the representation of a new African voice in the world of letters. The brutality of the sprawling, ambitious novel simultaneously reinforced and undercut images of Africa and African writers. The novel became a statement for the newfound emergence of African literature as many African nations were gaining independence. When the *Times Literary Supplement* first published allegations that the novel contained plagiarized portions in 1972, *Ouologuem* responded by claiming that the publisher had removed his notes indicating his sources from the manuscript (Wise, 2008). In addition, the author Graham Greene sued the publisher to ban the sale of the novel in France. Later, several postcolonial scholars attempted to recuperate *Ouologuem*'s novel by framing the plagiarism as an important statement about the ways in which authorship and power operate in the global economy (Appiah, 1999; Randall, 1991; Wehrs, 1992). Thus, plagiarism in the novel is not just about what *Ouologuem* did with his typewriter. Instead, the plagiarism is embedded in a social situation in which sponsors encourage and censor certain literacies. The publisher and the critics, as well as the writer himself, all shape and (re)interpret the act itself.

### *Turnitin*

Lastly, Turnitin.com is an active sponsor surrounding the literacy act of plagiarism. The company positions its software as a tool to help schools teach about plagiarism and to engage students in the writing process. Turnitin.com frames itself as a service that encourages original student research by highlighting any writing that is considered plagiarism. In addition to offering plagiarism detection software, Turnitin.com has recently expanded its service to include software to help teachers manage all facets of the writing classroom—from drafting to peer editing to providing feedback and recording grades. While these tools offer the possibility of better instruction and more timely feedback from teachers, this expansion of a plagiarism detection software company into all facets of the writing classroom becomes an attempt to make plagiarism detection part of the entire writing process. Turnitin.com acts as a powerful literacy sponsor, especially since, as an online entity, it is not limited to just the school day; it can reach students at anytime from anywhere they get online. Compositionist Sean Zwagerman (2008, p. 693) points out the possible danger of having Turnitin.com an integrated part of the writing classroom: “The better this technology works, the more likely it is to become natural, invisible, and permanent.” It is in Turnitin.com's best interest to have teachers remain vigilant in the

search for plagiarism; they want teachers to feel that without certain technological tools, they will not be able to catch the plagiarists.

Plagiarism, like all forms of literacy, has sponsors. For the purposes of this study, the concept of literacy sponsorship allows me to investigate the various forces that support and control plagiarism.

### **Discourses about plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a social act that is shaped and influenced by literacy sponsors. In addition, discourses from the media, the public, and the scholarship about plagiarism frame the ways people talk and understand plagiarism. I use the term *discourses* (Johnstone, 2008) to describe the prior texts and conversations that shape and are shaped by my participants' talk. Through my reading of the literature on plagiarism, I identify four types that shape and are shaped by teachers' talk about plagiarism. While there are several discourses available, I find the following four particularly salient, especially in terms of my interactions with the participants of this study:

1. Plagiarism as *fraud/crime*,
2. Plagiarism as *sin*,
3. Plagiarism as *disease*, and
4. Plagiarism as *cheating*.

While these four constructs are complex in their own right (see, for instance, Consalvo, 2007, 2009; Foucault, 1984; LaFollette, 1992; Leslie, 1997), the use of these discourses, however, often limits our understanding of the complexity of plagiarism by presenting plagiarism as clear-cut. So, while the notion of sin has kept religious thinkers and followers occupied for thousands of years to define and understand the various nuances of sin, to categorize and theorize about the varieties and significance of each sinful act, the use of this discourse when talking about plagiarism often loses any sense of this complexity and is reduced to a Commandment-like warning: Thou Shalt Not Commit Plagiarism. Likewise, the discourses of plagiarism as crime often depict plagiarism as a legal violation in which the teacher acts as judge, jury, and executioner. Some authors call for a metaphorical death penalty for plagiarists (Mahon, 2006). Others advocate making the punishment fit the crime (Robinson-Zanartu et al., 2005). The discourse of plagiarism as a crime focuses on policing and punishing the perpetrators. In most cases, the discourses limit our ability to see plagiarism as a literacy act. *Table 1* provides

examples of these four discourses. While many of these discourses intertwine and overlap, I have pulled them apart to be able to better identify these forces. Thus, it is very easy for a speaker to draw from both plagiarism as sin and use language related to plagiarism as cheating.

These discourses act as blunt tools to shape our understanding of plagiarism by constructing plagiarism as a destructive and negative force: Plagiarism threatens our lives (disease), our souls (sins), our institutions (cheating), and our laws (fraud/crime). With these discourses, there is little room to allow for pluralizing and nuancing plagiarism. It is difficult to have a little plague of plagiarism or to encourage students to be slightly dishonest in their writing. Responding to the power of these discourses, Rebecca Moore Howard advocates the abandonment of the term plagiarism altogether:

The term plagiarism, denoting a heterogeneous variety of textual activities, is doing cultural work that few of us would deliberately endorse. But notwithstanding attempts (my own included) to redefine that category, as long as the term marks any sort of academic activities, rules, or events, it will continue to do the distasteful, hierarchical work that its metaphors describe, even if some of us eschew or reject those metaphors. Walter Ong is right; the metaphors cannot be detached from the term they construct. Hence the term—and with it the notion of a unity among its heterogeneous subcategories—must be set aside, so that we can deal with those subcategories separately, in terms and under conditions that we ourselves endorse, instead of struggling against the yoke of a liberal cultural legacy” (Howard, 2000, p. 488).

While I agree that the notion of plagiarism is weighed down by its own history and the discourses and metaphor that are linked to it, I don't believe we must eliminate the term altogether. The purpose of this project is to investigate the complexity of teachers' talk about plagiarism not to replace the word *plagiarism* with all of its subcategories. Instead, I believe there is merit to embracing the term—no matter how flawed—precisely because of its unwieldiness. By mapping out the intersections of discourses and talk, this project aims to cut a path through the underbrush of plagiarism. This path can then be used to better understand the *ideological dilemmas* teachers face when talking about plagiarism.

Term	Possible components	Examples
<i>Fraud/crime</i>	Plagiarism as an illegal act Teachers as police Plagiarist as criminal	<p>“Because plagiarism is itself a deception, I don’t know why I was surprised Sumner might deceive people in other ways, except I had initially envisioned him as someone of limited imagination” (Bowers, 1997, p. 58)</p> <p>“First, we recognize that different types of plagiarism may have different degrees of gravity, thus warranting different types of consequences. Second, we need to develop more consistent guidelines that recognize or recommend consequences that are appropriate to the degree of gravity of the infraction or crime” (Robinson-Zanartu et al., 2005, p. 332)</p>
<i>Sin</i>	Plagiarism as a moral offense. Teachers as confessors. Plagiarist as sinners.	<p>“In more old-fashioned terms, plagiarism is a mortal sin, and the wages of sin are death.” (Mahon, 2006)</p> <p>“Faculty members gnash their teeth and wring their hands when students plagiarize. They cry for offenders to be punished. But now an online text-search program directed at their own work suggests that professors in biomedicine may be just as guilty of paper-writing sins” (Guterman, 2008)</p> <p>“The ‘sins’ section of the presentation was followed by a discussion of the consequences of engaging in plagiarism at Dickinson College, which include course failure and suspension, and information about where to get further help. Additionally, to summarize, reinforce the ‘seven deadly sins’ theme, and to end on a humorous note, the seven ‘sins’” were countered with seven ‘anti-plagiarism commandments.’ (Bombaro, 2007, p. 304)</p>
<i>Disease</i>	Plagiarism as epidemic Teacher as doctor Plagiarist as infected carrier	<p>“Marcia Angell, deputy editor of the <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i>, once proposed a medical analogy for classifying cases of scientific fraud into ‘benign’ (e.g., loose authorship or repetitive publication), ‘offensive’ (e.g., selective presentation of data), and ‘malignant’ (e.g., plagiarism)” (cited in LaFollette, 1992, p. 189)</p> <p>“...plagiarism is a disease that plagues college instructors everywhere” (Drum, 1986, p. 241)</p>
<i>Cheating</i>	Plagiarism as violation of rules Teacher as referee Plagiarist as player	<p>“It is just the latest plagiarism revelation afflicting American high schools and colleges, aggravated by an Internet age in which research papers — as well as programs to detect cheating — can be downloaded by the dollar. A Rutgers University professor's survey of 4,471 high school students last year found that more than half had stolen sentences and paragraphs from Web sites, 15 percent handed in papers completely copied from the Internet, and 74 percent had cheated on a test” (Wilgoren, 2002).</p> <p>“We cannot let students make cheating and plagiarizing into a game where <i>whoever cheats the most is the winner</i>. This is a game with serious consequences for the students, for education, and for society. Time and effort must go into creating a ‘level playing field’ at each school so students’ grades will reflect what they have accomplished, not how skillful or daring they have become at playing the cheating game” (Lathrop &amp; Foss, 2005, p. 6)</p>

Table 1. Types of Discourses about Plagiarism

## IDEOLOGICAL DILEMMAS

Amidst the complex web of literacy sponsorship, discourses, teacher talk and other contextual forces, it is not surprising that teachers' ideologies about plagiarism can be dilemmatic. This project draws upon the work of Billig et al. (1988) in order to connect teachers' talk with their ideologies. Billig et al. resist a simple definition of the term *ideological dilemma*. Instead, they provide a discursive triangle around the term exploring the possible uses of the term, a description of the phenomena captured by the term, and reasons why competing concepts may be incomplete or unsatisfactory. Central to their argument is the notion that thinking is dilemmatic, rhetorical, and "inherently social." Thus, the key components of this project all exist in a social sphere. Instead of seeing plagiarism as a textual feature and teachers' ideologies as a purely cognitive aspect, this study attends to the social interaction necessary for both the literacy act of plagiarism as well as the teachers' thinking about plagiarism. By highlighting the social nature of plagiarism and ideologies, I ground this project in the words and interactions that took place at Hopkins High. I investigate the ways in which teachers talk to each other and to me about plagiarism, the ways their talk reveal their dilemmatic ideologies.

Billig et al. describe two types of ideologies—*intellectual* and *lived* ideologies—as space for dilemmatic beliefs. *Intellectual ideologies* are those ideas, attitudes, and beliefs that are crafted in a more theoretical space and are often designed to encompass imagined or ideal activities. *Lived ideologies*, on the other hand, are those ideas, attitudes, and beliefs that emerge from, and are enacted in, actual, specific practice. That is, while teachers can subscribe to grander intellectual understandings of the purpose of education, the ways in which these teachers make meaning through their everyday practice are often driven by beliefs that are contrary to their intellectual ideologies. A teacher can attempt to work against a "banking model" of education, but because of the pressures of standardized curricula and the demands of a large class, that same teacher might feel the need to structure the class in a way that reduces the choices that the students have so as to allow students to pass high-stakes tests. This teacher might acknowledge the economic benefit of a high school degree while at the same time subscribing to the theoretical imperative of Freire's pedagogy. Thus, the ideologies of liberatory education and actual practice might come into conflict.

This is not to say that the teacher in the above example is hypocritical or a bad teacher. Ideological dilemmas are part of the fabric of everyday thinking and can be seen in the "social

preconditions of decision-making, as revealed in common sense or in ideology” (Billig et al., 1988, p. 8). In fact, a teacher who did not face dilemmatic decisions would not be able to question and analyze the situation at hand, and would most likely lack the flexibility to adapt to the changeable landscape of the classroom. Billig et al. claim that “people need to possess contrary themes if they are to think and argue” at all (p. 9). These contrary themes appear in the folk-wisdom and shared social knowledge that is often labeled “common sense.” For instance, there is dilemmatic tension between the maxims “look before you leap” and “he who hesitates is lost.” Both notions are constructed as common sense, but a person would have a difficult time adhering to only one of them. Instead, people navigate back and forth between the opposing injunctions to take one’s time and to move quickly in order to arrive at a meaningful solution. It is this movement that is critical to thoughtful consideration of a situation.

Researchers have identified ideological dilemmas in a wide range of topics including health and illness (Radley & Billig, 1996), citizenship (Condor, 2011), special education (Norwich, 1993), and social trauma (Cavallaro Johnson, 2008). Common to all of these studies is the emphasis on the social nature of thinking and the ways in which language reveals that people’s ideologies are not uniform and unchanging. In addition, studies that focus on ideological dilemmas tend to claim that awareness and acknowledgement of these tensions is necessary for change. Thinking about the dilemmatic and generative tensions in teachers’ ideologies about plagiarism and writing instruction is productive because it makes visible how these teachers employ a constellation of ideologies about authorship, textual ownership, and community and how these ideologies operate *vis-à-vis* intellectual ideologies. In addition, ideological dilemmas give us a language to look at the ways teachers talk about and understand authorship as it relates to plagiarism and the challenges it creates. Finally, this approach can provide direction to work with teachers to better instruct students about plagiarism.

### THREE POINTS OF INVESTIGATION: AUTHORSHIP, OWNERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

As I have shown, plagiarism and the ways in which we talk about plagiarism are social, and in order to capture the complexity of plagiarism we need to attend to this social aspect. I have introduced the concept of the ideological dilemma and have argued that it is useful in our understanding of how teachers talk about plagiarism. In the following section, I offer up three specific areas in which dilemmatic thinking about plagiarism occurs. By applying a social lens to

these three themes, this project aims to unpack the dilemmatic ideologies in teachers' talk about plagiarism.

In Chapter One I demonstrated the prevalence of three themes in the literature about academic plagiarism: authorship, textual ownership, and community. Scholars and practitioners have asked similar questions over the past one hundred year. Who wrote the text? Can a plagiarist be considered a writer? Who can claim that the text is his or hers? How far can that claim go? What happens to the school community when a student plagiarizes? While not all of the literature framed these questions as social concerns—in fact, some of the literature discusses authorship, ownership, and community in positivistic ways—there is a growing body of work that argues for understanding the social nature of plagiarism as a literacy practice. In the remainder of this chapter, I briefly define these three themes and describe how I will use them throughout this project. I explain how these constructs of authorship, ownership, and community help illuminate the contrary tensions for the teachers in this study.

## **Authorship**

The literature about authorship is vast and contentious. For something that happens every day, authoring is a complex and challenging act to define. Even the terminology is fraught. Literary critic Andrew Bennett (2005, p. 7) catalogues over nearly forty names for “the individual who writes or composes, or the image of that individual presented by literary texts.” He includes the terms apparitional author, artificial author, auctor, auteur, author, author construct, author-effect, author figure, author-function, bard, created author, creative author, dramatist, founder of discursivity, fundamental author, hack, historical author, hypothetical author, implied author, modern author, novelist, phantasmatic author, playwright, poet, postulated author, prophet, pseudo-historical author, romantic author, scribbler, scribe, script writer, scriptor, singer, troubadour, urauthor, vates, and writer (p. 228). With this wide variety of terms—some of which seem to be diametrically opposed to each other—it is not surprising that the definition of authorship is an ongoing debate.

Bennett's interest is limited to literature and its authors and does not expand his focus to include student writers, who are often seen as less than full and complete authors. Compositionist Bruce Horner (1997) argues that writing classrooms often construct the notion of the student writer who is set in opposition to the idea of the Author by “distinguishing art from mechanical

craft and the academic from the ‘real,’ part of a chain of binaries linked to the Author/student writer and the individual/social binaries” (p. 506). That is, student writers study real authors’ art and crank out text in response. In the past few decades, there have been efforts to treat students as authors by assigning authentic assessments, holding writing workshops, publishing their work, and allowing students the agency to make “authorial” decisions about their writing. With the easy access to desktop publishing software and the ability to publish online, students are able to compose and publish professional looking texts. Some classrooms use student-created text as the object of study. Teachers might follow the inspiring lead of Nancie Atwell and make student writing the core of their classes. Schools might celebrate student writing. Still, I would argue, there is tension between the types of authorship we assign students and those we reserve for published literary authors.

For the purpose of this study, I adopt Carrick and Howard’s (2006) (definition of *authorship* as having the qualities of possessing degrees of originality, autonomy, morality and proprietorship as a writer I take an expansive view of *writer* to include anyone involved in the production of text, including plagiarists. I use the term *author* to capture a wide range of roles that one takes in the composing or writing of text, especially when this writing occurs in a more formal situation, e.g., publishing.<sup>16</sup> This project explores the ideologies of authorship in teachers’ talk about plagiarism. While the discourses about plagiarism tend to set up plagiarists and authors as simple binaries—authors create authentic texts while plagiarists only fraudulently claim that they were the originators of particular written text—the participants in this study pulled from a wide range of constructions of authorship to talk about their students’ literacy.

## **Ownership**

I see the theme of ownership as encompassing two overlapping notions: the idea of claiming a text as one’s possession and the personal attachment to that text. These senses of ownership take on a legal flavor in the former case and a more emotional tone in the latter. Ownership as textual possession is often seen in answer to the question, “Whose text is it?” The conversations surrounding textual ownership often revert to language of copyright and common

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<sup>16</sup> Some of my participants saw clear differences between the terms *author* and *writer*; others claimed that they were synonymous. In my analysis, I have attempted to honor the individual teacher’s understanding of the terms while acknowledging that most discourses tend to construct an *author* as something more than a *writer*.

knowledge. The other sense is tied to the desire for writers to be invested in their own writing. Creating this feeling of ownership is not to make a claim for legal possession of the text exactly, but instead it is feeling that the text is a product of your own labor and therefore the text is part of the writer. These two components of textual ownership are tied into a sense of authorship, but for the purposes of the study, in order to better investigate the ideological dilemmas, I will treat these themes as separate.

The transition to writing in digital spaces has problematized notions of textual ownership. The new technologies used to create and distribute texts have made it difficult to identify the sequence and source of many texts. The acts of linking, forwarding, and repurposing texts online force us to reconsider concepts such as priority and newness. As the materiality of writing changes, we must adjust our conceptualization of originality to take into account the ways these new forces alter both the text and the writing process. This change in the composition, materiality, and dissemination of texts seems to have generated a certain level of anxiety for writers and readers in terms of ownership.

Similar moments of anxiety can be seen in other periods of transition in writing technologies. For instance, the transition from manuscript culture to print culture in the fifteenth century altered the ways texts were conceived of, created, and circulated. The printing press's ability to create multiple identical copies of a text and the industrialization of the printing industry allowed for more books to be available to a wider population. In addition, the printing press encouraged the development of indices, tables of contents, and title pages that contained publishing information. These changes set up a different relationship between the reader of a text and other texts. Typographic conventions begin to set the stage for our modern system of attribution. Likewise, the changes in the production and dissemination of texts led to government control of the bookselling economy. Mark Rose (1993) claims that the changing notion of property combined with the commercial interests of the developing printing economy led to the Statute of Anne in 1710, the first copyright law. The Statute of Anne not only protected London printers against smaller presses in Scotland and Ireland but also began to codify a particular notion of authorship that was informed by a Lockean ideal of work. Thus, the materiality of print texts was instrumental in the construction of ownership.

Compositionist Candace Spigelman (2000, p. 5) investigates the sense of textual ownership in writing groups. I draw upon her argument that “the notion of textual ownership is

complex, involving the concept of intellectual ‘matter’ or meaning as property, the possession and dissemination of that property, and the writer’s and reader’s role in the production (and evaluation) of textual meaning.” This understanding of ownership as part of the social fabric of writing, something that involves both the reader and the writer, aligns with the principles of this study, which attends to the complexity of plagiarism as a social process. Ownership involves both the reader and the writer, and plagiarism often hinges on questions of ownership. By acknowledging the various understandings of ownership, this project allows for dilemmatic ideologies about textual ownership. In addition, Spigelman notes that “writers must believe they have a stake in what their texts say, a belief that, as individuals, they can represent through language what they are trying to explain, defend, or express and that, at least to some degree, these meanings can be communicated to the reader” (p. 5). This sense of ownership as a personal attachment to the text makes the notion of ownership one that can quickly become emotional. These two components of ownership—the possession of the text and the emotional attachment to the text—add to the complexity of plagiarism. Although we often look at ownership as a test of originality (“this is *my* writing and not *yours*”), the question of who owns a text can lead to more even more uncertainty.

## **Community**

Like the constructions of authorship and ownership, the term *community* is, at best, difficult to pin down. I take note of Joseph Harris’s (1989) warning that “since it has no ‘positive opposing’ term, community can soon become an empty and sentimental word.... [C]ommunity tends to mean little more than a nicer, friendlier, fuzzier version of what came before” (p. 13). I use *community* to capture the specific interactions among the teachers, students, and administrators at Hopkins High, in particular those moments in which the interactions are directed at promoting a shared purpose or sense of belonging, respect, and trust. In this dissertation, I explore several facets of community as described in teachers’ talk. Teachers discussed the social dynamics within the department. They explained the roles and relationships parents played in the school. Teachers told stories about their interaction with the administration when dealing with cases of plagiarism. This project draws upon the construct that plagiarism is a literacy practice; that is “[p]lagiarism becomes plagiarism as part of a practice that involves participants’ values, attitudes, and feelings *as well as their social relationships to each other and*

*to the institutions in which they work*” [emphasis added] (Valentine, 2006, pp. 89-90). To this end, I explore teachers’ talk about the social relationships involved in plagiarism at Hopkins High.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have outlined the ways in which this project takes seriously the social components not only of plagiarism but also the nature of teachers’ talk about plagiarism. I return to Kate’s narrative from the beginning of the chapter:

So I think that’s where no matter how many policies and safeguards we have in place, we’re still going to run into the human element where we have to sit down and make decisions. And that’s when talking to each other and being around the office and trying to figure it out together helps. But, you know, I had to walk back in this room, and everybody’s like well, what’d you decide? And I had to say I’m a big wimp and I caved in. The kid’s going to graduate.

Kate description of this case of plagiarism does not focus on the text itself but rather the way in which the plagiarism played out in the social context. She talks about the role of the department. She highlights the “human element” and her own identity after making the decision not to fail the student. It is clear in situations like this that plagiarism is more than textual similarity. It is also apparent that an approach for addressing plagiarism must attend to the decision-making processes of the teachers as well as the literacy practices of students.

In the following chapters, I present the findings of my analysis of my participants’ talk about plagiarism. I look at how the themes of authorship, ownership, and community in their talk reveal sites of ideological dilemmas.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

When I first walked into Hopkins High, I was stopped by a desk just inside the front doors. I signed in as a visitor, received my sticker proclaiming me as such, and headed down the hall to the English department. Although I was marked as an outsider, walking down the hall felt comfortable. I was used to the energy in the halls and the rhythm of the day. Teach for 45 minutes, hear the bells, feel the students fill the halls moving towards their next class, teach for 45 minutes, and repeat. I arrived during first period so the halls were empty. The English department shares a common space on the first floor: twelve desks spread throughout the large room with a table in the middle. Books and papers could be seen on all of the desks. On the center table, I placed some donuts and juice. One of the teachers greeted me and told me that Reed would be in shortly. I began to unpack for the interviews. Using a list I had created through an exchange of emails earlier in the week, I started to meet with each member of the department during one of their prep periods. We would walk down the hall, find an empty classroom, and then push together two student desks to conduct our interview until the bell rang. Then we'd get up and file into the hall, joining the students and teachers going to their next classes.

For this project, it was important that I understood the teachers' perspective. I wanted to capture not only the words that these teachers said but also the context in which they said them. I knew that their talk was deeply embedded in the historical and cultural moments of Hopkins High School. These were not words that were uttered in a vacuum to be transcribed onto a blank page to be probed and tested until a hypothesis was confirmed. Instead, I knew that I needed to hear what these teachers were saying with an insider's ear. I needed to see the dilemmas that these teachers were facing with a sympathetic eye—one that had (in the etymological sense) a “fellow feeling.” Of course, I wasn't one of the teachers at Hopkins High; I never taught at the school. After our interviews, my participants would head off to their classrooms to teach their next class. I would move on to the English department office to meet up with the next teacher on my schedule. Yet, they saw me as a former high school English teacher who “got it.” I was someone who they could trust to understand what they were saying and what they were

experiencing at Hopkins High. They knew that I had experience teaching in a high school similar to Hopkins High. When I had a free moment between interviews, I was invited to stay in the English department office. I would sit at an empty desk and make notes about the interviews earlier in the day while a couple of other teachers prepped for their classes or corrected some papers. In between papers, they would ask me about my experience teaching at the college level or about living in the Midwest.

There were only a handful of these moments in five days I spent at Hopkins High, and I am not claiming that this study is an ethnography of this particular English department. Instead, I employed an *ethnographic approach* (Green & Bloome, 1997) to capture the complexity of the participants' talk about plagiarism. This approach adopts the logic-in-use typically used by ethnographers to "develop grounded explanations for patterns of practice, or roles and relationships, and other social phenomena" (Green, Skukauskaite, & Baker, 2012). By employing some of the ways of thinking and understanding that inform ethnographies, I was able approach my research question with a type of inquiry that foregrounded the teachers' multiple experiences as well as the role of my own experiences in the research. Green and Bloome report on a study by Beth Yeager in which she presents seven principles that underscore this type of inquiry:

1. Questions are formulated and reformulated throughout the inquiry process;
2. Data are constructed not found;
3. Observation is a selective process guided by personal as well as formal frames of reference;
4. Observation and data construction require a descriptive language;
5. Interpretation is based on evidence and point of view, not merely personal opinion;
6. Within a group, multiple interpretations of a text (visual, oral, aural, written) are possible and probable; and
7. Multiple ways of presenting information exists. (194-5)<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> These principles are adapted from Beth Yeager's work with her own students. In her study (Yeager, Floriani, & Green, 1998), Yeager worked with her students to explore different modes of inquiry in multiple disciplines. It seems particularly appropriate for this study to a repurpose a set of principles that emerged out of the Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, a community of university-based ethnographers who worked together with teacher ethnographers to explore complex issues of teaching and learning across disciplines in classrooms. This list of principles was implemented in a k-12 environment and is now being used to explore the high school setting from the point of view of the college researcher.

These seven principles inform this study. Throughout the research project I have returned to the research questions, rethinking and adapting them as the dilemmas I encountered posed new issues and concerns. For instance, as I was inquiring about how teachers had ideological dilemmas about community, I began to notice that they were not only talking about a community of learners in the school that would be affected by plagiarism but also about a sense of professional community among the teachers of the English department. As the teachers' talk expanded the sense of community beyond my original assumption, I adjusted my research questions to allow for this broader definition of community.

In addition, central to this work are the principles about observation. Green and Bloome (1997) note that observation is directed by personal frames of reference. This dissertation aims to foreground my own frames by including personal narratives about my own teaching experience. I aim for these narratives to accomplish two goals. The first is to highlight how my own history—and storytelling about this history—provides a lens through which I view the teachers of Hopkins High. The second goal is that these narratives also illustrate the connections between the experiences of the Hopkins High teachers and my experience in two additional teaching environments: a high school in Western New York and a large, public Midwestern university.

Furthermore, this ethnographic approach enables me to explore the multiple interpretations of a text within a group by understanding that within the individual there can be multiple (and contrasting) interpretations. This complexity of thought both within the group and within the individual is at the core of this research. By valuing not only the presence of multiple interpretations but also the generative nature of these interpretations, I am able to present a nuanced picture of teachers' actual experiences and understandings about plagiarism.

In the rest of this chapter, I outline the methodology of this study by presenting the origins and design of the study and by describing the research site and participants. I next move to describe my position as the researcher in this study. An explanation of the data collection and analysis follows. Then, I offer up a sample analysis. Lastly, I talk about the ethical considerations of the study. Throughout this chapter, I aim to make clear how these methodological choices align with the theoretical frameworks described in the previous chapter—in particular the importance of the social and the role of ideological dilemmas for this project.

## THE ORIGINS AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A year before I began my project at Hopkins High, Reed Allen, a member of the English department and 6-12 ELA Standards Leader, called me up to talk about plagiarism. He knew that I was interested in plagiarism, and his district was considering adopting Turnitin.com after a series of plagiarism cases at Hopkins High, as well as at the other high school in the district. The teachers were frustrated and the administration was eager to eliminate the problem, so the school was thinking about using the plagiarism detection software to act not only as a deterrent but as a way to keep students honest. I forwarded some articles from the college composition literature about Turnitin. Most of these articles were critical of the service. Reed thanked me but indicated that the district was pretty much committed to adopting Turnitin. Although Reed agreed with some of the stances that the critics took, he felt that they didn't quite line up with his high school experience.

I was struck by this tension between what teachers like Reed think about plagiarism in the abstract and how they describe their response to plagiarism in their classrooms. Teachers would often talk to me about the need to stomp out plagiarism—and usually with noble intentions—but then encounter instances in their everyday experience where this approach didn't feel appropriate. These teachers felt as if taking “zero-tolerance” stance on plagiarism didn't provide them with the flexibility to address the individual cases. While they did not want to appear “soft” on plagiarism, they rarely encountered a case that didn't require some sort of adjustment to the procedures outlined in plagiarism policies. Each of these cases required teachers to debate about their next steps, and these decisions were challenging.

And so this project began with an awareness of the tensions that teachers feel when dealing with plagiarism both in my conversations with teachers at multiple levels, and at Hopkins High in particular. Michael Billig's (1988) work on ideological dilemmas provided a robust lens through which to investigate these tensions. By seeing these dilemmas as part of the everyday thinking of teachers and not some mark of deficiency or incompetence, this project strives to bring into sharp relief the ideological dilemmas that I was aware of, but wasn't always able to name.

Plagiarism presents several challenges as the object of study for a researcher. We miss important components of plagiarism if we look only at the final product—the students' essays. To capture all of the social components of plagiarism, a researcher would need to observe the

moment of the teacher's discovery of something "off" with a student's essay and to sit in on the meetings with other teachers and administrators as a course of action was planned and implemented to respond to the accusations. A sense of the school community would add a layer of understanding, as would the extracurricular life of the individual student. It would be helpful to see the students' writing process, to talk to them about what they were doing and why. Much of what makes up plagiarism happens in the invisible portions of schooling: behind closed doors, outside of school, even between texts.

To investigate plagiarism requires the researcher to make choices about what part of plagiarism he or she wants to study. While interesting work has been done using surveys and questionnaires about the prevalence of plagiarism across several levels of educations, little has been investigated in terms of how ELA teachers talk about plagiarism. This study looks at teacher talk and allows a better understanding of how teachers approach and think about plagiarism. It opens a window to the debates and questions teachers have about plagiarism. It highlights the challenges of teaching students about plagiarism by bringing to the surface the different ideologies at play in teaching writing. Most importantly, it keeps the attention on the social components of plagiarism and avoid the trap of being fixated on just the plagiarized products. That is, instead of noting the similarities of student work and previously published work, which might lead to imaging these two texts as static and isolated, this project investigates the ways teachers talk about plagiarism, and thus foregrounds the interaction and socially-constructed nature of plagiarism.

This study is centered on talking to teachers about plagiarism. At its core are the stories teachers told about their experiences and their responses to hypothetical situations. I designed a series of protocols that would allow teachers to talk about their own experiences with plagiarism as well as explore five hypothetical scenarios. The scenarios were designed to encourage the teachers to talk about three topics that I pulled from my reading of composition and ELA scholarship: authorship, ownership, and community. I then investigated how teachers talked about these issues, paying particular attention to any ideological dilemmas in their talk. This focus allowed me to see the complexity of plagiarism that teachers were faced with when teaching writing.

## The Research Site

I noticed that in my conversations with teachers like Reed, or in online discussions on automatic mail list servers such as WPA-L or TechRhet, teachers' talk about plagiarism was incredibly robust. The stories teachers told, the language teachers used in writing plagiarism policies, and the frameworks teachers used to talk about plagiarism all highlighted the concerns and values teachers held about writing, learning, and schooling. Teachers selected the stories to tell as specific rhetorical choices. These stories might be framed as humorous or ironic. Other times, teachers would tell stories that centered on their emotional reactions. Teachers would talk of feeling betrayed or let down. Teachers rarely talked about plagiarism as something that was uneventful or unimportant. For this study, then, I needed to find a site where teachers were already talking to each other about plagiarism. I needed to choose a site where there was some element of debate about the best way to deal with plagiarism; teachers in this type of site would be drawing upon multiple discourses in order to enter into these conversations. I also needed to find a site in which I could join these conversations midstream as a peer, or at least someone who wasn't swooping in to provide all of the answers to solve plagiarism. I was interested in the questions and uncertainties that these teachers had about plagiarism more than having teachers offer up answers or merely point to the school policy. In addition, a department that was collegial enough to encourage conversations about plagiarism between teachers would provide a space where teacher talk about plagiarism was likely to be common, invested, and rich. My search for this type of site led me to Hopkins High School in Western New York.

Hopkins High School is a modest-looking brick building just off the main road heading south out of the village of Tafton. Two-stories high, with an unimposing facade, the school looks like many other buildings constructed in the suburbs in the 1970s. It is, however, by just about all academic measures, a very unusual school. It has been ranked in *US & World News Reports* as one of America's Best High Schools and by *Newsweek* as one of the top 100 Best High Schools in America. It boasts a graduation rate of 98% and nearly all (95%) of its graduates go on to post-secondary education.<sup>18</sup> The district is affluent with a median household income over \$94,000 and a median home value nearly \$270,000. Students have the opportunity to take nearly 20 Advanced Placement courses. It has a college preparatory curriculum with emphasis on writing and research. In many ways, the school has everything going for it: The community is

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<sup>18</sup> According to the school's website at the time of my field work at Hopkins High.

active, supportive and consistently votes to approve the budget. The faculty is well-paid in comparison to other neighboring districts. The students are motivated and very driven to succeed. Still, the daily work life of the teachers presents challenges. The same supportive community could be overly-demanding. The expectations for the teachers are high. The students could be obsessed with getting into the college of their choice. It is a high-achieving school. Some studies have shown that high achieving students are more likely to plagiarize than average because of the increased pressure to succeed (McCabe, 1999; Taylor, Pogrebin, & Dodge, 2002). This pressure and the high percentage of students who are college-bound would seem to indicate that conversations about plagiarism would be more likely to occur in classrooms.

Hopkins High School recently subscribed to Turnitin.com as a plagiarism detection service. In the first year, a small group of teachers piloted the service. In the second year, when I visited the school, Turnitin was optional and all of the English teachers used it in their classroom in various ways, although not all of the classes were included under the subscription. That is, while each teacher was able to use Turnitin, the school's subscription only covered a certain number of students, and so some classes were excluded from the plagiarism detection software service. In the remaining classes, some teachers used it for only the major writing assignments while other teachers incorporated the course management interface to handle more of the day-to-day activities of their classrooms. The teachers mentioned in their individual interviews how other teachers were using the service, indicating that there was some teacher to teacher conversation about the best way to incorporate Turnitin into their classes. The teachers seemed to be generally in favor of using Turnitin, although many teachers acknowledged that it did not solve all of the problems related to plagiarism. The department was still experimenting with using Turnitin, so the teachers were open to talking about their experiences with the software and students' reactions to it.

In addition, the school website contains explicit references to academic honesty and plagiarism. Hopkins High School prides itself on the strength of its academic program and, according to its website, highlights the importance of academic honesty to its educational mission: "Academic honesty is integral to the academic experience in school. All students shall do their own work at all times. Collusion, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited." Moreover, the school's handbook anticipates that "sometimes student understanding of what academic honesty is does not always match staff understanding." This awareness that

academic honesty is not a self-evident concept would seem to indicate that some dilemmatic beliefs surrounding plagiarism would take place in the classroom.

It was important to find a research site that I was familiar with, one in which I was known but not intimately part of. I had taught with Reed Allen, the district ELA standards leader, for seven years at a different high school. I also knew Samantha Brightman, with whom I taught for four years. Our relationships allowed me to gain immediate access to Hopkins High. They were able to vouch for me, introducing me as a teacher who was doing research rather than a researcher who had previously taught. I was also familiar with the area in Western New York, and so I knew of the reputation of Hopkins High. Having taught high school in New York, I was aware of the core curriculum. My background allowed me to enter into the research site with a general sense of the school and the district, which enabled me to focus on what the teachers were saying about plagiarism without getting lost in the references to state exams, neighboring districts, and local institutions.

### **The Department**

The Hopkins High School English Department consisted of nine teachers at the time of this study. Eight of the English teachers agreed to be part of the study. Two members of the department declined because of the time commitment. One of these two teachers volunteered to participate in the study during my second visit to the school. At the first round of interviews, I was encouraged to talk to Beth Rodgers, a special education teacher who co-taught with several of the English teachers, and I was able to meet with her during the second day. By the end of the study, I was able to talk to ten members of Hopkins High. *Table 2* summarizes the basic demographic information for the participants.

The Hopkins High School English department was an experienced, knowledgeable, and stable group of teachers. The department was full of veteran teachers with more than half of the member having taught for over 15 years. These teachers had all completed their master's degrees, and nine out of ten of the teachers were tenured at Hopkins High School. Many of the teachers had experience at other schools and all of them expressed a certain level of contentment at working at Hopkins High. For example, some of the teachers indicated that conditions were better at Hopkins High than their previous jobs. Other teachers noted that although Hopkins High presented challenges to the teachers, they were happy to be part of this

department. They spoke positively of each other in the interviews and at the group interview I noticed a pervasive sense of mutual respect among the teachers. These were teachers who liked their jobs and enjoyed working with each other. They talked to each other about the difficulties and successes of their daily teaching. The younger teachers commented that they often asked the more experienced members of the department for ideas or assistance.

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Experience teaching (in years)</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Courses taught at the time of the study</b>
Liz Robertson	17	Female	Masters	English 10 Honors, English 10, Modern Literature
Samantha Brightman	28	Female	Masters	English 11 Honors, English 11, English 9 Honors
Beth Rodgers	31	Female	Masters	English 9 (co-taught with Reed)
Reed Allen	30	Male	PhD	AP English Literature, English 9 (co-taught with Beth)
Thomas Vernon	2	Male	Masters	English 10 Honors, English 11, Public Speaking
Barbara Nelson	8	Female	Masters	English 10, English 10 Honors, Humanities
Michael McLoughlin	10	Male	MBA	AP English Language, Film as Literature
Renee Sullivan	15	Female	Masters	English 9 Honors, English 9, English 11 Honors
Emma Lou Claire	8	Female	Masters	English 9, English 10, Mass Media
Kate O'Connor	18	Female	Masters	English 10, Creative Writing, Public Speaking

*Table 2. Demographics of the Study Participants*

It is important to note that all of the teachers at Hopkins High were teaching courses that included a significant writing component. All of the core courses asked students to write literary essays and several of the class assigned a research project. In order to prepare students for the Regents exam in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, many classes included writing tasks that used a similar structure and language as the state test. In the Advanced Placement courses, both Reed and Michael used writing prompts that mimicked the AP exams. In addition to test preparation, the teachers of Hopkins High mentioned a number of other writing assignments in their classes. They asked their students to write in a wide range of genre, media, and styles. Significantly for this study, the

department also required teachers to have an individual writing conference with each student. These institutional elements created an environment that encouraged thought and conversation about writing.

### **The Participants**

The participants of this study often shared information about their background, attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions about teaching and writing that helped frame their talk during the interviews. A component of the ethnographic approach that this study takes is the belief that data are constructed (Green & Bloome, 1997). In addition, this study aimed to address the ethnographic goal of “building connections” between one bit of life and other bits (Green, Skukauskaite, & Baker, 2012). Below, I present a representative sample of some of the information teachers shared with me in order to demonstrate how the data from the interviews were co-constructed through these interactions. While not all of the teachers shared at the same level of intimacy or detail, the three examples that follow represent a range of the ways in which the participants’ talk in our interview sessions were presented in a rich, invested, and thoughtful context.

#### *Reed Allen*

Reed comes across as professorial. He has a PhD in English literature specializing in British modernism. His students call him “Doc.” When I asked him about his training, he joked, “you really want the whole rundown?” He then proceeded to list the five colleges (two for undergrad, one for his masters, one for his PhD, and another for his administrative certification). Throughout the interviews, Reed alluded to both contemporary and canonical authors and wove these references into our conversations with ease. He was able to make connections about the writing process and J.D. Salinger’s relationships with his editor, William Shawn; he compared his work with students and their college admissions essays with Percy Shelley’s role in the composition of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. As a graduate student in the 1980s, Reed was well-trained in literary theory and criticism. His ideas about authorship and textual ownership were informed by the critical work he performed as a PhD student: he could talk about the “death of the author” (Barthes, 1977) or the polyvocality of text (Bakhtin, 1986).

Yet at the same time, Reed saw himself as an author. He had edited nearly 20 collections of literary essays about significant figures in American, British, and World literature. He also had written and published many poems and short stories, some under pseudonyms. He was the advisor of the literary magazine for Hopkins High. Reed wasn't just a teacher of writing, he was a teacher who had written and still writes a lot. While he might have been able to talk about the socially-constructed ideas of authorship, his experience as a published author provided some interesting nuances. In one of our interactions, Reed let me know that he had discovered that he had plagiarized himself. He had written an article about a significant and tragic personal event that was originally published in a national magazine. Several years later, a writer in California had published that work as part of a newspaper column. I asked Reed if he was angry, amused, or otherwise confused about the situation. He responded that he felt all of those emotions.

For Reed, conversations about authorship, ownership, and community were not just intellectual exercises—although he was well-equipped to engage in these topics on a purely academic level. Instead, Reed was able to bring both his graduate school training, his experience as a writing teacher, and his beliefs about writing that emerged from his own history as a practicing writer to shape our conversations about plagiarism.

### *Kate O'Connor*

Kate was an eager participant in my conversations. She was more than willing to explore different scenarios in the interviews, asking me at one point, “Did I way over-answer your question?” In the same interview, I asked her if she saw any difference between *writers* and *authors*, and she thought aloud through the two terms. She then told me, “Now as soon as I’m done talking I’m going to go look up the definitions and see how close they are.” Kate saw these interviews as a chance to explore the issue of plagiarism. Our conversations were not merely an act of her relaying information about Hopkins High to me. Instead, Kate was intent on using these interactions as a way to think more deeply about writing and writing instruction. In our second interview, for instance, I mentioned an article that had appeared in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about a writer who claimed to have ghostwritten essays for high school students. Kate was fascinated by the details of this case and asked me, “Do you have a link to that, that I could see sometime?” At the end of that interview, Kate complimented me about the

scenarios by saying, “Those are good cases. You did well.” Throughout our interactions, Kate assumed a more active role than just an informant.

Kate provided some information that placed her discussions of the Hopkins High plagiarism policy into the context of her own education. Kate shared with me that her college had an honor code. She described how during her undergraduate career, “there was a huge conversation constantly about academic honesty and expectations” and that this experience most likely “was a little bit different” than other colleges. While many of her colleagues could not recall any instruction or discussions about plagiarism beyond warnings in English classes, Kate described how she remembered the honor code from college, but also how it became the basis for the Hopkins High academic honesty policy.

### *Thomas Vernon*

Thomas was the youngest member of the English department and was the most comfortable talking about the role of technology in the changing landscape of the English classroom. We talked about Twitter and Facebook, and how these two technologies had built-in ways to acknowledge authorship of texts:

Well it’s funny, like I’ve been using Twitter a lot and even one of the things that is almost like common knowledge is the re-tweet, and it’s not you go in and type it and send it. It’s you put “re-tweet” and you tweet that, so the person still gets ownership. So it’s kind of funny how sometimes that’s just part of like it’s so ingrained in the culture. Like no one even realizes that they’re kind of citing the source, whereas in writing it’s just like oh, I’ll write it in there without citing it. So again I think it comes down, somehow Twitter kind of worked that in there to kind of work out on its own.

I shared with him the story of a woman who had tweeted a quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. in response to the death of Osama Bin Laden. As the quote was retweeted and was disseminated across various social media outlets, it lost its attribution to King, while still retaining the woman’s Twitter handle. As I was describing this example, Thomas replied, “I know the exact one you’re talking about.” We continued to explore how social media both aligned and contrasted with traditional citation practices. While Thomas was thoughtful about these examples, he ended the interview by joking, “I just hope I didn’t sound like an idiot. [*Laughs*].” I responded, “No, no, not at all, not at all. That was awesome.” Through our interview, Thomas and I were able to explore the challenges of composing in new media.

These three examples are offered as a sample of how the interaction between the participants and me helped co-create the data for this study. The other participants and I had similar interactions. For instance, several participants asked me about how colleges dealt with plagiarism or aligned themselves with me through our mutual background as graduate students. Michael asked me on more than one occasion about how prevalence of plagiarism at the University of Michigan and how writing instructors responded to cases they encountered. Barbara drew upon our similar roles as graduate students to talk about the appropriate use of Wikipedia (“I think as a high school teacher and a – I’m a graduate student, um, my professors haven’t had to say, ‘Don’t give me Wikipedia’”).

### **The Researcher and the Study**

I have included my own stories as part of this study to foreground my own frameworks and ideological dilemmas that I bring to this project. I embarked on this research after 14 years as a high school ELA teacher who had experienced examples of plagiarism that made me feel caught betwixt and between.

My own teaching career was similar to many of my participants. During the interviews we were able to talk as teachers: we shared a common language of New York State teachers. I knew what courses they were talking about (AP Lit, 9 Regents, and 10 Honors) and what colleges they went to school: Nazareth, Fredonia, Brockport, Geneseo, and the University of Rochester. For example, at the beginning of my first interview with Barbara, I asked her about her educational background:

**Steve:** Great. Uh, where did you go to college?

**Barbara:** Uh, I did my undergrad at Geneseo.

**Steve:** Me, too.

**Barbara:** I did my grad, uh, degree at SUNY Brockport, and I’m currently doing my administrative certificate at Brockport as well.

**Steve:** All right. Went to Geneseo, I went to Brockport. I know that route.

Barbara and I were alumni of the same schools. While it is not that unusual that we held degrees from these two state schools—indeed many teachers in that area completed their training at these colleges—our shared experience provided me with a way to build a sense of trust with the participants. For most of the teachers, I shared something in common: I grew up in the town where the department chair currently lived; I had formerly taught at the school where one of the participants’ daughter was a student; I was the same age as another member. While I wasn’t

exactly an insider, the sticker that I wore every day that said visitor wasn't entirely accurate either. I wasn't a stranger. I could have been a colleague at Hopkins High. This familiarity had its benefits. I didn't get the sense that I needed to prove myself as a teacher. My participants seem to trust me, were candid, and able to admit when they didn't know something. They often wished me "good luck" at the end of the interview. They sometimes apologized if they thought their answer went off track.

Still, the teachers at times were guarded. I didn't hear as many stories about plagiarism as I thought I would. Every teacher was able to tell me a story, but I had imagined that they would have dozens. Maybe some of them thought the things they told each other weren't interesting enough for me.

### **The Data Collection**

I conducted over 16 hours of interviews with the department in seven days spread over six months. The face-to-face interviews were all with a single individual. Both the individual and group interviews were conducted at Hopkins High School. *Table 3* outlines the four phases of the data collection.

The first phase consisted of semi-structured interviews with nine practicing high school teachers. These interviews provided an overview of the participants' experience with plagiarism and working definitions of the key constructs of this study: authorship, ownership, and community. In order to get a fuller picture of the individual teachers, I began the interview with a series of questions about the teachers' background. These questions were designed to provide a sense of the teacher's educational and professional experience. I asked the participants to discuss the constructs of authorship, ownership, and community as they relate to writing instruction. The last part of the interviews encouraged teachers to tell stories about cases of plagiarism that they have encountered in the recent past. (See Appendix A for the full protocol.) Each interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes and was audio recorded. In addition, I used an Echo Smartpen to record the audio and take field notes. This Smartpen synchronized the audio with my notes allowing me to return to specific moments in the interviews by clicking on any point in the notes and hearing what was happening at that moment. In addition, the notes were uploaded and converted to a pdf file enabling me to store all of the data in a single location.

The second phase of interviews presented teachers with three scenarios that were designed to raise issues of authorship, ownership, and community. In this set of interviews, I met with all of the teachers who participated in the first phase. In addition, one member of the department (Renee Sullivan) was added to be part of the study. My interview with Renee included both the three scenarios of the second phase as well as the questions of the first phase.

Round 1	Type	Participants
March 15, 2011	45-minute semi-structured face-to-face interviews	Samantha Brightman Liz Robertson Barbara Nelson Kate O'Connor Reed Allen
March 16, 2011	45-minute semi-structured face-to-face interviews	Michael McLoughlin Emma Lou Claire Beth Rodgers Thomas Vernon
Round 2		
May 3, 2011	45-minute semi-structured face-to-face interviews	Samantha Brightman Michael McLoughlin Barbara Nelson Kate O'Connor Beth Rodgers
May 4, 2011	45-minute semi-structured face-to-face interviews	Emma Lou Claire Liz Robertson Reed Allen Renee Sullivan Thomas Vernon
Round 3		
June 1, 2011	60-minute semi-structured group interview	Samantha Brightman Michael McLoughlin Barbara Nelson Kate O'Connor Beth Rodgers Emma Lou Claire Reed Allen Renee Sullivan Thomas Vernon
Round 4		
August 15, 2011	30-minute follow-up phone interview	Kate O'Connor
August 16, 2011	30-minute follow-up phone interview	Samantha Brightman

*Table 3. Data Collection*

Due to time constraints, I was unable to probe Renee's responses as much as the other participants. The three scenarios of the second round of interviews provided another entry point

into a discussion about plagiarism. In contrast to the first phase, these scenarios asked teachers to think about hypothetical situations. These scenarios were designed to be plausible and to deal with experiences the teachers could imagine. I piloted these scenarios with several college writing instructors and high school English teachers to check for the details of the scenarios as well as the questions. After each scenario was presented, I asked the participants to decide if the case is an example of plagiarism or not. I then asked the participants to explain their reasoning. If during the discussion of the scenarios the issues of authorship, ownership, and community were not addressed, I asked some of the follow-up questions to prompt these topics. As with the first interview, I audio recorded the interview and recorded my notes and the audio of the interaction with an Echo Smartpen. (See Appendix B.)

The third round of this study consisted of a full group interview. The goal of this interview was to encourage interaction among the participants. Initially, I had planned to present the participants with two new scenarios. (See Appendix C.) The first scenario addressed issues of digital spaces and plagiarism. It attempted to focus on issues of documentation and the changes in ownership that online resources present. The follow-up questions in this interview attempted to define more clearly the boundaries of plagiarism by offering up variations in the details of the case. The second scenario was also situated in a digital space and deals with the use (and misuse) of ideas instead of exact words. The follow-up questions again attempted to define some of the key factors in the teachers' decision process. However, before we met to conduct this interview, I was informed that Kate, the department chair, had a case of academic honesty that she thought would be interesting to discuss. I decided to substitute that case for the second scenario.

The decision to change the agenda for the group interview was based on several reasons. The first was my belief in allowing my participants to shape the direction of the discussion. The scenarios were designed to bring generate conversations about plagiarism and to surface the ideological dilemmas of the teachers at Hopkins High. The example that Kate had mentioned to me felt that more immediate, relevant, and unresolved than the situation that I was planning on discussing. While Kate's story didn't cover the issues of research and exploring the differences between copying ideas versus words, it did allow me to witness the departmental dynamics surrounding a situation that one of its members was dealing with a case of academic dishonesty. Another reason for making the shift was that teachers' talk surrounding Kate's example was invested and rich. The teachers had strong and immediate reactions to Kate's stories and were

willing to express these beliefs. They were willing to spell out the connections between the student's misconduct and plagiarism. Finally, the teachers at Hopkins High were motivated to talk through this situation and use the group interview time to work through a solution. This conversation yielded some of the more interesting data, and I felt as if I was permitted a look at the workings of the department as a whole.

I thought that I had collected all of my data at that point. However, at the end of the Hopkins High school-year, I received an email from Samantha Brightman informing me that the department had witnessed a "rash" of plagiarism cases and that I should contact them to hear about it. After obtaining IRB approval to extend the interview portion of the study, I set up two phone interviews. The first was with Kate, the department chair and teacher involved in the plagiarism cases. The second was with Samantha, the teacher who told me about the cases. Both of these interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes. I recorded these calls as well as took notes.

In these interviews, Kate mentioned that she had taken notes during the end of the year so that she would be able to share what happened with me. *"I thought through it really quickly before I called to make sure that I had everything written down that we – I kept notes on it toward the end of the year."* I allowed Kate to narrate what happened, and she explained the several cases of plagiarism that the department had discovered in the last weeks of school. Kate was open about the dilemmas that she faced in dealing with these cases and spent a sizeable portion of the interview talking about the challenges of responding to the students accused of plagiarism. The open-ended aspect of the interview allowed Kate to construct her own narrative about the instances of plagiarism, which allowed me to capture rich descriptions of her ideological dilemmas.

## THE DATA ANALYSIS

### **Transcription**

The interviews were transcribed by me and by a third party service. In order to highlight the narrative quality of the participants' talk, I attempted to render their talk in a manner that would allow their word choice and story structure to stand out. The initial pass at transcription included pauses, but I did not include any marks for the length of the pauses. I captured as many

of my backchannel signals as possible. Although these initial transcriptions were verbatim, they do not include markers of prosody. As I began to code and analyze the passages, I removed some of the filled pauses and agreements in order to allow me to see the structure of the teachers' narratives. When my backchannel signals seemed to interrupt the teachers' talk, I eliminated them so as to keep the teachers' talk unbroken. I included those moments where either my talk or the participant's talk seemed to use these filled pauses and agreements in order to create meaning or to mark a movement in the narration. For instance, in my first interview with Barbara, she talked about how her one-on-one writing conferences with students might set up one set of practices that could conflict with a prohibition against receiving help on college admissions essays. She reported to me:

Um, I think it depends on the – the level that you're working with. I just had writing conferences with my sophomores, and I talked to a lot of them about, "What'd you do with this piece?" 'cause I hadn't gone through the writing process with them. I wanted to kind of see what they would do on their own. And a lot of – a few of them – you know, I said I know that their parents kind of routinely edit it, and if you were like, "Well, you know, my mom said it wasn't my best work," or you know, I'm like, "Oh, did your mom?" – "oh, no, my mom didn't edit this one for me."

Um, so I kind of asked, and I have never had them, you know, in a written way reflect upon that. But I kind of keep tabs on them throughout the process, and – and a lot of times, too, if you all of a sudden see a shining, sparkly piece from a student who maybe hasn't been so shining and sparkling before, I'll ask.

Um, but I think there is a contradiction there, because it – we are – unless we say, "You can't have anyone edit and help you" – and that's especially hard in a co-taught in environment with students with disabilities who a lot of times it's in their, you know, learning, you know, disability plan that they can if that – that they should, and that's one of their goals, you know?

For this transcription, I included three of Barbara's instances of "um" as they seem to mark the three major moves that she makes without interrupting the narrative that she was telling. These instances of "um" acted as transitions that mark a contrast rather just acting as a filler or a verbal tic. While a more standard Jeffersonian notation system might produce a transcript like the one below, I wanted to foreground the narrative components of the participants' talk.

**Barbara:** Um, I think it depends on the – the level (.) that you're working with. I just had writing conferences with my, uh, sophomores, =

**Steve:** [mmh-hmm]

**Barbara** =and I talked to a lot of them about, “What’d <you do> with this piece?” ‘cause I hadn’t gone through the writing process with them. I wanted to kind of see what they would do on their own.

**Steve:** mmh-hmm.

Although I lost some data about the rhythm of the teachers’ talk and the finer-grain detail of interaction between my talk and the teachers’ talk, my approach to transcribing the interviews provided me with a means to see how the teachers were understanding plagiarism and using language and story-telling to construct their ideologies. (A full sample of the transcription is found in Appendix D.)

### **Coding**

I began my analysis by reading through the transcripts, resisting the “urge to write in the margins, underline, or take notes” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 163). This initial pass allowed me to pay attention to the stories and narratives that the participants were reporting and to get a sense of their overall sense of plagiarism. I then imported the transcripts into Atlas.ti and went through the data again using an open coding method in which I was “breaking data apart and delineating concepts” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.195). At first I used in-vivo codes, or “concepts using the actual words of the participants,” in an attempt capture significant moments of the interview. For example, I noted moments where teachers described *reactions* in their students’ plagiarism. I also captured particularly evocative language that teachers used to describe some of the actions involved in *consequences* of the plagiarism process. This early pass of analysis helped me to find points within the interviews that were particularly significant moments in the participants’ stories.

I began to organize these concepts of *reactions* and *consequences* into categories based on the specific language choices that the teachers made. For example, teachers sometimes described feeling *disappointed* when they discovered student plagiarism. Other times, teachers talked about debating whether or not to *nail* the student or whether to *blow* the student in. As I was interested in three major themes that emerged from my review of the literature (authorship, ownership, and community), I wanted to be sure not to miss salient points in the teachers’ stories that might have been overlooked. In fact, this initial coding ended up creating interesting

intersections between some of the language choices that the teachers used and the three general themes.

Many of these moments were ones that were charged with emotion or tension. They were instances in the interviews where teachers were talking about experiences that were significant to them, moments that were still unresolved, or examples where teachers were working to adequately describe something. It was in these moments that I found my participants' talk invested and rich with regards to plagiarism. After highlighting these tensions, I shifted my attention to code for specifically for ideological dilemmas in the participants' talk. I had structured the interviews around scenarios that would highlight issues pertaining to the three themes. In the participants' responses to these scenarios I looked for particular ways these teachers talked about authorship, ownership, and community. For instance, I noted that teachers described the authoring practices of their students in at least five distinct ways. These different descriptions eventually became the competing ideologies I discuss in Chapter Four. The tension between the quasi-legal language of ownership and the descriptions of circulation of digital texts are at the heart of Chapter Five. And the dilemmas of responsibility and trust inform my investigation of community in Chapter Six.

### **Sample Analysis**

Below I present a portion of Kate's fourth interview to illustrate my analysis. In this interview, I talked with Kate about several cases of plagiarism that were discovered at the end of the school year. Although the interview was approximately thirty minutes long, Kate's talk about plagiarism was rich and invested. The full transcript of this interview can be found in Appendix D. For my initial pass of coding, I looked at the reactions and consequences of plagiarism that Kate talked about. After identifying those moments, I categorized them into reactions of disbelief, confusion, disgust, anger, annoyance, and self-deprecation. I grouped the consequences into examples of the student graduating, failing, redoing the work, and Kate's getting hauled into administration. *Table 4* provides examples of these categories from Kate's talk.

The categories of reactions pointed me toward Kate's ideological dilemmas in this interview. Her reactions to the plagiarism are not one-dimensional. She is angry, confused, and annoyed by her student's actions. She doubts her response to these same actions. The categories of consequences revealed the complex relationship between teacher and student. Not only were

Concept	Category	Example
<i>Reactions</i>		
	<i>Disbelief</i>	<i>It was so <u>obvious</u>, too.</i> I did was Google the first line, and I came up with the fact that five of her poems were just <u>blatantly</u> cut and paste on lyrics.
	Confusion	And I'm like well, <u>how is this up to me</u> , I mean, if we go by policy? And then I was told, and you'll love this, policy is there as a guideline to help us make decisions. So I was like – <u>I didn't know what that means</u> .
	Disgust	It's <u>disgusting</u> . The whole thing is <u>ridiculous</u> .
	Anger	But again, you know – and didn't she like cheer and dance as she crossed the stage at graduation? <u>I wanted to tackle her</u> .
	Annoyance	I thought [ <i>laughter</i> ] <u>have some freaking humility</u> . You <u>shouldn't even be here</u> .
	Doubt	So, you know, <u>I maybe made the wrong decision</u> , but if it had been first semester, she would have had a chance to take over a course. <u>I probably did the wrong thing</u> .
	Self-deprecation	So <u>I decided to be the big stupid hippy liberal</u> [ <i>laughter</i> ] and, you know, give her a shot.
<i>Consequences</i>		
	Getting hauled in	So what happened even more is <u>I was getting hauled into administration</u> , and they were saying well, listen, it's your decision.
	Fail/Not graduating	The problem with this is if she <u>failed that final</u> , her grades were low enough that she wasn't going to <u>graduate</u> .
	Not graduating	If you want <u>to keep her from graduating</u> , that's up to you.
	Redo/Fail	And the solution, for lack of a better word, that I came up with was <u>she could redo the entire project</u> , and <u>I would give her an F</u> .
	Fail/Graduating	If she redid the entire project and <u>she got an F</u> , that would give her an exact 65% average and <u>she could graduate</u> .

Table 4. Concepts and Categories in Kate's Talk about a Case of Plagiarism

there consequences for the student (failing, not graduating, redoing the work) but there were also consequences for Kate (in particular, being hauled into administration). This initial coding highlighted the moments in Kate’s talk that were particularly rich and invested by identifying those instances that were sites of tension.

The second pass of coding focused on the three themes of authorship, ownership, and community. In this stage, I looked for instances of teachers’ talk that referenced these three themes using as broad a definition as possible. I was interested in uncovering as many different instances of the three themes as in order to minimize limiting these examples because of my own assumptions and beliefs. *Table 5* lists examples of Kate’s talk that fall under the three themes.

Theme	Example
Authorship	She was not a <u>strong student</u> or a <u>strong writer</u> .
	And there were these like, you know, sort of <u>typical garbagy teenage poems</u> ,
	and then I flipped the page, and it was this <u>rhythmically perfect rhyme scheme, flawless, like long pieces</u>
	all I did was Google the first line, and I came up with the fact that five of her poems were just <u>blatantly cut and paste on lyrics</u> .
Ownership	<i>And I had a kid hand in a whole bunch of <u>song lyrics</u> and <u>represented as her poetry</u>.</i>
Community	Right. I mean, and, you know, again, <u>this is a kid who has been raised by her grandmother</u> , is not – she can go either way. She might be fine someday, and she might crap out in the first semester of community college and start getting into nothing, but bad. And, you know, I don’t know.
	<i>So I erred on the fact that I had her come in with the grandmother, we had a long talk with [Mr. Johnson], the assistant principal, and basically, you know, hash it all out and told her what the deal was.</i>
	<i>But again, you know – and didn’t she like cheer and dance <u>as she crossed the stage at graduation?</u></i>

*Table 5.* Themes and Examples in Kate’s Talk about Plagiarism

I examined each example of authorship, ownership, and community to determine the ideologies that informed these statements, comparing these moments with others across the interviews. In addition, I compared these examples with the moments I had identified in the first pass of coding to see if any connections could be seen between the participants’ response to plagiarism and the ways in which they described authorship, ownership, and community. In this example, Kate expresses *disbelief* that her student who isn’t a *strong student* or a *strong writer* would *blatantly*

cut and paste *rhythmically perfect rhyme scheme, flawless long pieces*. Kate is also *doubts* whether she did the right thing, especially when weighing the larger *consequences* and the hassle of being *hauled in* to administration. By locating these intersections between the reaction and the consequences as well as the moments of tension where the participants appeared to describe more than one position, I was able to identify the participants' *ideological dilemmas*.

## ETHICS

This project has at its core instances of plagiarism, which in many cases can result in serious consequences for students. In addition, the topic can be laden with emotion and overtones of morality. It was necessary then that I consider ways to safeguard the participants of this study. I have taken a number of methodological steps in an attempt to ensure that the research process is ethical and valid:

- 1) The study was focused on teachers' attitudes about plagiarism, not finding examples of student plagiarism,
- 2) Participation was entirely voluntary,
- 3) Participants had the option of asking that the video and/or audio recording be turned off during the interviews or group interview,
- 4) Participants had the ability to withdraw from the study,
- 5) Interviews were confirmed with audio recordings, and
- 6) The study was open to the revision of research questions.

In addition, I worked to develop trust between the participants and myself. This improved my communication with the participants and allowed me improved access. I was also able to have a better sense of the community and the various forces within the school so that I could make ethical decisions regarding the study. As I already had personal and professional relationships with two of the teachers in the English department, it was important for me to discuss upfront the legal limits and professional obligations regarding confidentiality.

This study also incorporated several other elements to ensure the validity of the findings. The three stages of data collection (face-to-face interviews, group interview, and phone interviews observations) and the collection of artifacts (such as the Parent-Student Handbook) allowed for triangulation of evidence.

## CHAPTER FOUR: MINOR COLLABORATORS, EDITORS, TEACHERS AND DILEMMAS OF AUTHORSHIP

**Thomas:** *Yeah, and it's weird though because I don't know how much, like, say you're a writer and writing is kind of this mix of everyone around you. I mean I'm sure writers aren't like, "This is mine. I'm not going to let anyone read this. I'm not going to let anyone influence what I'm writing." But usually that kind of shows up in the acknowledgement kind of section of it, and I don't really think there's that much difference to this. Even in my class when they're writing and kids have...if they struggle with particular tenses for some reason and they're like, "I just can't get it," and I'm like, "Okay, well, revise specifically for that, but maybe give it to someone else to look at."*

*It's a lot easier when someone isn't as close to it to look at it and say, "Oh, you're doing this, this and this." And they're like, "Well, am I allowed to do that?" And I'm like, "Writers have editors." You know what I mean? Like there's so much to the writing process that is invisible and for some reason it stays a mystery to students, so it's not—I don't think it's entirely different from that, but I think it is something that needs, somehow there needs to be credit, but when I'm doing it, which is weird, and might even be going against what I'm saying, if I'm helping a kid out I'm offering those ideas.*

*It's not like there's, that I'm presuming that what I'm giving you is mine and you can't use that. Um, I think teachers generally wanna help, and usually too when I, if I do something it's not like I'm just telling them the answers. I'm helping them get to it themselves, but I guess it is a form of plagiarism, but I don't think it's malicious. I don't think it's—I guess it would be. (Rnd 2)*

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“Neither diachronically nor synchronically, then, can authorship be bounded into stable, antipodal categories of mimetic, autonomous, or collaborative authorship. The heterogeneity of theories of authorship, the contradictory definitions that exist simultaneously, render impossible any sort of unitary representation. Yet both pedagogy and institutional policies on student authorship—and specifically, student plagiarism—attempt just that. Representations of student plagiarism seldom acknowledge the heterogeneous definitions of authorship in contemporary letters. Instead, these representations simplify student authorship, depicting it as a unified, stable field” (Howard, 1995, p. 793).

## INTRODUCTION

We all know what an author is, or at least we think we do. When there is an Author's Day at a local elementary school, we have clear expectations of who will be the featured guest of honor. When asked who our favorite author is, we might be reluctant to commit to a single answer, but it isn't because we aren't sure if the person we are thinking of is an author. If a graduating senior aspires to be an author, her parents might hope she ends up like J.K. Rowling or worry that she will be a starving artist trying to eke out a living.<sup>19</sup> We are less certain, however, when we are asked about ghostwriters, bloggers, or middle managers drafting memos: are they authors? What about students writing essays about *Romeo and Juliet*? Or plagiarists? Are they authors?

Plagiarism challenges our understanding of authorship by placing stress on the connections between the text and writer, undermining the qualities of autonomy, morality, proprietorship, and originality attributed to authors (Carrick & Howard, 2006). Plagiarists are positioned as relying too much on the words of others, being less than honest about where their ideas came from, or being too derivative. Plagiarists are often seen as less than a genuine author, although they may participate in many of the same literacy acts as authors. Plagiarists can conduct research, draft, revise, receive feedback on, and publish their writing; the way plagiarism is constructed, however, compels us to see the plagiarist as the opposite of authors. Still, we allow for all sorts of exceptions to this notion that the individual writer must be entirely autonomous and original: homage, imitation, formulaic writing, templates, boilerplates, corporate writing, and collaborative writing. And as Thomas mentions in the quote that begins this chapter, students write jointly with each other and with their teachers; this is generally considered good writing pedagogy. Plagiarism contributes to a landscape of authorship in the high school English Language Arts classroom that is fraught with challenges to student authors' autonomy, morality, proprietorship, and originality.

The purpose of this chapter is to build on Howard's (1995) claim of the heterogeneous nature of student authorship by illustrating the constellation of student authorship ideologies high

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<sup>19</sup> J.K. Rowling was both: Now a billionaire, she wrote the first novel of her *Harry Potter* series while a single-mother on welfare. She has also been accused several times of plagiarizing portions of her books. None of the resulting legal actions has been upheld.

school teachers describe in and across four rounds of semi-structured interviews. In addition, I describe how these overlapping and sometimes contradictory ideologies create dilemmatic spaces for teachers. My analysis reveals five major constructions of ideologies of authorship that emerged in teachers' talk about plagiarism, what I am calling the *Romantic*, the *school-based*, the *apprentice*, the *professional*, and the *exploratory*.

I begin with an analysis of the school's official stance on plagiarism, focusing on the policy as it is presented in the Parent/Student Handbook. I explore the ideologies of authorship presented in the Handbook. I then show how teachers, in their definitions of plagiarism, often align with the official policy in defining plagiarism. I also illustrate how teachers pull from other, non-congruent ideologies of authorship when talking about scenarios about student plagiarism and writing pedagogy. I demonstrate how these ideologies of authorship display contrasting and sometimes contradictory constructions about student authorship. These dilemmatic positions about authorship have the possibility to contribute to confusing writing instruction. At the same time, however, when acknowledged and explored, these same ideological dilemmas can offer generative spaces for critical thinking about issues of authorship. I end the chapter by discussing the how the Hopkins High English teachers' ideological dilemmas about authorship have implications for classroom writing instruction.

## THE SCHOOL POLICY

The Hopkins High School plagiarism policy is presented in the Student/Parent Handbook and is readily available online. According to Kate O'Connor, the department chair, the policy was originally drafted in 1995 by a small group of teachers and the principal, and it was revised in the past few years. While none of the teachers mentioned this policy explicitly during the interviews, the language and construction of authorship it uses were reflected in the definitions the teachers provided as their "working definition of plagiarism." In addition, the English Department chair acknowledged in an email that "[w]hile we have revisited the policy and alluded to it as a department, I don't know that we've had a lengthy conversation about it as it stands. [It] usually comes up in conjunction with an incident we're currently unwrapping." Thus, it seems appropriate to begin with an examination of this document and the frameworks it uses for authorship as it becomes the anchor for teachers as they work through examples of potential plagiarism. The policy constructs plagiarism as primarily an ethical issue that involves the

violation of notions of authoring and authorship. Through the common style of official policies, the Handbook presents plagiarism as a clear-cut issue. It is notable in that it acknowledges that students might have different assumptions about authorship and offers that it is the school's role to bring students to a proper understanding of appropriate academic writing and ethical behavior. Yet, despite this idea that correct authorship is learned and community-defined, the policy draws on an ideology that essentializes authorship as a fixed ethical issue.

### **The Ideologies of the Plagiarism Policy**

The Hopkins High School Parent/Student Handbook frames plagiarism as an ethical lapse of the individual and emphasizes the importance of honesty both within the school and beyond. The Handbook's language constructs plagiarism as a stable, self-evident concept that centers on the inappropriate authoring of texts, positioning plagiarism in opposition to ethical student authorship. While the policy does not offer an explicit definition of plagiarism, it links plagiarism to examples of fraud and collusion, highlighting the ways in which plagiarism is an issue of misrepresentation of authorship.

The first mention of *plagiarism* in the Handbook is located in the Student Conduct section under the subheading "Academic Honesty" and reads:

Academic honesty is integral to the academic experience in school. All students shall do their own work at all times. Collusion, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited.

The brevity of this statement obscures some of the ideologies that undergird the policy. Although the definition of plagiarism is not explicit, these three sentences place plagiarism in a loose sort of syllogism: 1.) academic honesty is essential to school; 2.) students must do their own work because that is the honest thing to do; and, therefore, 3.) dishonesty is prohibited. Yet, the order of the sentences seems to imply that instead of the students' behavior acting as the logical conclusion to a sense of right and wrong *vis-à-vis* academic honesty, the policy is the result of students' work and honesty. That is, because academic honesty is important and the fact that all students must work independently, academic dishonesty is prohibited. The policy emerges from the premises about honesty and independent work. This ordering of the sentences creates an overall effect of framing the prohibition of plagiarism as the logical conclusion of the school's

desire for an honest academic experience for its students, rather than a means to enforce particular student behaviors.

While few would argue with a policy that prohibits dishonesty, the lack of an explanation of what constitutes plagiarism creates a sense that a definition of the term is unnecessary. The statement does not mention writers, authors, or writing at all. Plagiarism is simply described as an act of dishonesty, but it is not made clear how this happens or who exactly is the agent of this action. This is not unusual as far as institutional language regarding plagiarism. As Price (2002) has shown, official policies often omit definitions of plagiarism or define plagiarism by emphasizing what it is not. This particular policy assumes that its readers are familiar with the terms “plagiarism,” “collusion,” and “academic honesty.” Overall, this statement foregrounds the importance of honesty in the academic setting and links this idea to autonomous and original work.

This brief section also aligns itself with the ideology of plagiarism as fraud. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the language of fraud is common in the discourse of plagiarism. The policy juxtaposes *plagiarism* with *collusion*, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as a “secret agreement or understanding for purposes of trickery or fraud; underhand scheming or working with another; deceit, fraud, trickery” (“Collusion,” 2013). The two examples of academic dishonesty highlighted in this statement are both presented as fraudulent behaviors that attempt to deceive the institution about the nature or the quality of the work a single student does. Either the student is falsely representing himself as the author of work that he did not create, or the student is working with another to deceive the school about the sole authorship of the work.<sup>20</sup> In both cases, the student falsely assumes authorship.

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<sup>20</sup> While I am using a generic *he* in this case, the issue of gender and plagiarism is fraught. Howard (2000) notes that the ways plagiarism is constructed through gendered metaphors, which often preclude women from being able to be “strong” authors: “The properties of autonomy, originality, proprietorship, and morality attributed to the modern author do not “merely” describe modern authorship; they also instate and reproduce hierarchized textual values that operate from a model of heterosexual, binary gender. The metaphoric arguments of authorship invest the masculine gender with power and creativity--with subject status--and the feminine with powerlessness and an absence of creativity--with object status. This rhetoric of authorship depicts plagiarism not only as a transgression against textual ethics but also as a transgression against the masculinity that defines binary heterosexuality.” However, most of the cases of plagiarism described to me by the teachers at Hopkins High School were committed by female students. Kate O’Connor, the department chair, wondered if the female students plagiarized

This official document positions a student who commits plagiarism as one who is dishonest by violating the characteristics of authorship. Compared to the qualities of authorship – originality, autonomy, morality and proprietorship as a writer (Carrick & Howard, 2006)—plagiarists are dishonest, overly-reliant on another writer, and fail to do their own work. Yet, the sense of authorship in this brief selection is only defined by its absence: the dishonest breach of an assumed understanding of the qualities of the author. This is further complicated by the sense of universality and simplicity that the three sentences contain. There is no hedging and no room for debate. All students shall do their own work and those who don't (by processes left undefined) are dishonest.

Later in the Handbook, there is a fuller discussion of academic honesty and its vital role in the school. In this section, the policy complicates the framework of plagiarism by introducing competing ideologies. The Handbook creates a much more complex image than the previous statement.

Students can anticipate an environment of mutual respect at Hopkins High School because the staff has confidence in the students' ability and integrity. We think, however, that sometimes student understanding of what academic honesty is does not always match staff understanding. Part of the school's job is to encourage students to demonstrate honesty in their dealings with others. Honesty, which contributes significantly to an individual's sense of worth, helps to create dignity and pride. Students should be aware that because honesty is a quality valued by our society, letters of recommendation to employers and colleges usually ask for remarks on character or integrity.

Here the statement seems to soften its position on plagiarism. In contrast to the all-encompassing statements of the first section, the Handbook allows for the potential disconnect between students' perceptions and understanding of academic honesty and the expectations of the institution's staff. The Handbook's first mention of plagiarism presented plagiarism as self-evident. Here, the policy indicates that the school works to move students toward ethical behavior for the betterment of society—a lofty goal, indeed. Yet, there is also a sense that the

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because they felt pressure to be perfect: “I feel like there is so much pressure for them to just be perfect. You have to be perfect. You have to get it right. And if you're not perfect, you better find a way to make it perfect. I think that the girls feel like you have to be pretty, you have to be thin, you have to carry the right handbag, you have to have good grades, whatever it takes, even if it means compromising your principles. I feel like there's – I think there's the same pressure for boys, but I think it's worse for girls in this town.”

more immediate concern is for a quality letter of recommendation for colleges and jobs. In these sections of the Handbook, plagiarism is not a writing concern but one of personal integrity.

Plagiarism is finally defined in the Handbook in a list of potential academic honesty violations as “presenting as original or independent work something that is not your own, including information or writing from computer sources.” Here, plagiarism is framed as the *misrepresentation* of another author’s work. Embedded in this sense of misrepresentation are several assumed qualities of authorship. Authors are original and independent. Authors might draw from other forms of information (e.g., “computer sources”), and they might engage with other works, but the implicit notion is that authors are able to clearly delineate between what is theirs and what is the product of another independent and original author. They are able to present this distinction in their writing.

The policy does not dwell on specific terms or provide illustrative examples. Missing in the description from the Handbook is a sense of any other forms of authoring and authorship. Because the policy leaves so much unmentioned, we can assume that the key constructs are those that are most common in the larger discourse about plagiarism. That is, the policy does not need to explore or expand on its claims about authorship and plagiarism because it is written from the stance that plagiarism is a misrepresentation of authorship and that is clearly classified as an academic honesty violation. In total, this policy defines plagiarism as a dishonest act in which the writer makes unauthorized claims of originality and independence.

The language in the official policy suggests the presence of dilemmatic positions on plagiarism. As I discussed earlier, these dilemmas are not indicative of a poorly written policy or a hypocritical stance. As Billig et al. (1988, p. 143) describes:

[Ordinary people’s] thinking is frequently characterized by the presence of opposing themes. These are not the oppositions which might be associated with a careless lack of thought. Rather they are the opposing themes which enable ordinary people to find the familiar puzzling and therefore worthy of thought.

One of the dilemmas in the policy is a tension between the dual roles of the institution of school: to teach students to be ethical citizens as well as to create marketable, attractive candidates for colleges and employers. At a school like Hopkins High, with its emphasis on preparing students to be competitive for admission to highly selective colleges, this tension can manifest itself through conflicting messages about the purpose for academic honesty. Within the policy, there is a movement from a more humanistic concern for the greater good to a more immediate and

individual goal of creating the strongest resume. Students might not immediately understand the cultural expectations of academically honest behavior and require the intervention and instruction of the school. The policy, however, highlights dishonest behaviors to avoid rather than exploring the honest behaviors that it claims that the school and future employers demand.

### **Teachers’ “Working Definitions” of Plagiarism**

It is against this backdrop that I place my participants’ talk about plagiarism, using the ideologies of the official policy as part of the teachers’ *intellectual* ideologies about authorship in contrast to their *lived* ideologies, which are informed by their experience. Early in my interviews with the Hopkins teachers, I asked my participants to tell me their “working definition” of plagiarism. Hopkins teachers offered examples that often aligned with the official policy both in language and in ideology. In defining plagiarism, the majority of the participants constructed plagiarism as an ethical issue that revolved around questions of appropriate authoring and authorship. In this section, I present selections of the transcripts of my interviews with the teachers in the department in order to highlight their dilemmatic ideologies about student authorship.

Teachers’ intellectual ideologies about authorship when defining plagiarism reflected several features that are found in the school Handbook. The teachers did not, however, explicitly refer to the plagiarism policy. Given that the department chair reported that the teachers would refer to the Handbook when trying to figure out difficult cases of plagiarism, it is not surprising that teachers would be aligned with the plagiarism policy. *Table 6* presents the working definitions of the ten participant teachers. Their working definitions shared similar language, construction, and emphasis as the sections of the Handbook dealing with plagiarism. Teachers talked about plagiarism as the “taking,” “using,” “presenting,” or “passing off” of someone else’s work, much like the definition in the Handbook of “presenting as original or independent work something that is not your own.” All of the definitions place the focus on the inappropriate use of someone else’s work, ideas, or words. The actor who inappropriately uses the words is left either unnamed or is the indefinite “you.” None of the definitions is described in terms of the first person or mentions the writer or author. Similarly, the teachers’ definitions do not foreground the role of the reader in constructing plagiarism. Three of the definitions speak of “representing” or “presenting” thoughts, implying the presence of an audience. In addition, these three definitions

seems to recognize a level of complexity that the others avoid. In all ten cases, however, the definitions are framed as solely the act of the nameless plagiarist.

	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Working Definition</i>
<b>Taking and Using</b>	<b>Emma Lou</b>	It's —well, I've learned a lot over the last couple years, but I think it's when you <u>take</u> someone else's work and <u>use</u> it as your own without giving him or her credit.
	<b>Beth</b>	I would say that it is <u>taking</u> someone else's idea and <u>using</u> it as your own.
	<b>Michael</b>	I guess I would say <u>taking</u> the words or ideas, of—from somebody else without attribution.
	<b>Barbara</b>	I think, in its simplest form, we always say <u>taking</u> somebody else's intellectual property and <u>claiming</u> it as your own.
	<b>Samantha</b>	I would define plagiarism as <u>taking</u> someone else's idea and <u>saying</u> it's yours, and not <u>giving</u> credit to the person who originally came up with it -and the idea, I mean research or, you know, theory about something, whatever.
	<b>Thomas</b>	Just any time you are <u>using</u> work, either from yourself or someone else, and not <u>giving</u> them recognition.
	<b>Liz</b>	<u>Taking</u> another's work without permission or without documentation.
<b>Representing, and presenting, and passing off</b>	<b>Kate</b>	<u>Representing</u> someone else's thoughts as your own, thoughts or ideas, and that takes so many different forms.
	<b>Renee</b>	I suppose, in a nutshell, <u>presenting</u> ideas or words that are not your own as your own whether intentionally or not.
	<b>Reed</b>	Plagiarism is theft of intellectual property—is generally what I regard it as— <u>passing off</u> someone else's work as your own intentionally. Then there's all the gray area, and I discuss that in class quite a bit.

Table 6. Teachers' Working Definitions of Plagiarism

The teachers of Hopkins High all defined plagiarism in short declarative statements. The definitions, by nature, attempt to delimit the meaning of plagiarism by giving a clear sense of the action; the generic expectations of a definition are that they will be definitive, of course. Teachers' definitions of plagiarism, while being brief and avoiding ambiguity, still demonstrate certain moves that indicate the difficulty of succinctly defining the term or were marked by hedging (Hyland, 1996). Table 7 shows the hedging in the “working definitions” of plagiarism in nine out of the ten participants. One teacher, Liz, did not use this type of hedging in her definition, although she did demonstrate this move in later conversations about plagiarism.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For example, in a conversation about college admissions essays, Liz says, “You know, I think there is plagiarism...and I know it's gray, all gray, but I – I don't think a phrase in a – in a paper

Hedging can be used in a variety of ways in talk (Hyland, 1996). For instance, some of the hedging in the above examples allows the speakers to demonstrate uncertainty (e.g., “I guess I would say”) or to signal an awareness of multiple viewpoints on the subject (e.g., “and that take so many different forms”). A third possible reading is that the participants, knowing that they were part of a study about plagiarism, wanted to lower their personal commitment to the definition (e.g., “I would define plagiarism as...”). In all of these cases, the participants allow for the challenges of what Reed calls “the gray area.” Whereas the plagiarism policy creates a sense that plagiarism is a concept that is readily apparent and fixed in meaning, the teachers’ working definitions indicate more uncertainty even while using similar language as the policy. Thus, the teachers seem to be in alignment with the policy in terms of defining plagiarism. However, their understanding of the complexity of plagiarism could be a reason for their hedging when trying to define plagiarism.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Hedge</b>
Emma Lou	“.. but I think...”
Barbara	“I think, in its simplest form...”
Beth	“I would say...”
Michael	“I guess I would say...”
Samantha	“I would define plagiarism as...”
Thomas	“Just any time you are...”
Kate	“...and that takes so many different forms.”
Renee	“I suppose, in a nutshell...”
Reed	“...is generally what I regard it as...”

*Table 7. Teachers’ Uses of Hedges in their Definitions of Plagiarism*

While the participants defined plagiarism in similar terms as the official policy, their definitions also revealed a strong influence of other contextual forces. For example, Emma Lou’s definition begins with a declaration that indicates that her experience has informed her understanding of plagiarism: “I’ve learned a lot over the last couple of years.” Emma Lou is a teacher who began her career as a special education teacher, then moved to an ELA position in a middle school setting and for the past two years has worked at Hopkins High in the English department. She indicates that her working definition is influenced by the context in which she is teaching. The “last couple years” includes interaction within the culture of the school, awareness

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is saying that it's not honestly their work, if – if they've really got their head around it, try things, and manipulated it, and – you know, I see them work awfully hard doing these things.”

of the plagiarism policy, and participating in discussions with the department about possible plagiarism cases. Emma Lou then makes a move to indicate that her definition is still a working definition and her understanding of plagiarism is fluid: “but I think.” She contrasts the learning she has done in the last couple of years with her current definition, which positions her understanding as one that is more tentative. Her thoughts about the definition of plagiarism have been challenged since her move to the high school level. Later in the interview she connects her evolving definition to the use of Turnitin.com at Hopkins High School:

**Emma Lou:** I learned about plagiarism, again, while teaching....And mostly – and obviously as a special ed teacher for five years and then I taught middle school, and we didn’t talk at – at all about plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarizing, and it was just something that they had never heard of. And then I, you know, came here, and then we started with the Turnitin.com....And that’s when it just made more sense to me, and I – we learned more about it through that system. It’s definitely more of a hands-on thing though.

For Emma Lou, her previous experiences were in places where teachers and students “didn’t talk at...all about plagiarism.” Not only was there more conversation about plagiarism at Hopkins High, but it was also the use of the plagiarism detection software shaped her understanding of plagiarism. The use of “that system” [Turnitin.com] “just made more sense” to Emma Lou. When talking about a scenario where a student uses two sentences from Wikipedia (see *Appendix B, Scenario 2*), Emma Lou said, “I guess if Turnitin didn’t pick anything else up, then you’d have to kind of give the student the benefit of the doubt.” Emma Lou relies on the Turnitin.com Originality Report to provide clarity: if the plagiarism detection software does not flag text as suspicious, she is willing to give the student the benefit of the doubt. That is, as she is learning more about plagiarism, she appreciates the ways in which the plagiarism detection software removes some of the uncertainty and presents plagiarism as a more stable construct. As I have described in Chapter 2, Turnitin.com frames plagiarism in terms that are similar to the language of the Handbook. Together, these two forces act as influences on Emma Lou’s understanding of plagiarism.

In other parts of the interviews, teachers revealed four additional constructions of authorship ideology, some of which do not easily align with the plagiarism policy. The wide variety of ideologies that teachers have at their disposal may be part of the reason teachers seemed less committed to their working definitions.

## Teachers' Other Frames of Authorship

In my analysis of the interview transcripts, I coded for the category of *authorship*. What emerged were five ideologies of authorship: The *Romantic author*, the *school-based author*, the *apprentice author*, the *professional author*, and the *exploratory author* (see Table 8). These categories represent frameworks that teachers used to describe authorship or authoring practices of their students and of other writers outside of the classroom. Teachers expressed multiple ideologies about student authorship, often while discussing a single scenario. While these categories are displayed as separate frameworks, teachers would often draw upon more than one to talk about a single moment. I will explore these categories separately in order to highlight the dilemmas teachers had in navigating through the issues of authorship, but in practice, teachers' ideologies were sometimes overlapping, blurred, or blended. Thus, this constellation of ideologies is not designed to be a definitive list of all of the types of authorship ideologies in Hopkins High teachers' talk nor is it offered as representing ideologies held by all of the members of the Hopkins High English Department. Instead, I aim to provide a language and theoretical understanding of the multiple authorship ideologies in order to explain the dilemmatic position these teachers—both as a department and as individuals—experienced with plagiarism.

<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Description</b>
Romantic author	Writers as solitary, original genius
School-based author	Students who are positioned as a completer of assignments or a fulfiller of tasks
Apprentice author	Developing writers who needed guidance in order to assist their growth
Professional author	Students as independent authors who enlist their teachers to act in editorial roles
Exploratory author	Students who use writing as a vehicle for self-discovery

Table 8. The Constellation of Authorship Ideologies

These five ideologies occurred in teachers' talk about specific examples of plagiarism from their classrooms or in response to detailed scenarios that I presented. These ideologies can be said to represent the *lived ideologies* of the teachers rather than the *intellectual ideologies* found in the plagiarism policy or the teachers' definitions of plagiarism given in the abstract. The uneven alignment of the intellectual and lived ideologies of the participants creates dilemmatic moments

for these teachers. As I discussed earlier, this disjunction is not a sign of lack of careful thought about plagiarism. Instead, it is, in fact, the place for thought and debate about plagiarism. The presence of this constellation of ideologies allows teachers to work with and respond to the wide variety of authoring practices that they encounter in their classrooms. What follows is a description of the five types of authorship ideologies.

### *Romantic Authorship*

The construction of Romantic authorship is a powerful ideology that permeates both popular conceptions of literature and pedagogical choices in high school ELA classrooms. Captured in William Wordsworth's (1800) description of the elevated station of the Poet in his "Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*,"<sup>22</sup> this notion positions the author as a creative genius for whom derivation would be a sin. The Romantic author attends to the overlooked ordinary and draws from the common language of man, but because of his particular qualities (by which the poet is separated from the common man by a matter of degree rather than of sort), he is able to express ideas in a sublime and unique manner.<sup>23</sup> The Romantic author is defined by his intense self-expression, his radical sense of originality, and his authorial autonomy (Bennett, 2005). While much of the second half of the twentieth century saw challenges to this framework (for example, most dramatically, Barthes, 1977; Foucault, 1984), this construction of the author as the solitary genius still influences teachers in high school classrooms. Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede (1994) note that despite the shift in writing pedagogy from teacher-centered to student-centered frameworks, many classrooms still hold on to residual assumptions of this more traditional conception of authorship. This can be seen in the Hopkins High School Handbook's plagiarism

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<sup>22</sup> Wordsworth (1800) writes: "Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? to whom does he address himself? and what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them" (para.15).

<sup>23</sup> The construction of the Romantic author seems to be a particularly masculine image. See Howard (2000) for an insightful exploration of effects of this tradition on our understanding of plagiarism.

policy with its emphasis on the work of the individual, as well as in the importance of the personal characteristics of the writer. In addition, some of the teachers' talk about plagiarism, especially when teachers were discussing the ideal state of authorship, reflects similar assumptions about authorship.

The Handbook relies on a sense of the student as an autonomous, original author in outlining its plagiarism policy. It assumes that text has an identifiable solitary author and that when a student writes, it is clearly his or her "own work." There is no mention of teachers being involved in the writing process other than the statement about the role of the school in teaching students about the cultural expectations of academic honesty. Nor is there mention of the ways in which peers could participate as in each other's literacy development, either as literacy sponsors or in less significant roles. The solitary student writes in order to present his or her work as "original and independent." Part of this insistence on the independence of the student author is necessary for the policy to work, as the both the reward system (grades) centers on the individual and the punishments for plagiarism are doled out to the individual; thus, responsibility ultimately rests on the individual student.

When the teachers talked about authorship, some participants framed it through Romantic ideologies, positioning authors as significantly different from more ordinary (student) writers. For instance, I asked my participants if they saw a difference between the terms *author* and *writer*. For Barbara, the difference was clear:

**Barbara:** So, for example, Shakespeare is the author of *Romeo and Juliet*, so I would say that's the way we use author a lot of times in an English classroom, uh, is by, you know, looking at who the work of literature is by. And writer I would say, we more use when we're talking about ourselves as writers, and that's pretty much how we use it.

**Steve:** Yeah, so do you talk about your students as writers or as authors?

**Barbara:** As writers.

Here, Barbara offers up a two-tiered hierarchy: Shakespeare is a published author of literature, whom students read and analyze in the classroom. The members of the class are writers. In this framework, authors are creators of literature like *Romeo and Juliet*. Authors are the source of great works of original genius that are worthy of study. On the other hand, students' work can be shared and celebrated, but not to the extent of what authors receive. Students can comment on each other's work, but they study authors' work. Assignments are designed to lead students

toward being independent, original authors. For example, Barbara attempts to invest the students' writing with meaning by sharing it among the class.

**Barbara:** I try to actually —I try to talk about the importance when we're writing something we're writing, we're writing for it not just to be shared with the teacher, and I try to take time to have them share with each other. I'm sure a lot of people have brought up Turnitin, and it has a revision or it has a peer option where you can have them read each other's, and they can pick like one or two and do comments. I've done that a few times this year, and they've enjoyed it because I think that it's important for them to attach meaning to what we're writing. We're not just writing it for a grade; we're not just writing it for our teacher or ourselves. When we write something, we're writing it to be shared.

This activity is designed to replicate some of the qualities of the Romantic author for the student writer. The student's writing is invested with meaning. The writing is the student's own work. Yet, unlike the Romantic notion of authorship in which the author writes, contributing to the greater good of society, the students are writing for the teacher and for a grade, in addition to their classmates.

Emma Lou at first hadn't thought about distinguishing between *author* and *writer*, but as she thinks aloud about the differences, she offers up a Romantic notion of the author as the object of study. An *author* is one with "credentials" and one who has been published. "Really talented" students can be given opportunities to strive toward this ideal through extracurricular outlets like the student literary magazine:

**Steve:** Do you see a difference between calling somebody an author and calling somebody a writer or are those interchangeable for you?

**Emma Lou:** Um, I'm not sure if I've ever really thought about it, like I've ever really separated the two. But I think an author might have different credentials than a writer. I mean I think maybe the writers are those that we kind of come across in our classes, and the authors are those that become published, like in a sense of whether it's a book or a magazine or a journal. Even, you know, I think we can do it on a small scale here in the high school. I think we've definitely got those kids that – that are really talented in the classroom, and then they do extend that, like I said, to the *Hopkins Chronicle*, the literary magazine. So that might – if I had to differentiate, that's maybe how I would do that.

Emma Lou claims the students who are talented can emulate authors, but she does not completely commit to this idea. She brackets her discussion by hedging her statement: she isn't sure she's ever thought about the differences. She ends by creating some distance between this claim and her own ideas. She uses words like "might," "if I had to," "maybe," and "would." I

believe that in this hedging, Emma Lou is trying to reconcile a Romantic ideology of authorship with the more complex lived experience of authorship she sees in her classroom.

Samantha makes a similar distinction between *author* and *writer* but reverses the terms. In her response to my request to talk about the differences, Samantha identifies D.H. Lawrence as a writer, whereas Stephenie Meyer (of *Twilight* fame) is an author. The writer is one who not only has published but whose work has “more intrinsic value.”

**Steve:** Do you see a difference between those terms at all?

**Samantha:** That’s a great question.

**Steve:** Thank you.

**Samantha:** Ah, yeah I do. I mean I got – I get like this visceral response to that question –right away. Um, an author is, I think, someone who has published something and like Stephenie Meyer is a – an author –and a writer is someone who probably has published but looks at writing or – I just feel like the writing is – has more intrinsic value as writing. Maybe not as making money and that kind of thing, but, you know, it’s like comparing Stephenie Meyer to um, D.H. Lawrence or something like that. Not that you have to be classic to be a writer.

For Samantha, the writer is one who is able to create something that contains some sort of essential value. The writer doesn’t write just to make a living. The Romantic notion of authorship being about creating art with little regard to commerce seems to be influencing Samantha’s descriptions. Like Emma Lou, Samantha is thinking aloud. She is curious about the question and begins to attempt to unravel the differences. Her answer is not fully formed but the influence of the Romantic author is apparent.

### *School-based Authorship*

Teachers also describe an ideology of *school-based authorship*, in which the student is positioned as a completer of assignments, a fulfiller of tasks, rather than the Romantic author concerned with expression of emotion or the creation of art. While the Romantic construction of authorship emphasizes the characteristics of autonomy, proprietorship, originality, and morality, the ideology of the school-based author foregrounds the manual completion of writing and the interaction between the student and the teacher in terms of requirements and expectations of assignments rather than notions of creative expression or self-discovery. This type of authorship can be seen in several different situations: when teachers see students as working toward a goal for the sake of completing that task; when teachers limit the choices students have; when teachers position students in roles that are seen as less than authors; when teachers do not value

the product of the students' work, and instead see the completion of the exercise as the learning objective; and when teachers foreground their role as gatekeepers for the assignment by emphasizing what is allowed and what is permissible.

For example, in describing a typical writing assignment for his junior level Advanced Placement English Language and Composition course (AP Language), Michael initially differentiates between an ideal writing experience and the actual experience of his students. In the ideal world, students would take advantage of a wide variety of opportunities to develop their essays—from the earliest invention stages to the final edits.

**Michael:** Well, I think, you know, there's obviously the difference between kind of the ideal and the reality. But I think many of them do take advantage of writing conferences, which means they would—they would make a—write a draft, at least; have a writing conference with me; and then finalize the draft. Now, some students, you know, depending on the, on the topic or how—how challenging it might be for them, might—often times what I try and do or sometimes...what I try and do is allow them to sort of pick the topic or give them a broad range of—of choice about topics. And that can create a dilemma for them, for some students. They don't know what to write about, so sometimes they go through several iterations —

**Steve:** Right.

**Michael:** —or conversations about, “I don't what —where to go with this.” But...and that's a good thing I think.

**Steve:** Right.

The students who struggle to know what to write about are the ones who take advantage of the additional opportunities. Michael notes that this struggle is a “good thing” for students; however, it appears that those students who feel more confident with their ability to select a topic are not always required to share their drafts with Michael. Thus, the ideal scenario, as described by Michael, is presented as an option for those students who struggle.

Michael acknowledges that the busyness of some of his students' lives necessitates the shift in the emphasis from process to product. In this shift, the ideology of authorship also shifts. Instead of taking the stance that students are authors who need time and space to recollect their overflowing passion in tranquility, this school-based authorship creates a sense of the student writing to fulfill requirements in the midst of busyness.

**Michael:** Many students still— you know, and there — they have these — these crazy, busy lives, will, sort of wait till the last minute and try and pound something—something out. I don't every time allow for— and I probably most times do not— allow for peer editing.

**Steve:** Okay.

**Michael:** Or not —do not require peer editing. I do sometimes. Students seem to have kind of often times a negative mindset about it, but sometimes we'll do peer editing. I think it's helpful. They—I—I don't necessarily, I'm sure see that. But I think, again, many of them because things are so busy, and I know I fall into this trap too 'cause I'm so busy, you know, give them a week or two weeks for a writing assignment and, you know, they do it at the last possible moment.

Michael describes how his students feel compelled to “pound something out” at the last minute because of their busy lives. Practices like drafting, peer-editing, and conferencing with the teacher become time-consuming activities of questionable value for the students. It is important to remember that these students taking AP English Language and Composition see their junior year as critical in their quest to go to a highly-selective college. The junior year contains important high-stakes tests (the AP Exam, the state Regents exam, the SAT), the last full-year grade that will appear on their transcripts that are sent to colleges, and teachers who will likely write their letters of recommendations. It is not surprising that students would emphasize the final (graded) product more than the less quantifiable, albeit noble, characteristics of the writing process.

This type of authorship is often connected to students' willingness to commit plagiarism. If their primary goal is to complete the assignment and there is little sense of personal connection to the act of composition, students might be more willing to do whatever it takes to finish the writing task. At their most cynical point, teachers might see this type of authorship as the opposite of the Romantic author. Instead of worrying about saying the best words in the best order, the school-based author is focused on acing the test or getting full credit.

The teachers are also under pressure to prepare students for the high-stakes exams. For instance, Reed points out that although he used to place an emphasis on having students publish their writing, now he is more concerned with preparing students for the state exams:

**Steve:** I know in other places you've taught, um, that you had an emphasis on publication and teaching creative writing, as sort of a capstone project. Do you try to do anything with publication in some of the other courses?

**Reed:** You know I've kind of gotten lazy in that area since I've been here. I have not been as involved in it. You know we're in a different atmosphere now where the exams are everything and, you know, especially anything that I've taught that hasn't been AP, uh, I have always worked with the kids. Even with the 9<sup>th</sup> graders now I'm really concentrating on can they pass the Regents in three years. That's my main interest, and it isn't publication, you know? [...]

I was innovative in different ways [at a previous teaching position] and really priding myself on all those crazy innovations that I did, and here I really feel that, you know, the atmosphere has changed, you know, the emphasis on testing, you know?

Reed blames his “laziness” for the shift in his writing pedagogy, but remarks that he used to pride himself on the “crazy innovations” he did in the classroom. While Reed mentioned earlier in the interview that he “never really made the distinction between the two” terms *writer* and *author*, his changing emphasis from student as writer to student as test-taker mirrors the differences between a more Romantic authorship and a school-based authorship. Later, Reed notes the “it’s funny because normally I’d say, oh, ‘I don’t pay as much attention. I’m [at Hopkins]. I don’t have to pay as much attention on the tests.’ But that’s what everybody is pushing, you know?” This high-stakes testing environment helps inform an ideology that frames student authorship as one that centers on test-preparation. Reed’s claim that his laziness and the changing atmosphere have prevented him from being innovative is further complicated by the fact that he holds the position as the 6-12 Standards Leader for the district, the teacher who works to ensure that the school is aligned with state curriculum and goals. He is also the advisor for the literary magazine and a published author himself, identities that would seem to align more with a celebration of creativity.

### *Apprentice authorship*

In this frame, teachers saw students as *apprentice authors*, or developing writers, who needed close guidance in order to assist their growth. While still grounded in the school experience, this type of authorship constructed students as beginning academic writers whose work is about the generation of knowledge, or at least the demonstration of knowledge. Unlike the school-based author whose goals are driven by the standardized tests or grades, the apprentice author was viewed more positively. The teachers saw authorship as something students grew into. They believed that students needed varying degrees of direct guidance in order to learn how to become authors. In the teachers’ talk, there was a clear sense that ninth grade writers were different from seniors and that teachers adjusted their instruction based on this information. In addition, the use of conferences (mandated by the department) supported this frame. In these conferences, teachers would work one on one with students in order to help them learn and develop. These conferences were not designed to improve students’ scores on state

exams or improve their overall GPA (although these might be outcomes to the individual attention); instead the teachers saw these interactions as important ways to help students develop into stronger writers. In alignment with this notion of developing student writers, plagiarism was presented as authoring choices that were born in ignorance of the ways that mature writers use sources.

The teachers at Hopkins High saw their role in the development of student writers as mature and important. For instance, Michael talked about how his AP Language students, like all writers, are always learning how to be writers.

**Steve:** Okay. So — but you would — do you still see the students as sort of writers or are they — are they student writers? Are they writers when they're creating things in your AP language?

**Michael:** Yeah, they're writers. Yeah.

**Steve:** Yeah.

**Michael:** I think— I see them as writers. They're — as student writers and writers. I think—you know, I guess my conception of writing is that it's—it's—no one's ever kind have got it. You're never finished. You're never kind of there. It's—it's always going to be a process. It's always going to be something that you're working at.

**Steve:** Right.

**Michael:** Um, so it's — I wouldn't—uh, they are students and—and they've got me as their teacher to help them, but it's not— I don't, uh, see that necessarily as a limiting factor. I mean I guess, you know, we're all learning, right?

Michael states that his “conception” of writing is that it is a process. Unlike the Romantic ideology of authorship in which the author is born, not made, the apprentice ideology that Michael draws from in this excerpt indicates that writers are shaped by the guidance of their teachers. Michael also notes that this shaping is never completed. Student writers are continually learning about the craft through the interaction with mentors. In addition, Michael expands his scope from talking about “students” to a much broader “we.”

The apprentice author ideology positions students as developing in all elements of authorship that Carrick and Howard (2006) propose (i.e., autonomy, morality, proprietorship and originality). Students are invited to independence over time. They learn over their time at Hopkins High School to start to make the choices that are required to become authors and not just students. In terms of morality, in this frame students are seen as learning the difference between right and wrong, or the importance of academic honesty. As students learn about the rules and conventions, they gain the sense of morality required to be an author. While students are growing in regards to their authorial morality and autonomy, they are also being instructed in

ways to find their own voice and generate a sense of ownership of their writing. The teachers at Hopkins High relished the opportunity to be part of this kind of development. As Emma Lou describes, they work from the first day to equip students with the skills and habits of mind to become authors.

**Steve:** Um, what—what does it mean to be an author, for you? I mean what—what makes somebody an author?

**Emma Lou:** You mean in the classroom or like...

**Steve:** Yeah. Or, in general.

**Emma Lou:** Yeah. Well, I think that — I — I don't know if I'm going to answer this how you want me to in the sense of going in that direction. But I think when I do it in my classroom, I focus a lot on the process. So I mean as soon as I get—I love teaching freshman because they're like moldable, impressionable. Like I've got 'em right there, and I focus on the process. So starting almost like day one it's like, "Okay. We're going to start with pre-writing." And they — they learn that terminology: pre-writing, brainstorming, and then we move into the drafting process and then the editing and revising and – and publishing. So I think that to become an author, they have to understand the process of writing.

Emma Lou enjoys teaching ninth-graders because of the potential opportunity to reshape them and have them gain the knowledge of the processes of authors. She connects this joy with being part of the journey of the students becoming writers. Her language frames this work as change: the students are "moldable, impressionable"; writing is about moving through the different steps of the writing process; her instruction is described as having a clear beginning and direction.

Teachers were aware the students develop as writers and authors. They realize that the writers in their classroom as ninth graders are different from the seniors writing in their classes. They also know that these writers are going to be different once they go to college. That is, these teachers don't believe that students are going to be fully formed writers when they leave high school. In fact some of these teachers indicated that writers are always growing and developing.

**Beth:** I always tell them not to get too — don't fall in love with your writing because the biggest thing I think with a lot of kids is they become emerging writers. They're not — they don't wanna use the process and they think they can, you know, hack it out, boom it's done. So this constant, uh, you know, constant revision encouragement I guess, we do that in the resource room too.

Beth tells her students not to get too attached to their own writing because they are emerging writers. If writers are encouraged to not fall "in love" with their writing, they establish a more temporary relationship with their work. They end up in a place where they "hack it out." Unlike the Romantic ideology of authorship in which the writer's work can be seen as the writer's

“progeny,” in this apprentice writer frame, the writer’s work is practice. These writers are in “constant revision” of both their work and themselves.

### *Professional Authorship*

Another of the ideologies that emerged from my interviews with teachers is one that emphasized the relationship between the student and the teacher in a manner that evoked a sense of the editor/writer interactions. In this *professional authorship* construct, teachers described students as writers who worked closely with teachers in order to improve their writing. The teachers saw themselves more as editors than instructors. Teachers described writing conferences, meetings with students about college essays, and writing conferences in which students are positioned as authors who are in need of an external set of eyes in order to help make the final product better. The writing is product-oriented—toward the contest, college admission or the final product, but with a sense of the importance of collaboration. The interaction between the teacher and the student emphasizes the autonomy of the student author. Teachers are concerned with respecting the autonomy either because of the rules governing the interchange or the expectations of the assignment. Interestingly, this framework was more likely to emerge in interactions that dealt with extra-curricular writing assignments.

For example, in response to a scenario about a student receiving assistance on a college essay, Reed talked about working with students on their writing.

**Steve:** ... Where’s that tipping point for you in terms of how much— so obviously the parent who writes the essay like you said, that’s pretty clear. Getting help from teachers, like you say, it’s part of the writing process. At what point would you feel, maybe, uncomfortable? Maybe that’s a good way of thinking about it.

**Reed:** I’ve never gotten to that point with a kid so it’s really hard for me to say where it is. I mean I’m just pointing out suggestions and, you know, I’m heavily involved in rewriting especially when I’m crossing out whole paragraphs and saying arrows, put this paragraph here instead of there and things like that. Um, I don’t know where it is. It’s when somebody writes entire lines or paragraphs for someone else, but until then it’s just, you know, I mean you know about writing. Your editors will heavily revise your stuff. At what point is it your stuff? No, it’s always your stuff even if your editor rewrote the whole thing, you know?

For Reed, the role of the editor is to be “heavily involved in rewriting.” Editors can rewrite “the whole thing,” but the key element of this ideology of authorship is that the writer is the source of the original idea. The editor can remove and relocate words (“crossing out whole

paragraphs and arrows”) or be “heavily “involved with the revision without changing the authorship of the piece. Reed positions students as authors who are the ones who create the content and the editors are the ones who help shape the content. Reed later brought up other examples of the editor/author relationship, in which the editor played an active and significant role. In this excerpt, he attempts to define where tipping point is between editing and co-writing.

**Reed:** ...I mean look at some of the very famous examples of it, you know, where editors have...it's almost more the editors than it is, uh, the writers. I was reading a biography of Salinger last week and, you know, there was a big fight. To *The New Yorker*, especially, they wanted to heavily rewrite his things. The editor Shawn sat down with him for days at a time working with him to rewrite his stories...There is no point, is there?... I don't know. They'd never put “By J.D. Salinger and William Shawn.” It was only J.D. Salinger, “A Perfect Day for Bananafish.”

Reed describes how Salinger's editor would work for “days at a time” on a short story, but “they'd never put” Shawn's name on the story as a co-author. Reed claims that there really isn't a tipping point for the professional author and editor. Reed then brings up another example: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Reed has taught the book for several years to his AP English Literature class and investigates some of the issues of authorship with his students. He draws upon his experience from his own graduate school work with James Rieger, a Shelley scholar.

**Reed:** Um, the *Frankenstein* thing that I deal with every year where, you know, my professor Rieger wrote the line; at what point do you consider him [Percy Bysshe Shelley] not, you know, Mary's editor but a minor collaborator? At what point do you consider me a minor collaborator? But Mary Shelley's name is still on there and [mine] isn't on this. So there's a lot of gray area.

Reed connects the work he does with editing students' college essays to the examples of William Shawn's relationship with J.D. Salinger and James Rieger's scholarly edition of *Frankenstein*. Reed acknowledges the important work of the editor in shaping the work of the author and explains that this relationship is problematic. The editor might be a “minor collaborator” or “more than the writer,” but in the end it is the author who receives the credit for the final product.

Reed also talked about his own writing for an editor and how this relationship isn't always productive:

**Reed:** My editors at Greenhaven revise me more than I want them to and sometimes, you know, like yesterday I was re-reading, you know, I was reading their edits on me, 'cause I get the final proof, and I'm changing some of them back 'cause it annoys me, you know? But you always fight that process. [Laughs] They edited me and I thought it was more

awkward than I originally wrote, 'cause I'll go back and check my original manuscript and I'll say, that's what they did? That ticks me off.

Reed presents a complex image of the editor/author relationship that is both generative and annoying. One that is both visible and invisible to outside readers. I asked Reed if he uses these examples in his teaching.

**Steve:** And do you [talk about] any of that?

**Reed:** ... yes I do. With the kids, yeah, I talk to them about that sometimes. It's over-edited, but editors feel they have carte blanche to do that. So in this regard, too, I think teachers when you give them an essay if they really, unless they're just giving you, you know, lip service and saying, "Oh, [look] here, correct this word. It should be, you know, continual instead of continuous" or something, unless they're just sort of doing a couple things, if the teacher is really involved in the process there's a lot to do...

For Reed, the role of the teacher is to get "really involved in the process." He believes that the teacher needs to get involved with the actual writing of the text. And this involvement might lead to the teacher being "a minor collaborator" or more. It appears to be any less involved is to just give "lip service." However, in all of this conversation about editors and students, Reed positioned the writers as authors who still were the source of the writing and this work does not constitute plagiarism.

Other members of the department talked about the role of the teacher as an editor for student writing. Michael responded to the scenario of the college essay by acknowledging the familiarity of the situation.

**Michael:** Oh absolutely, yeah, both in terms of essays but this exact scenario happened 'cause I teach a lot of juniors and seniors. This exact scenario happens to me all the time and I bet it does to [Reed] and to, to [Samantha] and others, um, and, um, you know, I find myself, I guess, collaborating in the way that an editor would, conscious always of the fact that I'm not the one that should be writing this. And then the same thing about suggesting ideas for a quote or whatever, again I think that's what editors do, you know, and if you believe in the process of revision and talking to people and getting feedback from writers and that kind of stuff, you know, you have to accept that the flow of ideas is going to come in from multiple sources.

In this context, Michael sees the relationship of the student and teacher as one of the editor and professional writer. This focus on the collaborative process might mean that the "flow of ideas is going to come in from multiple source," and these sources are often invisible. Still, Michael highlights that he is "conscious always of the fact that [he is] not the one that should be writing" the college essay. For him, there seems to be a difference between "suggesting ideas," "talking to

people,” and “getting feedback” on the one hand and “writing.” The first category allows the editor to still collaborate but not claim authorship. Writing, although not explicitly defined here, is a practice that invests authorship. Thus, the professional author can enlist the support of another person, and she does not have to acknowledge that assistance. This collaboration is not plagiarism because of the roles the two agents assume. For Reed and Michael, one way in which students take up authorship is to enlist their teachers in editing roles much like published authors.

### *Exploratory authorship*

The least prevalent ideology that emerged in my interviews was *exploratory* authorship, in which students use writing as primarily a vehicle for discovery. Students are seen as writers who use writing as an act of self-awareness. Students can adopt other voices, mimic or impersonate, ventriloquize, or remix in order to explore or investigate. By giving students the freedom to experiment, teachers allow that student might appropriate other texts and might even violate some of the rules of writing or the community expectations of academic writing. Most often, this frame was used for writing processes that occurred before the final drafting, for writing that wasn't graded or assessed and for writing that wasn't shared with outside readers. For instance, Kate reported about how she uses journaling in her class to help student use writing as a form of personal expression.

**Kate:** I do every Monday, Journal Monday, which is sort of a cheesy little thing. It's old school. I put a prompt on the screen. I time them. Stream of consciousness writing. ... I don't ever read those, but they've started — and I promised them that I don't read them, and they're like, “You come in on weekends and read them.” I'm like, “I don't. That's your personal writing. That's your writing for you to express yourself and do your thing.” I would love to read them. I can't even imagine what I'd learn, but they feel very possessive and as I've started in the last couple weeks especially talking about, you know, I talk to them about how that's practice for the big game. You don't show up at your band concert and go, “Hey, I'm just going to be over here in the clarinet section.” ... If nothing else, I can establish that their writing is their personal expression and that belongs to them. I start to see their voice come out and they're getting a little more serious, or they look at the prompts and they go “[*gasp*]”, or sometimes they go, “I can't write about that.” So then I say, “Write about anything. I'm never going to read it.”

Kate sets up the writing as a way for students to explore their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas. She tells her students to “express yourself” and to “do your thing” in their journals. Although this writing is given a grade (for completion), Kate doesn't read it. In fact, she has to convince her students that she doesn't sneak in on weekends to peer into their journals. This ideology

positions writing as a way for students to discover themselves rather than complete assignments or prepare for tests. In addition, this type of authoring is done without a sense of audience beyond the writer herself. Exploratory authors write for themselves and to explore ideas rather than to share information.

Kate mentions that this type of writing is the students' "personal writing" that "belongs to them." The students as authors have ownership of their writing, but because it is not shared, it is difficult to position the students as having a proprietorial stance toward the material. That is, while the students own the expressions of ideas in their journal, in order for them to claim ownership of these words, they would need to share these with an audience, who could then acknowledge their originality. Kate notes that this writing is important for "cultivating that little bit of spark in them." The students can use this writing for growth but Kate acknowledges that this writing probably doesn't have much value beyond the act of writing: "It's like their little sad book of their year. I don't know what they do with them. They probably find them in their drawer when they graduate college." The students file away the journal and forget about it for several years. If they rediscover their writing, its only value is as a "little sad" record of their sophomore year.

## IMPLICATIONS

As I have shown, the teachers at Hopkins High have a wide range of ideologies about authorship to draw from when they talk about writing and plagiarism. Teachers expressed these ideologies when they were describing typical writing tasks that students at Hopkins High would complete. While some teachers might align themselves more closely with one ideology over another, all of the teachers expressed some sort of dilemma between two or more frames of authorship. They offered multiple ideologies about authorship while working their way through scenarios. For instance, Michael talked about taking on an editorial role with some students and positioning them as more professional authors while seeing other students as developing writers who need training. In some writing tasks, Michael sees students as driven by their busyness and the concern for a grade. Throughout all of these multiple ways of understanding authorship, however, is a definition of plagiarism that fails to take into account this complexity. Michael and his colleagues worked through the various scenarios with me by beginning each section by answering, "Is this plagiarism?" Sometimes they were sure of their answer; other times they

hesitated, debated, or equivocated. Of course, this is not surprising, as debate and argumentation are born in dilemmatic spaces. When teachers mused about authorship and plagiarism, they indicated that there were plenty of “gray areas.” These ill-defined spaces are created by the conflicting tensions of dilemmatic ideologies.

High school ELA teachers experience these gray areas on a regular basis. From formal assignments to more casual writing activities, teachers are faced with dilemmas between their lived and intellectual ideologies about authorship. These dilemmas are important because they provide the space for teachers to engage in debate about their students’ authorship. In this section, I explore the possibilities of all five ideologies to play out in a single writing practice: the writing contest. I illustrate how teachers could align with these five ideologies and position their students in a variety of authorship roles.

### **Writing Contests**

In the ELA literature, the writing contest has been a source of concern for high school teachers for decades. For example, Margaret Curtis (1940) called writing contests “the bane of every English teacher's existence” because she felt that they seemed to “encourage plagiarism rather than creative effort.” Katherine Moses (1943) claims that a laboratory approach to a class focused on writing contests would “greatly reduce” any fear about student plagiarism. A feature in the February 1984 issue of *English Journal* debates the “good and bad of essay contests” (Frank, Booth, Hays, & Eblen, 1984). The teachers at Hopkins High also talked about encouraging their students to take part in writing contests. They described their purpose and the benefits they saw for their students; they also highlighted some of the challenges.

The writing contest creates an environment where students can take up multiple authorship roles. The writing contest can promote a Romantic authorship ideology. The contest celebrates the individual author, elevating one particular winner as more talented than the rest. It encourages inspired creation. It rewards originality. Rarely do writing contests require any sort of writing process; instead students send in polished pieces. The writing contest enables students to be acknowledged as award-winning authors worthy of publication. At the same time, teachers can use the writing contest as a class assignment. Students are required to submit an essay for the contest as part of their grade for the course. Unlike the few students who win the contests, a good portion of the students will write the essay because there isn’t an option. They may not be

invested in the essay other than the value it has within the class. They will focus on the short term reward of the class grade rather than thinking about any accolades. Some writing contests will ask students to investigate an inspirational quote or topic. Some contests encourage students to use the writing as a way of exploring themselves. The act of writing for the contest becomes an act of discovery. The essay is positioned as an extension of the writer. A successful essay is seen as insightful, one where the writer has not only masterfully handled the language but has also developed an awareness of herself. The work to prepare for a writing contest can either be seen as apprenticing under the teacher or as collaborating in a more professional way. In both cases, the student writer and the teacher work together to craft and refine the essay. For the apprentice author, the teacher is there to help the writer grow and mature through the writing, whereas the professional author works with the editor-teacher in order to pull out the best in the final product.

In a class of thirty students, teachers could position students in all five of these roles. In addition, teachers could pull from these five ideologies for a particular student. In my interview with Michael, he reports on two writing contests that he incorporates into his class.

**Michael:** I have my 11<sup>th</sup> grade students enter two writing contests. The local Cornell alumni club has an essay contest and we may have done it when you were here, and the local Harvard Radcliffe club has a writing contest and so I use both of their contests as writing assignments for me, they have to submit to me for a grade, and I also suggest that they submit them to the contest. Why not? You're writing for me anyway.

The Cornell contest does not have any specific prohibitions against getting help on your essay or anything like that, comments or feedback. Obviously the implication is at least it should be your own work. The Harvard essay though has a statement that says very explicitly "This is to be entirely your own work. You are not to have help from anybody in writing this essay." So in the Cornell essay when they're writing that for me I'll go through kind of what I would normally do and make myself available for a writing conference. You want to come in and have a writing conference with me I'm available to do that, and so what I try and do in a writing conference and I think what all of us in this department try and do is it's not an editing process but try and work with them on bigger, more important ideas.

Um, so that can encompass anything from structure to sentence revision to, you know, ideas about making the argument stronger. Um, so anyway, I'll make, I'll do that in the Cornell contest because there's no specific prohibition against it. On the Harvard contest I will not, I won't, 'cause the rules say it and I believe in the rules. I'm not going to help you with it until after you submit it to the contest. Once you submit it to the contest, and before you submit it to me for a grade, I will have a writing conference with you.

Michael navigates through a number of these ideologies in his reporting about the two writing contests: one for the local chapter of the Harvard-Radcliffe alumni association and the other for the local Cornell alumni club. Michael notes the importance of the Harvard essay contest's prohibition against receiving any help. Although it is a class assignment, students cannot conference with him until after the submission deadline. So while the writing is a class assignment and would seem to align with a school-based authorship ideology, the students are positioned, at least, temporarily as solitary, original authors. The Cornell essay, since it does not explicitly mention students working with their teachers, can involve students working closely with the teacher.

On one level, Michael is merely following the rules of the contests. For situations that explicitly prohibit help, Michael allowed the students to work on their own until after they submitted the essay to the contest, at which point he would conference with his students. What is significant is how Michael understands authorship when there isn't an explicit set of rules. Without the guidelines of a writing contest, Michael works closely with his students to craft their essay during the length of the assignment. With the Harvard-Radcliffe contest, Michael shifts this work until later rather than just allowing the rules of the contest to define the ways in which the students write. Here, Michael can hold multiple understandings of his students' authorship. He can see them as independent and creative, as well as collaborative and developing.

For the teachers of Hopkins High, plagiarism was, in part, about inappropriate authoring practices and uncertain authorship. Although the literature on authorship in the composition field and in literary criticism has raised a whole host of questions about the construction of authorship, the plagiarism policy at Hopkins High constructed a very limited understanding of authorship and authoring practices. Likewise, when teachers defined plagiarism they presented a similar construction of authorship. However, when these teachers explored scenarios and talked about their own experiences, they described authoring practices and constructs of authorship that did not map on neatly to the more fixed understanding found in the official statements. These teachers were able to draw upon a wide range of ideologies in order to better understand and work with their students' writing. Teachers were able to adopt multiple roles and to imagine their students in different roles in order to help their students develop as writers and authors. However, this constellation of authorship ideologies created space for ideological dilemmas for

the teachers. They attempted to navigate between the theoretical ideologies of authorship and plagiarism and the lived ideologies that they enacted in the classroom.

The teachers at Hopkins High were committed to helping their students become authors. In order to do this, they would employ a number of different pedagogical strategies. These different strategies often were framed by different ideologies of plagiarism. For example, teachers like Kate might have students journal once a week in order to explore their own voice, while later in the semester work on more traditional literary analyses of published authors. Also during the school year, these same students would practice for high-stakes testing that would require a more school-based author ideology. However, while the students were adopting various frames of authorship, they were still being assessed according to the rigid definition found in the Handbook. While teachers might not always follow through and hold students to the standard implied in the plagiarism policy, these teachers used these dilemmatic moments to debate with themselves and the rest of the department about what was—and wasn't—plagiarism. As Michael said in response to a scenario about helping a student with a college admissions essay, helping students “get to it themselves” is sometimes “a form of plagiarism.”

**Michael:** It's not like there's, that I'm presuming that what I'm giving you is mine and you can't use that. Um, I think teachers generally wanna help, and usually too when I, if I do something it's not like I'm just telling them the answers. I'm helping them get to it themselves, but I guess it is a form of plagiarism, but I don't think it's malicious. I don't think it's—I guess it would be.

Working with students to develop ideas and to learn as writers requires teachers to pull from pedagogy grounded in multiple ideologies of authorship. My participants' talk about plagiarism and writing demonstrates that these multiple ideologies can create dilemmatic spaces and that these spaces can create some confusion and uncertainty.

It is important to note that the presence of these ideological dilemmas is not unexpected nor is their existence the source of less effective or inspiring teaching. Instead, these dilemmas about authorship can become a concern for teachers if these ideologies are not acknowledged and addressed in the classroom. If teachers ask students to take up a range of types of authorship—ones that are framed through different ideologies—without exploring how these types of authorship differ from the ones found in the plagiarism policy, then teachers' instruction can appear at cross-purposes.

## CHAPTER FIVE: “NOT THE MOST LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS” AND DILEMMAS OF TEXTUAL OWNERSHIP

*Michael: ... look at it this way too, when it comes to copyright infringement English teachers are always copying, you know, photocopying stuff out of books and copying articles, so we are, we are not ourselves the most honest people in the world. We're not the most law-abiding citizens when it comes to copyright violation. So there's, you know, there's a limit to the expectations that we can be held accountable to as well.*

When I would tell my friends that I was writing a dissertation about plagiarism, sooner or later they would make the joke that I should just cut and paste large sections from the Internet. Wouldn't it be funny, they said, if you *plagiarized* your dissertation about *plagiarism*? Each new speaker would pronounce this joke with all the joy of an explorer who had just sighted what they assumed was some undiscovered land. Of course, I am not the first to write about plagiarism, nor am I the first to hear this quip. In fact, it is a common move in books about plagiarism to note the work's lack of originality (see, for instance, Marsh, 2007). Writing about plagiarism hasn't made me want to go out and commit plagiarism; instead, it has made me nervous that I already have. I worry that some portion, section, or turn-of-phrase can be traced back to one of the hundreds of articles, books, or websites I've looked at, skimmed, or studied. I wonder, probably more than is healthy, how much of this writing is *mine*? Beyond an anxiety of influence, I have an anxiety of ownership.

One of the first lessons I learned as a high school teacher was that if I wanted students to turn in any work, I needed to either put a blank line at the top of the page for their name or explicitly require writing their name as part of the assignment. I would often be frustrated when students would turn in a paper without a name. And so I would have, like many other classrooms, a basket that carried a label something along the lines of “Do I belong to you?” or “Please claim me.” Early on in my career, it was possible to identify papers through amateur handwriting analysis. Later, once the majority of students would turn in typed or word-processed papers, this sleuthing became more challenging. Sometimes I would remember which student had the old dot-matrix printer and which one had the (at the time) new laser printer. More

recently, my composition students' papers are often marked digitally in the properties of the electronic file. So although I may have several document files named "English essay#1," within the file the author is identified as the owner of the computer. Sometimes this is accurate; other times it is comical. A student's essay composed on her father's old laptop might be identified as belonging to "Dad." Other students might be more mysterious and just be described as "Computer."

Ownership (announced or less explicitly marked) becomes more complex in the presence of plagiarism. Who owns the source text? Who can claim ownership of the plagiarized paper? (In fact, the word *plagiarized* masks the issue of ownership. "This paper was plagiarized" can both describe the original paper as well as the [partially] copied text.) And while teachers can acknowledge intellectually the complexity of ownership, they also work in a classroom that encourages a simplified view of textual ownership. It would be much easier if every text was marked in terms of its ownership: texts that belong to students and those that don't; those words that are enclosed in quotation marks and those that aren't; and those words that belong to everyone. However, for the teachers at Hopkins High, this type of clarity didn't occur in their daily practices. Their talk about ownership, therefore, revealed this dilemmatic tension between their intellectual ideologies about ownership and their complex and nuanced lived ideologies.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the ideological dilemmas regarding textual ownership that the ELA teachers at Hopkins High revealed when discussing plagiarism and writing pedagogy. I use the concept of *textual ownership* to capture the ways in which the teachers at Hopkins High talked about the products of composing and writing<sup>24</sup> as property and the related sense of claiming and controlling that product. As I discussed in Chapter 2, I situate this notion of ownership in the ongoing conversations in composition studies about intellectual property as well as student investment (or engagement) in their own work in order to encompass a wide range of ideologies about ownership. For this analysis, I am especially interested in the conceptual metaphors teachers used when talking about texts: texts seen as possessions, texts seen through legal frameworks for understanding the rights and responsibilities of ownership,

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<sup>24</sup> For the purposes of this project, I use the term *composing* broadly to describe all types of multimodal authoring and *writing* to describe more traditional print-based authoring.

and texts seen through their worth or quality. These metaphors underlined a sense of fixedness and order that teachers had about textual ownership. However, the teachers also expressed concern about the ways that digital texts and multimodal compositions complicated the traditional ways they had of understanding ownership.

Thus, this chapter reports on two complications. First, my analysis reveals that for my participants textual ownership is tightly related to copyright, and they often employed a quasi-legal discourse that framed plagiarism as illegal use of text or textual theft. That is, teachers talked about students “stealing,” “lifting ideas,” “intellectual property,” the “public domain,” and the inappropriate applications of “fair use” to their classrooms. By adopting this framework, teachers relied on a sense of ownership that was grounded in legal understandings. However, their uncertainty surrounding copyright law and intellectual property ownership, especially when these frameworks were applied to student writing, created ideological dilemmas. In addition, teachers assumed positions of authority in dealing with plagiarism that were framed in this quasi-legal discourse. Teachers expressed the need to “police” students’ use of text and importance of dealing out the appropriate justice when students committed textual “crimes.” Second, teachers’ ideologies of textual ownership with regards to plagiarism were challenged by the increasing use of digital texts in their classrooms. The shift from traditional print-based sources to digital-based texts and images problematized the more stable understandings of textual ownership that were found in teachers’ intellectual ideologies about plagiarism.

I begin with an examination of the ways in which teachers talked about textual ownership, highlighting the conceptual metaphors of ownership that teachers used and exploring the participants’ conflation of copyright and plagiarism. I then move to a description of the culture of print at Hopkins High and its imperfect alignment with the growing digital spaces that both the students and teachers inhabit. Finally, I explore the promise that these dilemmatic positions offer as a site for generative discussions about students’ textual ownership.

## TALKING ABOUT OWNERSHIP AND THE LAW

The differences between plagiarism and copyright infringement are difficult to tease apart fully. These differences are also challenging to talk about. Often plagiarism and copyright are set in opposition as issues of ethics (plagiarism) versus law (copyright violations); as concerns for the reputation economy (citations) versus the market economy (permissions); or as problems in

the realm of the academy versus those in industry (Murray, 2008). However, plagiarism and copyright can overlap and are often conflated and confused by both the popular press and by ordinary citizens. It is murky territory. Indeed, Laura Murray (2008) points out that copyright holders potentially have an interest in keeping the acts of acknowledgment and permission blurred, thereby broadening the reach of their copyright into situations usually controlled by the practices of acknowledgment and citation. Thus, it is not surprising that the teachers in this study conflated these two issues, leading to ideological dilemmas about ownership. In Renee Hobbs, Peter Jazsi, and Pat Aufderheide's (2007) study, "The Cost of Copyright Confusion for Media Literacy," they argue that teachers' "cognitive dissonance" about copyright law and their own classroom practice have a substantial impact on the ability to teach critical media literacy. Hobbs et al. report that teachers resolved this cognitive dissonance with "studied ignorance, quiet transgression, and hyper-compliance" (p.14). Teachers' responses to the challenges of understanding copyright law as it applies to the classroom lead them to take up seemingly impossible positions. They become, as Michael says in the excerpt that begins this chapter, "not the most law-abiding citizens" while trying to teach students to be responsible and ethical with their own source use. Other scholars have noted the particular complexities of copyright for the writing teacher (see, for instance, Hobbs & National Council of Teachers of English, 2010; Rife, 2007). As ELA classrooms are usually centered on the production, consumption, and circulation of texts—reading published novels, poems, and short stories, writing student essays, watching Hollywood films, composing PowerPoint presentations, and conducting online research—concerns about who owns the text and what students can and cannot do with it (and what they need to do if they do use it) are at the heart of the job of the English teacher.

When talking about textual ownership, the teachers at Hopkins High School often drew upon quasi-legal discourse. In our conversations, they spoke about their understanding of copyright law, of citation standards, and of appropriate use of sources. The teachers described not only their own understandings but also their perceptions of how their students made sense of textual ownership. When these teachers talked specifically about plagiarism, the issues of ownership became less well-defined. In addition, when they talked about students and digital texts, the participants noted cultural changes in attitudes about ownership and how this change influenced their students' understanding of plagiarism. Altogether, the teachers found the issues of textual ownership fraught with dilemmas.

Many of my participants attempted to explain plagiarism through comparisons to other illegal acts. For instance, when talking about the use of images in students' projects, Samantha described how students fail to see plagiarism as a crime such as shoplifting:

Samantha: I mean it's astounding to me right now sitting here thinking about how kids, when we talk to the kids, so many of them don't get it and they, they, I tell them it's not any different than if you went to a store and you stole a CD or you stole this painting or anything. That's cheating. That's stealing from someone. It's the same thing if you take these words out of somebody's book and you say they came out of your head. That's stealing their thoughts, you know?

At first, Samantha connects plagiarism to theft. She says that plagiarism is "not any different" from stealing and compares the "words out of somebody's book" to a CD. Earlier in the interview, Samantha defined plagiarism as "taking someone else's idea and saying it's yours." Here, she shifts the general idea of *taking* to a more specifically legal construct of *stealing*. In the middle of her explanation of the comparison, she brings up the idea of cheating. While she does not make it explicit what exactly is considered cheating, she seems to be making the claim that plagiarism and stealing are both violations of rules. Then, Samantha adds a third issue to her discussion of plagiarism: misattribution. A plagiarist is one who claims ownership by falsely attributing the origin of the ideas, saying that the words "came out of your head" rather than "out of somebody's book." Thus, in this excerpt, Samantha conflates four concepts: stealing, cheating, plagiarism, and misattribution. For Samantha, each of these acts is "not any different" from stealing a CD from a store. She is astounded that students can't seem to understand that plagiarism and shoplifting are the same things. Despite her telling students that plagiarism is cheating and lying (saying that the ideas came from your head and not from a book), Samantha can't get her students to make the connection. However, Samantha's comparison of plagiarism and shoplifting don't align perfectly. CDs and words from a book are different. The CD is a complete work and a physical object that is being sold at a store while the words in a book are pieces of a larger object. In addition, when students plagiarize, they do not take the actual book—the physical object—from the bookstore; they leave the original text intact and still on the bookshelf. In addition, Samantha sets up a framework of ownership that limits the origins of words to be either from books or from the author's head.

In order for this conflation of concepts to work when talking about plagiarism, Samantha has to see text as intellectual property that can be owned. If students were to use someone else's

property, they would be infringing on the author's copyright (a crime) as well as gaining an unfair advantage over their peers by taking a shortcut and avoiding the work of invention (cheating). In order to cover for this act, these plagiarists would have to misattribute the text (a lie).

Immediately after talking about how students don't understand the similarities between plagiarism and shoplifting, Samantha confesses that her own authoring of PowerPoint presentations to accompany her teaching incorporates images without attribution or citation: "They don't get that, but I was doing the same thing on the photos, you know?" During our conversation, she joked that she thought she "was going to get out of here easy [by retiring at the end of the year]. Now I'm going to go to prison. *[Laughs]*." Samantha is concerned that her practice of using images as a teaching tool is a criminal act. It is the same practice that she is trying to convince her students to avoid. Samantha notes that her confusion about copyright has made her uneasy:

**Samantha:** It makes me so nervous now. I mean, you know, I mean obviously the good thing is everyone is becoming much more conscious of the importance of giving credit to the person who created it, you know? Everybody is more conscious of that, I mean like just in having these kids do this thing and them saying, "Do we need to cite all our photographs?" and you know, me really thinking my first gut was no because da, da, da, and it has stayed with me.

These three days they've been working on this [project] I've been thinking, oh man, I really have thought about it. Am I giving them the wrong message? Um, it's not about me. It's about them. I don't want them to then go next year and do something and, "[Samantha] Brightman never said we had to do this, so why do we have to do it now? You mean I was breaking the law then?" ....

**Steve:** Right. Right.

**Samantha:** Too much wiggle room so that each educator interprets it.

Samantha worries that she is giving her students the wrong message about how to use texts appropriately. She is aware of the benefits of the department's raised consciousness of ownership, but her initial "gut" reaction is to tell students that citing images was unnecessary. Samantha feels the dilemma between the intellectual ideology that comes from the policies and discussions from the department and a lived ideology that she represents as a "gut reaction."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> It is not surprising to me that Samantha would locate her own lived ideology as an embodied reaction. Samantha studied theater and would on occasion incorporate movement and performance into her classroom. In addition, she had a long-standing interest in holistic health and believed that body and mind were linked together.

Samantha describes how this dilemma causes her to ruminate about her choice: “I’ve been thinking, oh man, I really have thought about it.” She wonders if she is setting her students up to commit criminal acts that will have consequences in the future. Although Samantha began with a comparison between plagiarism and shoplifting, she appears to limit it to print texts:

**Samantha:** I will [cite] if it’s a quote from a novel or something. I will put that ‘cause we’re hammering with that, but at the same time I’ll have a photograph. You know we just did the whole thing on *Ethan Frome*, and I had her photograph from when she was this age and then this age and then this age and background about her life and la, la, la, and I didn’t cite any of that on the PowerPoint.

Samantha’s dilemma is not between what she does and what she thinks her students should do—although there seems to be some friction there—instead it is between the notions of intellectual property and legal ownership against her classroom practices of learning and exploration. Samantha is concerned about modeling appropriate behavior for students but doesn’t want to get bogged down in the minutiae of citation practices. When attribution gets conflated with copyright compliance, Samantha is uncertain how to act.

Other teachers brought up music when talking about plagiarism. For instance, Thomas thought that students’ practices with downloading music influenced their attitudes about plagiarism. In response to a scenario in which a student inserts into a college admissions essay an epigraph that his teacher provides, Thomas wonders about the how the changing culture surrounding online music might be significant:

**Thomas:** Uh, I mean I guess in essence it would be [plagiarism] I think. And it sounds like he uses—especially the epigraph—I mean, it sounds like he’s kind of taking that, the way I interpreted it, word-for-word, so I guess it would be. It is sticky because it’s not like the teachers are giving them that help. I don’t think it’s meant to be—I don’t think the student is going into it thinking, “Oh this is good stuff. I’m going to steal this.” I think it’s just part of the culture of high school particularly, and even more so now because if you look at how music, especially, is, I mean now it’s that culture where it’s out there.

It’s almost like students don’t see it as this artistic thing, and I’m not saying that’s wrong, because of the culture now. The whole music thing is different because it’s so attainable and it’s an easier way to get your music out, but anyway, I think like students are having a harder time understanding what is and what isn’t plagiarism, um, and how people’s ideas are kind of part of their intellectual property. Um, so I do think it [the essay in the given scenario] is plagiarism and I think there might be better ways to incorporate the work of the teachers into it.

Thomas begins by offering a qualified assessment of the student’s actions. He couches his sense that it is an act of plagiarism for the student to use the epigraph without acknowledging the

teacher's role in providing the source with several hedges: "I mean," "I guess," "in essence," "would be," and "I think." Thomas believes that taking a selection of text "word-for-word" would constitute plagiarism but feels uneasy because we can't be sure of the intentions of the student and the teacher. He admits that the scenario is "sticky" because of this tension. Furthermore, Thomas attempts to place this act into a broader context. The "culture of high school" and "the whole music thing" offers a different framework for understanding intellectual property. Instead of foregrounding the ownership of the music, this culture recognizes the importance of dissemination and access—of getting one's music out there. In Thomas's view, students assume that music should be shared because of the ease of that dissemination. Much like Samantha's comparison, the act of illegally downloading music and plagiarism is not entirely parallel. Students might illegally download music from the Internet but they rarely fail to acknowledge the creator of the music. While they might fail to pay for the music, students don't claim that they are the composers of the songs nor do they obscure the original source of the song. Both illegal downloading and plagiarism are violations of the rules and regulations of powerful institutions (the legal system and the educational system), yet the students might see the transgression of these rules as something common and justified.

Likewise, Reed notes that there is a change in the way students understand ownership because of their familiarity with the digital. While they enjoy the affordances of digital texts in terms of efficiency and ease of access, they have a different sense of ownership because they are not as tied to the material object:

**Reed:** Sometimes [students are] too gullible about what's out there as ownership, you know what I mean? But the same way they don't necessarily need to own a CD like we did, they don't need to own the paper I think in the same way. Intellectual property is, you know, is up there. So, I don't think they have the same hang up about paper as we did, 'cause you know what? When I asked my kids about it last year, um, I give a portfolio and in the portfolio one of the things I ask a whole bunch of questions about the course. They all love Turnitin.com. They don't have to print out papers.

Reed believes that for people of his generation the possession of the CD means more than having digital copies of the same music. His students, on the other hand, don't have this "hang up" for either music or "paper." The students don't mind not having a physical object because the digital versions of both their music and their portfolios are much easier to circulate and access. Reed ties in this sense of ownership to the notion of intellectual property, which he says

is “up there.” Reed juxtaposes the legal framework of intellectual property with how students have a sense of ownership of their writing.

In our group interview, Thomas and Samantha discussed the challenge of talking about theft when the thing being stolen isn’t a physical object. Thomas begins by offering an example of a child shoplifting. The child’s parents are able to monitor and correct this transaction because the object that has been stolen is tangible:

**Thomas:** Well, I think if you're younger and you steal something, your parents can say, "Okay. Go return that." And tell them what they did.

**Samantha:** Right.

**Thomas:** And I think it's that difference between it's not a physical—

**Samantha:** A non-tangible thing.

**Thomas:** Intellectual property isn't something you can touch and feel. Just like music; when they download music they don't consider it stealing because it's not something you can touch and hold.

Thomas sees that the materiality of the property is instrumental to students’ perceptions of theft. Those things that “you can touch and feel” are easier to be seen as property that can be stolen. Digitized music, and by extension the words and ideas of an author, cannot be touched or held, and therefore students “don’t consider it stealing.”

For all of these teachers, plagiarism is framed through a quasi-legal discourse that ties plagiarism to criminality. Students’ practices in appropriating text from the Internet are seen as similar to illegally downloading music. As I demonstrate in the next section, these teachers have, as Reed says, a “hang up about paper” that forces them to navigate between their students’ experiences with the digital circulation of texts and their own reverence and preference for print texts.

## OWNING TEXTS AND THE CULTURE OF PRINT

The teachers of Hopkins High, not unexpectedly, expressed a love for books and the associated literary culture of authors and readers. In both my formal interviews and informal discussions with them, they referenced the books that they were reading, teaching, and writing. Teachers mentioned the books they were reading outside of school and the conversations they had with spouses and other department members about their reading experiences. The teachers discussed biographies, fiction, poetry, and magazine articles. One participant spoke fondly of vacations centered on “being completely off the grid” and “sitting still on white sand...read[ing]

books.” Their departmental office had several overflowing shelves of canonical books. Their desks were covered with papers. My participants were firmly embedded in the culture of print.

And while the interviews and discussions were focused mainly on the teaching of writing, the teachers talk about print texts more often than digital texts in terms of their own reading and writing. While one teacher mentioned his experience using Twitter, for the most part, the teachers at Hopkins High experienced reading and writing, especially what they considered serious or legitimate reading and writing, as primarily a print-based activity. At the same time, in terms of their own teaching, most of the participants expressed a desire and a need to move more of their teaching about, and interaction with, students’ writing to digital spaces—the use of Turnitin.com’s course management feature or Moodle, for instance.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the teachers of Hopkins High were firmly rooted in a print tradition while working in a system that was becoming increasingly digital.

The teachers’ connection to the print tradition plays out as a reverence and preference for print texts. Although the department offers courses in popular media and film, these courses are not geared toward the top students, who end up taking the Advance Placement Literature course instead. Like many English departments, the teachers of Hopkins High emphasized the printed text over other forms of text. For example, the required summer reading incoming students consisted of two books, including canonical text such as Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* or a collection of Anton Chekhov’s short stories. Although *Anna Karenina* is available in electronic formats (such for the Nook, Kindle or iPad), only one of the many handouts and webpages announcing the readings alluded to Kindle edition as a possibility.

The shift from print to digital texts creates a strain on the traditional notions of textual ownership. This concern over ownership is an old one that can be traced back at least to the poet Martial’s application of the term plagiarism (which typically referred to kidnapping) to textual appropriation. Interspersed throughout his epigrams are references to the materiality and the commoditization of his new books. Martial highlights the tension between the physical ownership of the poems and their authorship and indicates that the practice of bookmaking and selling is changing: the art of preparing the parchment, the habits of booksellers, and the reading and writing practices of his contemporaries. This change in the composition, materiality, and

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<sup>26</sup> Moodle is a free, web-based course management system.

dissemination of texts seems to have generated a certain level of anxiety for writers and readers in terms of textual ownership.

For the participants of this study, this concern about the materiality of the text and ownership informed their understanding of plagiarism. While participants defined plagiarism in terms of the inappropriate use of words and ideas, the language they used to describe this practice was one that made physical the words and ideas. That is, plagiarism was framed as the taking of the objects of writing as much as the expression of writing. Student writing was nearly universally called their “papers” and teachers talked about writing comments on the page or holding the essay in their hands.

### THE INCREASINGLY DIGITAL

The teachers described working with students to engage and compose in digital spaces—in particular digital multimodal texts and Internet-based research. While the majority of Hopkins High English teachers grew up and were trained in a print text-centric world, their students are from a more digital world. Scholars, noting this generational shift, have called these students digital natives (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b), digital youth (Ito, 2010), or Generation M (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005).<sup>27</sup> The teachers were aware of the larger cultural change toward the digital and worked to keep their teaching responsive to this shift. This concern on the part of the teachers to remain current while still maintaining the connection to the print-based world from which they identified created dilemmatic spaces about textual ownership in relation to plagiarism and writing pedagogy.

The movement of text between the digital and print-based highlights this dual position of teachers. For instance, I return to a case I described in Chapter 3, in which Kate describes an instance of plagiarism she discovered at the end of the school year:

**Kate:** But there was one for me that never went through Turnitin.com. My second-semester creative writing class we didn't have enough Turnitin accounts. So they were just handing in paper stuff. And I had a kid hand in a whole bunch of song lyrics and represented it as her own poetry.

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<sup>27</sup> The label *digital natives* is not without its problems. It carries with it the limitations of the larger discourse of immigration, nationality, and exclusivity. In addition, not all current high school students possess the same level of fluency with technology. Nevertheless, it has gained traction in the popular press and is useful in capturing the sense of place and culture in digital spaces.

It was so obvious too. She was not a strong student or a strong writer. And there were these like, you know, sort of typical garbagy teenage poems, and then I flipped the page, and it was this rhythmically perfect rhyme scheme, flawless, like long pieces, that all I did was Google the first line, and I came up with the fact that five or her poems were just blatantly cut and paste on lyrics.

The student turned in “paper stuff” and Kate describes the act of flipping the page as the moment when she notes the discrepancy between the “typical garbagy teenage poems” and the “flawless” ones. Although Kate recognized the difference, it was Kate’s use of Google that confirmed the plagiarism. The poems were “blatantly cut and paste[d]” from the Internet, and the use of a search engine provided Kate proof that this was plagiarism. Kate encounters her student’s poems both as papers turned in with the student’s name representing them as “her own” and as websites with other attribution.

For Hopkins High School students, writing is either born digital or mediated through digital spaces: They compose directly on a computer, submit their papers electronically, and often conduct research online. Participants in the study indicated that the Internet was a significant part of their students’ writing experiences. Some participants used Turnitin.com’s online content management system for all of the students’ writing for their class, while most teachers used it for only the major assignments.<sup>28</sup> Other participants talked about the use of online databases as a primary source for students’ research projects. Still others mentioned the shift that they saw in the public discourse regarding ownership and attributed this change to the students’ experience of growing up in a predominantly digital environment. For the majority of the participants, there was a clear association between the seemingly endless availability of digital resources and a perception that plagiarism was on the rise. In fact, many of the participants referred to the need of using an online plagiarism detection service Turnitin.com to better deter and police plagiarism. With this transition in writing process and writing technology, teachers were working with texts in new ways than what they were familiar with as students themselves. The various literacy practices that teachers taught—and practiced themselves—created space for dilemmas about textual ownership because the teachers, while subscribing to more traditional notions of ownership, needed to make room for the ways in which digital texts

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<sup>28</sup> The Turnitin.com subscription did not cover all of the classes and so a small number of sections did not use this service. Three cases of plagiarism were discovered in an end-of-year assignment for one of these sections.

were circulated and created in the classroom. These overlapping literacy practices often created dilemmas about textual ownership for these teachers. In particular, my participants talked about the use of Wikipedia, Turnitin.com, and digital images in the writing classroom. Next, I explore the teachers' talk about these three issues attending to the ideological dilemmas of ownership that this shift in literacy practices created.

## **Wikipedia**

Wikipedia, the online, “free encyclopedia that anyone can edit” poses a number of questions about ownership. Anyone with an Internet connection can create or edit an article, and while these changes are logged by IP addresses or virtual identities, the real life identities of these writers are difficult to ascertain. In addition, Wikipedia claims that it “is not a publisher of original thought.” It is distributed through a Creative Commons license, which allows users to share and remix the content as long as Wikipedia is attributed. This combination of anonymous editors, free access, and permission to adapt and change the text undermines some of the elements normally associated with ownership. Who owns the text on Wikipedia? Since the content of any given article can change multiple times on any day, that text might only be published for hours or minutes. Moreover, as Wikipedia often tops the result list for a Google search inquiry, it is one of the most readily available sources for students to consult when writing papers. The fluidity and anonymity of the text on Wikipedia can make teachers uneasy about it as a valid resource for students' research papers.

The teachers at Hopkins High were clearly uncomfortable with students using Wikipedia for academic assignments. All of the teachers in this study mentioned the unofficial department policy prohibiting Wikipedia as an appropriate resource for students. Despite the policy, there was a general sense that Wikipedia was, as Reed described it, “the beginning and the end” for students. Yet, the teachers still reiterated the prohibition against the site. For example, my exchange with Liz was typical of the interviews I conducted with the department:

**Liz:** Well, I don't allow them [students] to use Wikipedia.

**Steve:** Is—[Laughter] I've noticed this trend here in the department.

**Liz:** Um, I think it's a great source. I think they love it. I like using Wikipedia —

**Steve:** Right.

**Liz:** — to check things if I'm just, you know — but I don't allow them to use it as a source in their works cited.

**Steve:** Right.

**Liz:** It just — and the history teachers do not allow them to use Wikipedia.

**Steve:** Right.

**Liz:** So we like to be consistent with that. They know that they're not supposed to use Wikipedia.

Liz does not allow students to use Wikipedia even though she thinks it is a “great source.” She believes that it is authoritative enough to “check things,” under certain circumstances. Liz cuts herself off before fully explaining when she uses it, but it is clear from what she says next that there is a difference between checking things and using something as a source of information. Again, Liz begins to articulate the problem with Wikipedia (“It just—”) before she stops and mentions that the history teachers also prohibit the use of Wikipedia. Liz states that it is important to have consistency in the school and concludes that students are aware that they shouldn’t use Wikipedia. While Liz is not attempting to make a formal argument against Wikipedia, it is interesting to note how she is clear about the prohibition but is less articulate about the reasons for that rule. This type of general distrust for Wikipedia was common in the English department.

Barbara, although still conflicted about Wikipedia, did explore her reasons a little more. In the following excerpt, she describes her approach to using Wikipedia in her classroom. Her discussion of Wikipedia is marked by a series of contrasting statements using the coordinating conjunction *but*. These four sentences emphasize her dilemmatic movement between appreciation and concern:

**Barbara:** That’s my—I—it comes to realization that they are going to use Wikipedia whether I say so or not. So, I just have made the personal decision not to make it like this witch, Wikipedia-witch-hunt, um, but I don’t want to see it in your works cited.

**Steve:** Okay.

[...]

**Barbara:** So—you know, and I think that—you know, at the bottom of Wikipedia it’s got that whole list of resources, which some of them are really reliable and valid. Um, and I think if you’re getting into a topic that you don’t know a lot about it’s a good general overview, but on the other hand, it’s also frustrating because some of the pages are so extensive, and they have that table of contents, but sometimes there’s almost too much for them. So you know, I think for a variety of reasons, um—you know, there’s the—the—it can be changed, uh, by anybody—

**Steve:** Right.

**Barbara:** [...] at any time. I do like it more now, though, that I saw that whole thing that it’s a non-profit and that, you know, they’re kind of doing it for the betterment of the world, and—

**Steve:** Right, right.

**Barbara:** Accumulating knowledge. Like, I did think that was neat but if anybody could change it—you know, it,—and I—I use it myself. And I’ll use it in class, pull it up, and I’ll say, “But we have to keep in mind this is according to Wikipedia.”

Barbara first announces that she has made the decision not to actively enforce the departmental prohibition against Wikipedia, categorizing it as a Wikipedia-witch-hunt.<sup>29</sup> Barbara doesn’t see Wikipedia as a moral threat to student writing, yet stops before endorsing it as a legitimate source (“but I don’t want to see it in your works cited”). Barbara notes how Wikipedia articles are often well-researched with a “whole list of resources” at the bottom of the page. As a source of information, Wikipedia is valuable. However, Barbara soon shifts to her concern about how this text “can be changed...by anybody.” As a stable resource, Wikipedia is problematic for Barbara. This lack of clear ownership seems to make the source less trustworthy for Barbara. She then makes another move saying that her opinion on Wikipedia has changed since she noticed that it was a “non-profit” and that “they’re kind of doing it for the betterment of the world.” Barbara’s sense is that as a non-profit, Wikipedia’s motives are admirable; they are trying to accumulate knowledge rather than just trying to turn a profit. Yet, despite all of the resources available and the good intentions of the organization, Barbara returns to her concern about the site because “it can be changed by anybody.” Later, Barbara says, “And maybe the longer Wikipedia perpetuates, maybe the more reliable it will become and soon we’ll be looking to it as the authority, but I think that—I don’t know, how long has it been around? Five years, maybe?” For Barbara, Wikipedia is both honorable because of its lack of commercialization and questionable because of its crowdsourcing.

Barbara’s dilemmas about Wikipedia are centered on the issues of ownership. Barbara’s premise seems to be that ownership, when limited, is more trustworthy. When the ownership is spread to “anybody,” the authority and reliability is diminished. If the site is under the control of a non-profit, the ownership is assigned to a more benevolent institution. Yet, Barbara cannot seem to get past the fact that anyone can be the author, and therefore owner, of the text.

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<sup>29</sup> Wikipedia describes a witch-hunt as “a search for witches or evidence of witchcraft, often involving moral panic,[1] or mass hysteria...The term "witch-hunt" since the 1930s has also been in use as a metaphor to refer to moral panics in general (frantic persecution of perceived enemies). This usage is especially associated with the Second Red Scare of the 1950s, with the McCarthyist persecution of communists in the United States.”

## Turnitin.com

If Wikipedia highlights the dilemmas of ownership in terms of resources, Turnitin.com brings into sharp relief the issues of student ownership of their own texts. When students submit their essays through Turnitin.com, their text becomes part of the company's large database against which future essays are compared. Traditionally, when teachers would return students' essays, they would hand back the only paper copy of the text. Now, when students submit their essays electronically, a digital copy is archived by Turnitin.com. While the company has successfully defended itself against lawsuits by students who claimed that this act of archiving essays infringed on the students' copyright, it continues to be criticized by many in higher education for violating students' rights to their own work. At Hopkins High, this concern about students' ownership of their own text vis à vis Turnitin emerged in several different ways.

Beth saw this argument as the maneuverings of affluent parents looking to protect their children from the consequences of inappropriate actions.

**Beth:** I think this Turnitin, too, has— oh, boy, they— I'll tell you. The first few years we've used it, even parents complained about it. You know, and then they said their kids' writings, you know, were copyrighted and infringement of privacy— I mean, it just got way out of hand. But, you know, it did—I think that makes them more aware of being caught, too.

Beth felt that framing the use of Turnitin as a legal issue was “way out of hand.” For Beth, Turnitin is an appropriate response to ensure that students are submitting their own writing and not someone else's. The awareness that using Turnitin raises outweighs any concerns about ownership. For Beth, seeing student writers as holding copyrights or rights regarding privacy feels out of place, concerns that weren't as prevalent before the school started to use Turnitin.

Likewise, Kate noted that the most vocal critics of the software were the people who got caught:

**Steve:** So has the community supported sort of the adoption of —

**Kate:** Oh, Turnitin and stuff? Mostly except some people who get caught.

**Steve:** Yeah, I was wondering —

**Kate:** And then their parents call it “Gotcha” software, and I get it, you know? I'd probably look to defend my —no I wouldn't. If my kid cheats I would slaughter 'em, but, um, you know, you don't wanna think your kid is doing this, so there's that little denial thing. I think mostly they've been supportive and mostly they're telling kids, “Too bad. That's the way it is. You've got to do it.” We haven't had a lot of backlash.

The parents of the guilty students referred to Turnitin as “‘Gotcha’ software,” associating it with gotcha journalism. This type of reporting aims to entrap subjects by posing questions that will place the interviewees in unfavorable or damaging positions. Since the charge of plagiarism can be damaging to a student’s post-secondary options, it is not surprising that parents, especially at such a high performing district like Hopkins, would be willing to turn the attention to the detection software and away from their child. Interestingly, Kate initially agrees with parents who would be willing to find some sort of defense to protect their child. However, she quickly changes her mind and jokes, “If my kid cheats I would slaughter ‘em.” In both Kate’s and Beth’s descriptions of Turnitin highlight the unethical actions of the plagiarist and minimize the effects on the other students. Only the parents of the plagiarists seem to be complaining about Turnitin; the other parents, ones like Kate, would dole out stricter punishments than the school. The question of who owns the texts submitted to Turnitin by students who are following the rules is immaterial.

Kate later brings up a second approach to thinking about Turnitin and the issue of ownership. She relays a conversation with a student in which he talks about how his normal writing process has been disrupted by Turnitin.

**Kate:** I think it’s [plagiarism] become a lot more in the forefront with the addition of Turnitin. In fact I had a kid today say, “Turnitin.com ruined everybody’s life.” I’m thinking, that’s a pretty strong statement. He’s like, “Well it did.” I said, “How did it ruin your life? Were you cheating that much before?” He said, “To be honest with you the place where it hits me is I used to take my own papers and tweak them a little sometimes and change things around and now I can’t do that anymore.” I said, “You were resubmitting the same paper?” He’s like, “No, but sometimes I’d use like a paragraph or an intro that I’d used before.” I thought oh, that’s kind of interesting, ‘cause it’s your own work and you can’t do that anymore.

When the student tells Kate that Turnitin has ruined everybody’s life, Kate at first imagines that the plagiarism detection software has the desired effect on the student body: it has deterred students from cheating. In fact, Kate assumes that in order for Turnitin to “ruin your life” you would have to be cheating a lot. Instead the student, in being “honest” with his teacher, tells Kate that he can no longer repurpose introductions from one paper to the next. She finds this interesting and focuses on how the student must now worry about the similarity of his current essay to previously submitted ones. She does not label this action “self-plagiarism,” which some

plagiarism policies and handbooks treat in a similar manner to other types of plagiarism. Turnitin does not distinguish between the student's own work and any other text in its database.

The third way in which students' ownership is framed comes from Turnitin's "educational website," plagiarism.org. On this site, the company offers warnings about the legal ramifications of using someone else's words without permission:

Most cases of plagiarism are considered misdemeanors, punishable by fines of anywhere between \$100 and \$50,000 — and up to one year in jail. Plagiarism can also be considered a felony under certain state and federal laws. For example, if a plagiarist copies and earns more than \$2,500 from copyrighted material, he or she may face up to \$250,000 in fines and up to ten years in jail.

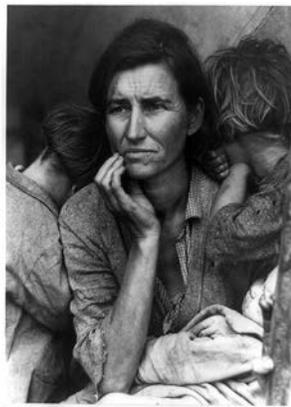
In this construction, plagiarism is a crime and one that is punishable not only by the standard practice of expulsion but also through fines and jail time. The move to highlight the maximum punishment for copyright infringement elevates classroom plagiarism as a serious breach of intellectual property laws. The practice that plagiarism.org points to is not about attribution and citation. Instead it is about permission and copyright. The students at Hopkins High have their text handled by a third-party for-profit corporation who appropriates the student's texts in order to develop a more powerful deterrent.

## PLAGIARIZING IMAGES

The issues about ownership of digital texts were especially pronounced when the teachers at Hopkins High talked about multimodal composition and in particular the use of images in student work. While the teachers believed that multimodal composition and critical media literacy skills were important parts of the ELA classroom, they were less certain on how to instruct students on how to use images appropriately. Many of the participants talked about the use of images in very different ways than the use of print text. The teachers stated that images were important to cite. They thought that these images were the property of the creator of the image. They also talked about the images as art. Yet, when it came to students using these images in their own documents or when discussing including images in their own presentations, the teachers of Hopkins High had dilemmatic attitudes about ownership. The participants talked about different understandings of the work involved in incorporating print versus images into their documents. They often described the use of these images as decorative rather than

substantive. And because of this, documents that relied on images were seen as less rigorous than traditional essayistic prose.

In order to prompt teachers to talk about the challenges of using images and the ways in which images complicates their understanding of plagiarism and ownership, I presented a scenario in which a student uses an iconic photograph of the migrant mother by Dorothea Lange without attribution: “For part of a multi-genre project on The Great Depression, Monica uses Dorothea Lange’s photo of the migrant mother from the Library of Congress website (see picture below). This image is part of the public domain and is not protected by copyright laws. The student does not cite nor acknowledge the source of the image or the name of the photographer.”



*Figure 5 Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother"*

Teachers expressed a general sense that their department did not place the same emphasis on citing and acknowledging visual texts in the same way as print texts. While teachers reported that they used images in PowerPoints and asked students to create multimedia projects, they did not think about applying the same standards of acknowledgement and citation as they do for print sources. Kate expressed a common theme of teachers’ dilemmatic positions about using images and citation:

**Kate:** Sure. Yeah, well I think my students do this all the time and I don’t pay any attention to it. I think I do it too with PowerPoints....So I don’t, you know, worry as much about pictures as I worry about the written word. Maybe I should. Maybe that’s, you know, kind of—I do try to put in sources, you know, when I take certain things, but you know the Internet is a wild, wooly world. You get any picture and download it and, you know, I mean any painter, any artist, any—anything.

In this excerpt, Kate began by asserting that the use of the Lange photograph without attribution is plagiarism. She expressed a sense that this type of practice happens “all the time,” both in her students’ work and in her own work. Because her focus as an English teacher is to “worry about

the written word,” she doesn’t pay any attention to it. Kate hesitated and wondered if she should worry about the attribution of images. She began to explain why she doesn’t (“Maybe that’s, you know, kind of—”) and then acknowledged that she attempts to “put in sources.” Kate moved back and forth between stating that this form of plagiarism is a problem and dismissing it as something that is common and unremarkable. Finally, Kate seemed to rest on the idea that the Internet’s lack of regulation and control (“wild, wooly world”) makes appropriate use of images difficult. The easy access to all sorts of images and the ability to download “any painter, any artist, any—anything” makes it difficult to pinpoint origins or ownership. Images can move effortlessly from the Internet to the user’s computer to the writer’s document. In fact, the screen on which the image is viewed remains the same even if the location of the image changes. The similar availability of print text does not seem to afford the same lack of concern about citation and acknowledgement. That is, although students are able to download texts, images are seen as something different.

One explanation for why images are treated differently than text in the high school ELA classroom is offered up by Michael:

**Michael:** I don’t know. I think part of it is cultural, that English teachers are still kind of text focused, word focused, as opposed to image focused. It’s probably something we should be more attuned to. Um, I think, um, we kind of know that images at least for the most part come from elsewhere and are not the student’s own work. You know it’s not a, uh, art class or a photography class, so I think everyone knows, it’s understood that the images come from somewhere else.

In this excerpt, Michael explains that English teachers are “text focused, word focused” and that this is part of the culture of the department. From this point of view, Michael describes how images in student work are not assumed to be the property of the student and that the students do not explicitly or implicitly claim ownership of the images. Unlike text, which looks the same whether it was composed by the student or taken from another source, images are set apart from the text visually. Students are able to manipulate text and remove any trace of source by reformatting or rekeying the text. Hopkins High ELA teachers do not typically assign students to integrate images in the same ways as they ask students to combine their texts with other sources. Instead, they ask students to use images as decoration instead of primary evidence or content. And because the assignments do not require students to compose with images—that is, to create new images—the teachers do not assume that the students have done that type of composition:

**Kate:** I mean we, we don't have any notion that this kid is trying to pass this off as his own photography, so I'm not too worried about that. [*Laughs*]

Even when the assignment asks students to use images, the teachers did not seem to think of the use of image as important to document as the use of text.

In responding to the prompt, Samantha refers to the project her students were currently completing. After the scenario drew her attention to the use of citation for images, Samantha begins to reconsider the message she is sending to her students. In her response, she frames the issue of citation in terms of work:

**Samantha:** Yeah I guess it [the use of the Lange photo] is plagiarism if it's in the image, but you know this is really funny because this is like to me right now because I'm doing a—my kids are doing this mini-presentation thing on World War II and they're doing a separate piece, so I gave each group a particular thing to look at, right? So, I told them at the end your last slide on your PowerPoint has to be your works cited, just one more time to make you do that and one more time for us to see a work cited list and then we'll talk about it at the end, you know?

They have a proper works cited list, da, da, da, and they're using a lot of pictures of course and they asked me if they had to cite the pictures, and I said no, and I said the reason why I'm not having you cite the pictures is for this kind of thing that you're doing, the whole thing would be cited every second, and I think I don't want this to become part of like a lesson in how to cite 'cause we've already done two research papers so they get that. So –and it's niggled me a little bit 'cause I keep thinking, oh my god, am I giving them the wrong message here? 'Cause I told them it's not your property, yeah, true. So, um, you know, I don't know. It [the scenario] says it's [Lange's photo] part of the public domain. It's not copyrighted. ...I did say, if I ask you what's that a picture of and, and whose picture is it, that you should be able to tell me, but it didn't say you had to cite it.

So while Samantha sees the use of Lange's photo in a student's multimodal project without citation an act of plagiarism in the scenario, in her own classroom practice, she does not require students to cite every picture because then they would be citing "every second" and the assignment would become a lesson in citation rather than a project investigating World War II. In addition, she says that the students had already completed two research assignments earlier in the year, and they have already demonstrated their ability to cite. For the current assignment, the importance of acknowledging the ownership of the photo becomes secondary to keeping the focus on the content. Yet, Samantha still feels uneasy that the same standard for citation in print is not in play when dealing with digital texts. She is aware of the dilemmatic position she is in: "it's niggled me a bit" and "am I giving them the wrong message here?" There is a difference for

Samantha between how students cite and acknowledge the ownership of print and non-print sources.

Michael sees an important distinction between the use of print text and the use of images. He gives an example of student presentations on genre in his film class:

**Michael:** My, my film students starting today are giving presentations on genres of film, and part of what I specifically asked them to do is they have to show some film clips and they have to use some stills from photos as part of their presentation. So I'm sure most of them are going to be playing clips or trailers or something off of YouTube....Um, and I've not asked nor do I really care about, you know, citing where these things came from, um, 'cause I know they're coming from YouTube and I know it's not their work.

**Steve:** Now will they probably say, "This is from *Psycho*"?

**Michael:** Yes.

**Steve:** So they'll identify all of those?

**Michael:** Yeah. They're not going to, they're certainly not presenting it as their own work.

Michael does not require students to document their sources for the presentation. He offers two reasons for this choice. The first is that citation is not useful for Michael. He assumes that the students will use YouTube to locate the video clips. These videos can be unauthorized excerpts of the original movie and often there are multiple versions of the same clip available. Thus, to document these sources does not perform many of the functions of a citation. The citation does not give credibility to the video and does not point to an authoritative source; it is merely acknowledged as part of the billions of hours of video available on YouTube. It does not present a record of the research path that the students took. It is not used to show the connections between researchers. Because the YouTube clip is not the movie itself but rather an easily accessible, easily retrievable copy of the movie, Michael is not concerned about having students cite that source. Secondly, Michael is not worried that students will claim, either explicitly or implicitly, that the videos are their own work. The format of the presentation sets off the videos as examples of the genre that are created by other people. It is clear during the presentation that the students did not create the movies they are discussing and that they make no claim of ownership. While this seems commonsensical, it does raise questions about the differences between image and text and how students should use them appropriately.

## IMAGES AS DECORATION

The teachers at Hopkins High also noted that they saw images in students' documents as more decorative than substantive. The images and video students used in their presentations were used as additional information to illustrate a point rather than being the point itself. Michael describes how he is weary of multimodal projects because they can become lessons in decoration rather than critical thinking:

**Michael:** And I think that's again back to a Power Point presentation, and this is why I think the dilemma why I think, um, so many of us too are kind of have issues with these kinds of presentations, you know is because a lot of it is just cutting and pasting. So I think in terms of what you're really learning or teaching, how much, uh, to have somebody stand up and do a Power Point presentation, it's so easy to go out and steal images and just put together something that looks pretty, but does it have the same rigor that writing an essay is involved with? So I'm always a little bit skeptical when I hear about these, you know, methods of alternative assessment that sometimes are just, you know, it's the modern day version of collages or something, you know?

**Steve:** Mm hm.

**Michael:** So that's again the onus on the English teacher to try and make it rigorous, make it worthwhile.

PowerPoints can reinforce practices that run counter to the type of engagement with sources that ELA teachers try to teach. Students "steal images and just put together something that looks pretty." This is not to say that multimodal composition is without merit. Instead, Michael is skeptical of the rigor involved in that kind of project. They become exercises in cutting and pasting—which in the digital age is accomplished in just a few keystrokes. For Michael, the use of images is just about making things pretty rather than making arguments.

Samantha distinguishes between using an image in a paper on photography versus using the image on the cover sheet of a report:

**Samantha:** I mean again I think, ugh, here's kind of the intent thing too. I mean if it were, uh, I mean 'cause this says that it's just going to—let's see, it's a multi-genre project. Okay. Um, if it, if this were a paper on photographers or photography or photography in the Depression or whatever, then I have a real problem with the no citing of this. I, I, maybe I just read this wrong but I, I don't know, I thought maybe this was like the cover of the paper or the cover of the something. It's kinda like the kids are using in these little things they're doing, they're getting —like one group has music, so of course they're going to talk about, you know, Glen Miller and all these people. They're going to show a picture of that person.

**Steve:** Right.

**Samantha:** So it's kind of like, I don't know what to call it, decoration or window dressing and this is the, you know, here's the guy I'm talking about. Going to play a little

clip of his music and this is what he looked like. Do we have to cite where that picture came from? Probably should, but are they, are they just, I don't know. Could they take a picture of anybody and put it there and say this is Glen Miller?

For Samantha, the intent of the use of the image determines whether or not it should be cited. Images that are merely “decoration or window-dressing” don't need to be documented, but those that form the subject of the paper should be cited. Samantha then wonders aloud: “Do we have to cite where that picture came from? Probably should, but are they, are they just, I don't know.” Samantha wavers between a plagiarism policy that requires citation for any source that the student does not own and a sense that documentation should be reserved for only important texts.

## CONCLUSION

While the issue of student ownership of their writing has been explored in the post-secondary classroom (Adler-Kassner, 1998; Lunsford & West, 1996b; Spigelman, 2000) and in college composition research (Anderson, 1998), there does not seem to be a significant research literature about high school student ownership of their texts beyond the sense of ownership as a synonym for engagement (e.g., Wintle, 2011). Indeed, for my participants, the notion of student ownership of their texts was not voiced as a primary concern. However, these teachers still labored to navigate and explain issues of textual ownership, especially when discussing digital texts. In particular, the participants' talk about Wikipedia highlighted the dilemmas about the new ways in which knowledge is created and vetted in digital spaces.

Teachers felt that Wikipedia was an acceptable place to check facts or to find useful resources for further research. The teachers, like many other internet users, often went to Wikipedia as their first stop to get quick answers. Some of the teachers at Hopkins High would even use Wikipedia in class to answer question that came up in class. Yet, the department as a whole felt that Wikipedia was not an acceptable source that should appear in students' works cited lists. Wikipedia was a good place to get answers but not a source that was worth acknowledging. Further complicating this stance was the fact that the majority of the teachers would advise their students to cite any language taken directly from the online encyclopedia. One possible reason for this dilemmatic position is the teachers' understanding of crowd-sourcing. The ability of any individual to make changes to any Wikipedia page weakens the authority of the information. There isn't an editorial board or a panel of experts to claim that the

knowledge on these pages is current and reliable. However, Wikipedia is able to harness the power of thousands of individuals who create, edit, and vet the information on each page. This shift in the location of the ownership of the information—from single experts to a more distributed model—disrupts the traditional sense of authority and reliability.

Also dilemmatic for the teachers was the use of images in multimodal composing. Teachers reported that they rarely cited the images that they used in their own PowerPoint presentations. They were also less concerned about students' unacknowledged use of images in their essays. For both of these practices, teachers believed that it was apparent to a reader that the writer was not making a claim of ownership of those images. When students would include an uncited image in their essay, the teachers would not assume that writer was the creator or the owner of that image.

These dilemmas about textual ownership offer promise as a site for generative conversation. While the dilemmatic positions that teachers took up when talking about textual ownership often created some confusion and could possibly lead to classroom instruction that could come off as contradictory or ineffective, the same tension between different ideologies of textual ownership can also be used as a way for teachers and students to actively engage with important questions. For example, later in my interview with Samantha, she worries about the project her students are doing and her instruction concerning citation and documentation:

**Samantha:** Is that right? No. You know, is there a difference with that? Bottom line, no, you know, and again now I really feel worried about this. Ahh! I'll talk to them today.  
*[Laughs]* [...]

**Steve:** What is that “ahh” feeling that you're having?

**Samantha:** The “ahh” feeling is, you know, I gave them the wrong, maybe I'm giving them the wrong message that if it's a photograph, if it's a visual it doesn't matter but if it's written it does. That is totally the message I gave them.

After discussing the visuals and documentation, Samantha has decided to talk to her class. Using the “ahh” feeling as beginning of the conversation, Samantha can explore with her class the messages we send through our decisions about what, when, and how we cite sources. As the types of sources students use in the ELA continue to evolve, teachers need to engage students in critical conversations about ownership. They need to interrogate how the media through which we compose, read, and disseminate text can alter our understanding of ownership.

As access to, and availability of, high-quality texts (i.e., HD quality video, high resolution images, improved scanned versions of print sources, and born-digital texts) increases,

the ability to distinguish between the original and the copy becomes more challenging. Digital texts can be copied easily and almost infinitely. This capability to recreate the text impacts the dissemination of the text as well. If (nearly) anyone can produce a digital text that is the same as an original, the author's control over the dissemination of the text is weakened. And as these texts begin to circulate around, the ability to identify the ownership of the text becomes less clear. As teachers continue to work with students' digital literacies, writing classrooms need to explore how these new literacies affect our understanding of textual ownership. In digital spaces, the traditional ideologies about ownership are strained. This can make it difficult to talk about plagiarism because it has become harder to differentiate a student's text from an outside source. In addition, digital technologies make collaboration (both sanctioned and inappropriate) easier for students, which can blur the boundaries of ownership.

## CHAPTER SIX: “WE KIND OF ALL KIND OF CIRCLE THE WAGONS WHEN WE GET SOMETHING”: DILEMMAS OF COMMUNITY IN TEACHERS’ TALK

**Steve:** *I mean, does it become personal at that point, Reed? I mean, is it –*

**Reed:** *Yeah, I’m sure*

**Samantha:** *I think it does.*

**Steve:** *– trying to find –*

**Samantha:** *—it does.*

**Reed:** *In our department...if one of us has a plagiarism case, especially in the days when Johnson and Simon were here, the whole department ... the whole department would be – Johnson would be sitting there for hours on the computer trying to find it, and it wasn’t even his student. It was –*

**Kate:** *Yeah, we used to spend a lot of time.*

**Reed:** *– we kind of all kind of circle the wagons when we get something.*

**Renee:** *But then what happens?*

**Kate:** *Well, even this morning when I brought that thing, because that thing’s been nagging at me for 24 hours. I didn’t say anything yesterday –*

*[Crosstalk]*

**Thomas:** *That made me mad.*

*[Crosstalk]*

**Kate:** *And everybody’s like, wait a minute that really makes me mad 'cause I thought I was being a little over the top mad about it. I thought, "Eh, you’re taking this a little too personally. You’re being ridiculous." And everybody said, "No, that’s not okay."*

### INTRODUCTION

As a high school teacher, I always felt a sense of responsibility when students plagiarized. Should I have done something else? Should I have crafted better assignments, ones that were plagiarism-proof? Should I have caught it earlier by spending more time reading drafts along the way? Often times, the most challenging cases occurred at the end of the school year when there wasn’t time to work with the student on correcting the mistake. One year, I was working my way through a stack of a class’s final essays. I had discovered something in a senior’s paper that didn’t feel quite right. The deadline to submit grades was looming. The memo from the guidance department asking to give them names of students in danger of failing had just come in my mailbox. There I was, alone in my classroom staring at the paper. Should I try to contact the student, the assistant principal, the guidance counselor, and/or the department

coordinator? The stakes were high, and I felt like the decision was mine alone. Looking the other way felt like I would be shirking my responsibility both as employee of the school and as the student's teacher. Coming down hard on the student seemed like an out-of-proportion response. While I was angry at the student for plagiarizing, I wasn't sure that preventing him from graduating and most likely from attending the school of his choice was the correct punishment. Of course, I didn't really know what colleges would do with this knowledge. We always told the students that the colleges would rescind their acceptance, but I had never seen it happen. Then again, I didn't want the student to repeat this act again. I calculated his marking period average with a zero for the assignment, and then again with a failing score of 50%. I computed his overall grade with all of these options. Would he pass the course? Would he graduate? Alone in my classroom, I pondered my next step. I then walked up to the department coordinator to tell her that I was taking the paper to the assistant principal. It was a short conversation that ended with the coordinator wishing me something like "good luck."

What strikes me now about this moment is that while many people were affected by this plagiarism—the student, the administrators, the student's parents, the guidance counselor, the college, and me—I was the one who had to make the most important decision about what path we were all going to take. While I felt it was mostly a nuisance for me, I knew that it was also disruptive to all of the other people involved. The alliances among all of these actors were being strained. The act of plagiarism brought into sharp relief the network of relationships that school-based writing creates. And there I was in the middle of it feeling both alone and entangled in a web of people at the same time. This act of plagiarism was at the same time an issue of an isolated violation of trust and a practice that felt like an affront to the school community. My choice about how to handle this case was a moment where I had to make a decision about what I thought was important.

Plagiarism seems to do this. It forces teachers into a debate about more than just the similarities of two texts. It widens the subject to relationships among the teacher, the student, and teacher's department. In the same way that plagiarism disrupts Romantic notions of the author, it also complicates the construct of the isolated reader. Teachers, when they read their students' essays, are not just reading in a vacuum. They are deeply embedded in networks of relationships and plagiarism places these connections under a strain.

## PLAGIARISM AND COMMUNITY

In the previous two chapters, I argued that teachers' complex and dilemmatic ideologies create challenging terrain for teachers to navigate as they respond to student plagiarism. In a similar vein, I argue in this chapter that teachers' understandings of community are complicated by plagiarism. The teachers of Hopkins High wrestled with the ways in which they operated in the classroom community and their professional community within the English department when dealing with cases of plagiarism. My participants talked about the importance of building safe learning spaces in their classrooms and described how they worked to make students feel as if they were part of a community of writers. The teachers also saw themselves as part of a community of teachers. They reported that they often sought advice from other members of their department. They noted how they shared ideas, assignments, and strategies with one another.

Yet, when these teachers encountered a case of plagiarism they told me about the sense of disappointment and betrayal. When their students plagiarized, they relied on the collective wisdom of the department to help make decisions about how to proceed with plagiarism cases. They also talked about the ways in which they considered their roles in the department and how their actions would impact the department. For the teachers of Hopkins High, plagiarism was ensnared between the personal and the communal. Plagiarism forced the individual teacher to make tough decisions in which the teacher felt that she bore the ultimate responsibility. At the same time, my participants saw themselves as part of a department that was trying to address the issue of plagiarism as a unified group. The teachers wrestled with how to respond to cases of student plagiarism. They wondered about the wider effects of their accusations of plagiarism beyond the individual students. The teachers worried about making decisions that they thought might have consequences for students beyond Hopkins High while taking seriously their role to prepare students for the world outside of Hopkins High.

Some teachers saw the possibilities of using Turnitin.com's writing tools as a way to strengthen ties with their students by both encouraging more interaction with the students about—and through—writing. By extending the classroom through Turnitin.com's course management elements, teachers could have students submit papers any time and could offer feedback in more efficient ways. Students' papers could all be collected and stored digitally creating a *de facto* portfolio. Students could edit their peers' papers helping to create the sense of the community of writers that the teachers had hoped to foster. At the same time, some of these

teachers wondered about the message that mandatory plagiarism detection would send to their student. Should students have to prove that their papers were original enough before their teachers would look at them? Was Turnitin.com really “gotcha software” as some parents thought? Would this undermine the safe community that they were trying to create?

This chapter focuses on the social relationships and institutions in which the teachers of Hopkins High work and their feelings of community. I use the term *community* to capture specific social interactions among the teachers, students, and administrators at Hopkins High, in particular those moments in which the interactions are directed at promoting a shared purpose or sense of belonging, respect, and trust.

I begin with investigating the ways in which the teachers at Hopkins High were social readers. Rebecca Moore Howard (1999) argues that plagiarism must involve the reader because it is only in the reading, recognition, and interpretation of the text that it becomes plagiarism:

We cannot eliminate the role of the reader in the issue of plagiarism, nor should we ignore it; the professorial reader will respond with emotion because he or she will feel personally affronted, his or her intelligence insulted, his or her values degraded (p. 165).

The teacher responds not just as an individual but as a member of several communities. He or she inhabits more roles than just the isolated reader of the text. Teachers are the adjudicators of plagiarism, the assessors of the student’s work, and contributing members of a department, whose actions help co-construct a departmental culture and identity. My participants were aware of a complex network of relationships that radiate from the writer and reader of the plagiarized text. When a student turned in an essay that contained plagiarized material, these relationships were brought to the forefront—relationships that were previously submerged or hidden. It was when students submitted papers that drew upon unauthorized literacy practices like plagiarism that community was most acutely felt by the teachers. No longer could the writing remain contained within the walls of the classroom. With the plagiarized paper, the other components and agents of the community were more noticeable: the department, the administrators, the parents, Turnitin.com, and the other students in the class.

In the analysis that follows, I describe how the teachers of Hopkins High talked about community as a generally positive force for both their classrooms and for the school at large. Within in this notion of community, I explore how plagiarism problematizes this ideal. Next, I present data about the various interactions the teachers saw both between the student and the teacher, as well as the relationships among the teachers within the English Department when

discussing plagiarism. These relationships often created dilemmatic positions for teachers by requiring them to navigate between their own sense of independence and individual responsibility when making decisions about plagiarism and a commitment to the department and the collective identity of the school. Finally, I look at Turnitin.com and how it acts as an additional reader and evaluator of student writing. I examine the role of Turnitin.com as a literacy sponsor and its effect on the teachers' perception of community at Hopkins High.

#### ACADEMIC DISCOURSES AND INTELLECTUAL IDEOLOGIES OF COMMUNITY

The teachers of Hopkins High used the idea of *community* to signal a broader force that influenced, informed, and sustained the work of their classrooms. They referenced the positive feelings associated with a sense of belonging and shared purpose in the classroom. They talked about the ways they set up their classrooms to create these spaces where students would feel safe and trusted. *Table 9* below lists some examples of the ways in which my participants described community within their classes as a safe learning environment. These teachers wanted students to be free from threats or disparaging language. They aimed to have students feel comfortable sharing details about their lives with their classmates. They worked to create a sense of trust by divulging personal information about themselves. By creating a space in the classroom where both the students and the teacher could share freely and without judgment, these teachers were attempting to create a sense of community.

For example, when I asked Samantha if she does anything in particular to encourage a sense of community in the classroom, she described how she hands out a list of rules lightheartedly entitled, "Ways to Make [Samantha] Brightman Happy." While the handout focuses on the themes of respect, responsibility, and rewards, the bottom line for Samantha is that the classroom is a "safe place" for students. She prohibits derogatory language in the classroom, especially words that are "going to offend other people." She said that she doesn't have "any tolerance for people saying, 'Fag,' or 'That's gay.'" For Samantha, it is important to monitor the language choices of her students in order to maintain a sense of inclusivity. She works to have the students feel a sense of belonging. In fact, she said that she would rather have her students showing respect for each other than showing respect for her because she's "the adult," implying that she was better equipped to handle any disrespect. Samantha believes that creating a space where students show respect for one another will create a harmonious community.

Teacher	Use of <i>Community</i> to signal a safe leaning environment
Samantha	Day one I set down the – the kind of, you know, I don’t like to call them rules, but kind of the, you know. What I call it is, “Ways to Make [Samantha] Brightman Happy.”...That’s what I call it on the – on the sheet they got. And I just lay down some things, you know, you – I have three things that are really important to me: Respect, Responsibility, and Rewards....But, yeah, I mean I think just setting those parameters. <u>I tell the kids in the beginning that the most important to me in any class regardless of what – how it is, is a safe space.</u>
Beth	<u>Well I think a lot of humor and storytelling and showing them your own work, sharing with them parts of your life and you know, try to build up the trust so people aren’t afraid to open up and read their writings.</u> I haven’t really had a big problem with most of the students. <u>Most of the time they’re very excited about sharing their work, but I think yeah, once that’s a safe zone they’re pretty comfortable.</u>
Thomas	But we’ll do right away just kind of — usually it’s a smaller class like 15, 17 kids. But getting them up doing like improv, little things just to get them warmed up to everyone. And they’re coming in like not knowing a lot of people. And it’s kind of funny — by the end they <u>know so much about each other</u> , and even when I do the, um, I do like a course reflection, like what I can do better and what you like and what assignment did you like? Which one would you switch? <u>They talked about how they got a chance to interact with kids that they would normally walk by in the hallways and not even —...glance back at.... They’re comfortable in this, like, atmosphere.</u>
Emma Lou	<u>I think that, again, they feel like they’ll feel more comfortable, uh, sharing various things, whether it’s related to their writing or literature or just personal things.</u> And I think a lot of things with English we’re so lucky because we can connect it. It’s like sort of that human — humanitarian like we’re trying to make them better people, and I think that as an English teacher I feel so fortunate that I have the <u>opportunity to make them better people through that sense of community and implementing — you know, you can like obviously do the writing and the literature. All that’s important, but what — at the end of the day, let’s — I think we want to make them a better person, and I think with English you can do that.</u>

Table 9. Teachers’ Uses of *Community* to Signal a Safe Leaning Environment

Both Beth and Thomas emphasize the act of sharing to create a sense of community. Beth models the type of sharing that she wants students to do and finds this approach creates a “safe zone.” Thomas has the students interact through improvisation games to get to know more about each other. Through this exchange of personal information, both teachers work to create a sense of comfort and ease amongst the students. Emma Lou has a similar approach but frames the

purpose of this sense of community as something grander. In addition to creating a better learning environment, Emma Lou hopes to make students better people through this sense of community. All four of these teachers see community as a sense of belonging and shared purpose that creates a safe learning environment.

Teacher	Use of “Community” as “Community of Learners”
Michael	I think I’m better at building a kind of classroom <u>intellectual community</u> than I am in a <u>writers’ community</u> . Um, and that’s something I would like to do better at. I like the idea of a writers' community, but we tend to focus — uh, I tend to focus a lot on kind of the — the discussion and analysis of — of literature. And, you know, I — I remember reading, when I was becoming a certified teacher, some — some books about, you know, creating writer workshop environments and community of writers and that kind. And I had — and I just have not — you know, I like that idea, intellectually.
Kate	They can choose something else if they’re uncomfortable with it ‘cause some kids just practically throw up at that concept, but they give each other feedback and they go, “Wait a minute, you wrote that?” And you know it sort of becomes this <u>community feel</u> .
Barbara	Trying to have — it doesn’t always need to be, uh, analytical in nature and drudgery, and we have a few students who — we have one student actually who, we were just talking about him this morning, that he does not wanna write anything down, and we have a few students like that in the co-taught setting, students with some learning disabilities who have a very hard time. Um, you know, you say “Write a paragraph” and you’ll get a sentence, so that’s a struggle as a teacher to get, you know, some kids it’s just a struggle to get the written feedback from, so that makes it difficult too when you’re trying to build a <u>community of writers</u> because you have kids on the very low end and then you’ll have kids on a very high end, so sometimes it’s hard for everybody to share ‘cause some people might not have much to share.

Table 10. Teachers' Uses of *Community* as Community of Learners

Other teachers invoke a sense of a *community of learners* where the community emerges from more explicitly academic activities such as the “discussion and analysis of literature” or peer-editing. Table 10 lists several examples of teachers using the construct of community to talk about the ideal state of an English classroom. In these cases, the teachers talked about community as if it were a utopian state of free-flowing ideas and conversation. The students in an intellectual community or a writers’ community would feel the same sort of trust and comfort

that was described above but would be able to experience this sense of comfort into an academic environment. Only one teacher talked about the challenges of creating this sort of ideal. Barbara, who co-taught a class with a special education teacher talked about the difficulties of creating this sense of community of learners when the students are of different abilities. She said that in order to have a space where everyone feels comfortable sharing something he or she wrote, all of the students need to be able to generate some written text: this “makes it difficult too when you’re trying to build a community of writers because you have kids on the very low end and then you’ll have kids on a very high end, so sometimes it’s hard for everybody to share ‘cause some people might not have much to share.”

Still other teachers talked about *community* in terms of the demographics of the school or of other schools at which they taught (see *Table 11*). In these instances, teachers saw *community* as a way of generalizing about the types of students they would have in their classrooms. Community became a means of identifying the motivations and dispositions of their students. For example, Reed describes Hopkins High as part of a “go out and make money” community rather than a more artistic community of a previous school district in which he taught. Renee likewise used the notion of community to capture the professional attitudes of the district inhabitants in a previous job. In both of these examples, the teachers talk about the shared values and characteristics of the citizens who lived within the school district and how these values and characteristics influenced the classroom and their teaching. For Renee and Reed, the school community is the source of the general motivation of the student population. The fact that so many of the students at Hopkins High were committed to going to college was attributed to the community as much as to the individual student.

Teacher	Use of <i>community</i> as sense of place
Renee	‘Cause it does have sort of that, you know, <u>upper echelon socio-economically and academically</u> and that thrust, but it was plopped a little more in a city feel, so you had a small element of that as well. Um, very highly educated, uh, parents. You know, many of them were working at universities as either professor or they were in the medical profession that’s right there or they were commuting to DC and involved in government work. I mean really, really, you know, <u>interesting community</u> in that regard, and then you’d have this small population that was from the other side of the tracks, literally, like literally the other side of the railroad tracks.
Reed	This is a kind of ‘I wanna go out and make money’ community.

*Table 11. Teachers' Uses of Community as Sense of Place*

In all three ways in which the participants of this study talked about community, these teachers referred to a broader force that influenced, informed, and sustained the work of their classrooms. Whether they used the term *community* to describe the quality of the learning environment or the characteristics of the school population, teachers described community as a powerful, productive force. The teachers seem to subscribe to a notion of community that foregrounded the shared sense of purpose and positive collective force that could help students learn better and become more successful.

In academic discourses about plagiarism, *community* is often depicted as the victim of the offending act of plagiarism. Rather than focus on the individual instructor or student, many plagiarism policies highlight the seriousness of plagiarism by talking about larger ramifications beyond the writer and reader. A quick search on the Internet reveals a whole host of plagiarism policies that note how an individual's actions undermine the educational goals for the entire educational community. For example, Baylor School (2013), a private school in Tennessee, claims that “[o]f course people who engage in plagiarism also hurt others: for one, their classmates, and for another, the school or university they attend.” Lowell High School (2013) in San Francisco declares that plagiarism is “unfair to the vast majority of Lowell students who work honestly and diligently to produce their own work.” At the post-secondary level, similar moves can be seen in plagiarism policies. For example, Calvin College's (2012) plagiarism policy states that “[a]cts of plagiarism affect not only the plagiarizer but also the entire academic community” and the University of Michigan English Department's Note on Plagiarism (n.d.) explains that plagiarism is one of the “more serious breaches of intellectual community.” Like many plagiarism policies, these documents frame plagiarism as a violation of trust perpetrated by students. In these cases the student is the source of the harm and the institution is obligated to defend itself from these attacks to maintain the integrity of the community.

At the same time, community is often seen as a possible site for the prevention of plagiarism. For instance, in the Council of Writing Program Administrators' (2003) “Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices,” the organization encourages administrators to emphasize the importance of creating a climate of academic honesty, recognizing the ways in which writing is situated within a larger social context. Donald McCabe and colleagues (2012) advocate an “ethical community-building approach” to send “clear and unambiguous messages to students.” In these discourses, community is highlighted as a powerful

force that can influence students to make an ethical choice. Together, these two images (community as threatened by plagiarism and community as the defense against plagiarism) create a landscape in which the ideologies of community are complex and sometimes contradictory.

Concurrently, there is a discourse of the importance of community to effective teaching. For instance, Ken Lindblom (2012) in a preface to the special issue of *English Journal* on “The Community in the Classroom” writes that

one important step [...] is to acknowledge that we teach in communities. Our students are members of many communities (blocks, neighborhoods, clubs, churches, families, after-school workplaces, and more) and many communities depend on our students as members; that dependence will only grow as the students mature. Engaging our students as members of communities and enlisting other members of those communities in our students’ education are ways of tapping into the larger world of energy that informs English language arts (p. 11).

Lindblom calls for an increased awareness of community that will energize the teaching of English language arts. By drawing on the many communities that exist both within and outside of the classroom, teachers can resist the traditional isolation of the individual classroom. This move aligns with the larger sociocultural turn and attempts to place the teaching and learning that happen in the classroom into a broader context. While this issue of *English Journal* does note some of the challenges of cultivating community within the classroom, the articles celebrate community as a resource that can improve teaching.

It is into this landscape of the dual understanding of community as both vulnerable and powerful that I place my participants’ talk about plagiarism. Plagiarism could undermine the sense of a safe learning community. It could disrupt the community of writers in the classroom. Teachers were concerned about how plagiarism—and more specifically the teachers’ own responses to plagiarism—would play out in the school community. At the same time, teachers used the strength of their professional community of the department to tackle individual issues of plagiarism that they encountered. While the department helped individual teachers think through possible reactions to cases of plagiarism, it also emphasized the relationships and roles that these teachers had within the department.

## READING PLAGIARISM

Not surprisingly, teachers at Hopkins High described their personal reaction to discovering student plagiarism in emotional terms. Teachers were “disappointed,” “mad,”

“upset,” “bewildered,” or “frustrated.” My participants often felt, in Rebecca Moore Howard’s words, “personally affronted.” For example, Michael reported about an AP English student who plagiarized and how he felt when he discovered it:

**Michael:** I was disappointed because this is a student who I like, is a student who’s a good student, and is a hard working student, and, so it was one of disappointment. And so when I approached her about it, I kinda framed it in that way. And that’s—you know, I think, uh, uh, kind of probably the way most of us would react.

Michael highlights how he was disappointed because of the positive relationship he had with the student. Michael also indicates that the student was a “good” student and a “hard working” student, making his disappointment more pronounced. It appears that this student let Michael down rather than a larger audience. Michael does not immediately mention the harm to other students or to the broader community of Hopkins High. This is Michael’s personal reaction of an individual student’s actions. Yet, he concludes by saying that his reaction is typical, that it is “the way most of” the teachers at Hopkins High “would react.” For Michael, this student’s plagiarism is bounded by the individual relationship he has with the student. Her actions have made him disappointed. In this case, Michael’s reading of plagiarism is framed as an interpersonal issue. He is not a social reader, but rather an audience of one who has been let down by the actions of a student he thought was “hard working.”

Even when a teacher was less certain about whether or not a student had plagiarized, she was still personally affected by the student’s actions. For instance, Emma Lou describes an example in which a student reused a large portion of her own paper from a previous semester.

**Emma Lou:** One gray area that I had last year was a girl was taking my film as literature class, and then the next semester took my mass media class, and then used the — most of the same — did I tell you this?...Most of the same paper that she used in film as lit for her mass media paper, ‘cause I did a unit on documentaries. And so, of course, she submits it and it comes up, like, 88 percent plagiarized, ‘cause she plagiarized her own work....And so that was a gray area, ‘cause I’m like, “Ugh,” ‘cause I did — you know, she was taking my class first and second semester. I do a similar unit, not quite the — ‘cause obviously it’s film and mass media, so it was different. But — and then [unintelligible] again I had to go to Kate, ‘cause I had, you know, these, like, kind of weird situations, then — and — and Michael was also teaching film at the time, and they both considered it plagiarism, that she did not, you know, give herself credit, and we needed — she’s a senior, she should know better. So that’s, you know, definitely one gray area that I encountered last year.

**Steve:** That’s really fascinating. Tell me a little bit about your initial reaction, you know, when — when you see that —

**Emma Lou:** I was disappointed.

**Steve:** Yeah.

**Emma Lou:** Like, “Are you serious?” She was, like, a good kid. She was, like, a B, B-plus kid. Like, she was kind of a slacker — senioritis — but I was like, “Wow, I can’t believe she did that...”

Like Michael, Emma Lou is disappointed with the student and she reacts personally to the plagiarism. Emma Lou at first identifies the student as a “good kid” who was a “B, B-plus” student, but then qualifies that by adding that the student was a “slacker” who suffered from “senioritis.” Still, Emma Lou finds it incredulous that the student would commit such an act. In particular, this student commits “self-plagiarism” by using parts of her own paper that she already written for a previous class with Emma Lou. Emma Lou is the teacher for both the first submission and the plagiarism. In both Michael’s and Emma Lou’s cases, the teachers felt disappointed by their students. They emphasize the relationships they had with the students and how this amplified the disappointment. The teachers at Hopkins High saw plagiarism as an issue of failing to live up to expectations as well as an issue of textual production. That is, their disappointment was an important component to the experience as well as the student’s learning or writing ability.

In this excerpt, however, Emma Lou seems to be trying to figure out who is responsible for this instance of plagiarism. At first, Emma Lou seems to indicate that she wasn’t sure if this was really plagiarism and wasn’t certain what to do. She then went to the department chair and another teacher in order to get advice about what to do. Based on their reading of the paper, Emma Lou decided that the essay was plagiarism and that she should give the student a zero for the assignment. By expanding the audience for the paper, Emma Lou moves from being an individual reader to one who is embedded in the network of relationships in the department. And her reaction to the suspected plagiarism becomes more public. More than a case of just sharing an unusual essay, the enlisting of other teachers to be readers of a suspected case of plagiarism places the original teacher’s evaluation and reaction into a more public sphere. Whereas the idea of what makes a “good” essay might be debatable, the stakes of claiming a piece of writing as successful are relatively low. Making an accusation of plagiarism, on the other hand, is more charged and by drawing in other teachers, the teacher’s decision-making process is made visible.

In the excerpt that begins this chapter, Kate describes the nagging feeling that she had in terms of her reaction to a student’s academic dishonesty. In this instance, a creative writing student had forged Kate’s handwriting in order to make it appear that the student had turned in

and received a grade on a revision of a poem. Kate wonders if she was being “over the top mad” about it. She worries that she is “taking [it] a little too personally” and that she is “being ridiculous.” The student had clearly violated the school policy, but Kate was angry about what the student had done to her.

When Kate told this story during the group interview, the participants noted that this was not a case of “classic plagiarism.” The group did note that they had already talked about this incident earlier, but it was during this group re-reading of the situation that the personal response was amplified:

**Samantha:** Well, it's like we said too this morning when we were talking about it, and you just said, "Does it get personal?" Yeah. I thought it was, you know incredibly insulting.

**Barbara:** She's using your handwriting —

**Renee:** How stupid does she think you are?

**Beth:** — and lying to your face.

**Kate:** Handing it back to me as mine.

**Thomas:** That's like plagiarizing and giving it to the author and saying, here. You know what I mean?

**Samantha:** Here, isn't this your son?

**Thomas:** [laughing] Yeah.

**Samantha:** Don't mind the red hair.

Thomas makes the initial link to plagiarism, saying that the student's act of turning in a forged document was akin to handing an author her own work. Samantha then intensifies this image by comparing the forged document to a red-haired step child, an unwanted child of questionable parentage. The teachers describe the act as “brazen,” with Renee asking, “How stupid does she think you are?” Whereas Kate was worried about taking this case too personally, once she talked about it with her colleagues, the group seemed to indicate that she didn't take it personally enough. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty took the interaction between the teacher and the student and expanded it to include the rest of the English department.

The teachers of Hopkins High talked about how the English department as a group approached cases of suspected plagiarism. For instance, Emma Lou described how the department handles plagiarism:

**Emma Lou:** I dealt with a lot of seniors last year. I taught three electives and, um — I don't know what it was (*Laughter*), but there was a lot of plagiarism. And the way that the department handled it, because it was my first year and I had never really dealt with it in middle school English — and basically it was like, “Listen, you're a senior. You

should know the rules,” um, and they — I think every single time it happened they — the student received a zero.

In this case, Emma Lou describes both her own experience (“I dealt with a lot of seniors;” “I taught three electives;” “I don’t know what it was;” and “it was my first year”) and her collective experience as part of the department (“the way that the department handled it”). She notes that because it was her first year teaching at the high school, she deferred to the department. In her talk, Emma Lou creates some distance between herself and the doling out of punishment. It is the department that “handled it,” not Emma Lou. She also says that “the student received a zero” rather than describing herself as the one who gave the student the failing grade. For Emma Lou, she sees herself as part of a community of teachers in the department who help deal with issues of plagiarism.

Other teachers echoed this sense of being part of the department. Thomas describes how the unified position of the department acts as a deterrent:

**Thomas:** Yeah, but I mean and I think the seniors that are guilty are more guilty of just laziness or trying to get away with something, but that’s not to say that a freshman couldn’t do that. I mean they’re just as inclined to try and get away with things.

**Steve:** Right.

**Thomas:** Um, but I also think a freshman is less inclined especially not being at this school and seeing the English department take it as seriously as we do.

Thomas highlights that as the students spend time in the school, they begin to know that the department takes plagiarism seriously. The appearance of a unified stance on plagiarism discourages students from trying to take advantage of the relationship they form with the individual teacher. That is, instead of the decision about how to proceed with an accusation of plagiarism resting solely with the individual teacher, if the students sense that the entire English department is behind the decision-making, then there seems to be less room for variation in terms of how teachers respond.

While the teachers talked about the positive power of the community response to plagiarism in general, there were a few moments where the participants revealed some challenges to this sense of community. In particular, the department’s use of the plagiarism detection software Turnitin and the relationships among the members of the department sometimes created assumptions and expectations that made the individual teacher’s job more difficult.

In my time talking to the members of the Hopkins High English department, I was struck by the overwhelming sense of collegiality. The teachers spoke highly of their peers and talked positively about their interactions with one another. Our group interview was amiable and marked by laughter and agreement. Yet, as with any group, the relationships among the members sometimes make things more complex. In a department that talked through cases of plagiarism with one another, these relationships can be amplified. So while the teachers appreciated that they could get the support of their fellow English teachers, they also had to eventually make the decisions themselves. In addition, their position in the department could influence how they made these decisions. For example, Kate found herself in a challenging situation where she had to navigate between her own sense of decision making and the community pressures of being the head of the department.<sup>30</sup> She began by telling me about how she discovered the plagiarism:

**Kate:** But there was one for me that never went through Turnitin.com. My second-semester creative writing class we didn't have enough Turnitin accounts. So they were just handing in paper stuff. And I had a kid hand in a whole bunch of song lyrics and represented [*inaudible*] poetry. It was so obvious, too.

She was not a strong student or a strong writer. And there were these like, you know, sort of typical garbary teenage poems, and then I flipped the page, and it was this rhythmically perfect rhyme scheme, flawless, like long pieces that all I did was Google the first line, and I came up with the fact that five or her poems were just blatantly cut and pasted on lyrics.

Like many cases of plagiarism, the “cut and pasted” text sticks out compared to the rest of the student’s writing. Unlike some of the earlier examples teachers described, in this case, the student wasn’t a “strong writer.” The plagiarized song lyrics are nothing like the “typical garbary teenage poems.” Kate has discovered the plagiarism and a quick Google search has confirmed her beliefs. This could be a clear-cut case of plagiarism. Kate has rock-solid evidence to show that the student has plagiarized. However, Kate then introduces two complications:

**Kate:** The problem with this is if she failed that final, her grades were low enough that she wasn't going to graduate. So what happened even more is I was getting hauled into administration, and they were saying well, listen, it's your decision. If you want to keep her from graduating, that's up to you [*Laughter*].

And I'm like well, how is this up to me, I mean, if we go by policy? And then I was told [the] policy is there as a guideline to help us make decisions. So I was like — I didn't know what that means. So I —

**Steve:** So that means you can be the bad person —

**Kate:** — don't —

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<sup>30</sup> See chapter 5 for additional analysis of this section of my interview with Kate.

**Steve:** — if you want to.

**Kate:** Right. I mean, and, you know, again, this is a kid who has been raised by her grandmother, is not — she can go either way. She might be fine someday, and she might crap out in the first semester of community college and start getting into nothing but bad. And, you know, I don't know.

The student is in danger of not graduating. This is troublesome enough for Kate, but what makes it particularly challenging is that the plagiarism isn't just about the consequences for the student. It also affects Kate as she is "hauled into administration." There she is told that the decision whether or not to prevent the student from graduating is hers. While Kate looks to the administrator to enforce the policy, she is told that the policy is just a guideline for making decisions.<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to note that Kate reports how she is singled out to make the decision: the administrator says, "it's your decision" and she responds, "how is it up to me?" While using the policy as a guideline is something that is available to the larger group ("help us make decisions"), Kate is on her own to make the choice. So, while Kate has become part of a wider readership for this project by including the administration, she is still alone as the evaluator of plagiarism. And as the department chair, there is no one to act as a liaison between the administration and the students.

The other complication is that Kate cannot merely read the text in isolation but must see the text in light of what she knows about the student. Kate feels that the student is at a crossroads. The student might be "fine" or "might start getting into nothing but bad." The choice will make is not just about the project or even about whether the student can graduate with her classmates. Kate thinks that the decision has long-term consequences. Here, Kate is stuck between two choices because she is aware of the social nature of writing and of schooling. Kate is not an isolated reader any more than the student's words on the page are unconnected words. Both the writer and the reader are part of larger networks of relationships, and the accusation of plagiarism has put a strain on these bonds.

**Kate:** And I went back and forth, back and forth and decided, finally, that either way, it's a bad decision. So I erred on the fact that I had her come in with the grandmother, we had

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<sup>31</sup> The Parent-Student Handbook contains the following policy for an academic honesty violation: "Initially, a violation includes a teacher-student conference and loss of credit for the work; it may involve teacher notification of parents. If violations are repeated, consequences include loss of credit for the work, a teacher-student-parent-administrator conference, and an appropriate disciplinary consequence."

a long talk with... the assistant principal, and basically, you know, hash it all out, and told her what the deal was.

And the solution, for lack of a better word, that I came up with was she could redo the entire project, and I would give her an F. If she redid the entire project and she got an F, that would give her an exact 65% average and she could graduate.

**Steve:** I'm sorry to laugh [*laughter*], but I mean, I know, right, that you —

**Kate:** It's disgusting. The whole thing is ridiculous. But again, you know — and didn't she like cheer and dance as she crossed the stage at graduation? I wanted to tackle her. I thought [*laughter*] have some freaking humility. You shouldn't even be here. So, you know, I maybe made the wrong decision, but if it had been first semester, she would have had a chance to take over a course.

So I decided to be the big stupid hippy liberal [*laughter*] and, you know, give her a shot. I probably did the wrong thing.

After deliberating, Kate decides to create a “solution” in which the student must redo the assignment for which she would receive a failing grade of “F” rather than a zero for the project. This will allow the student to pass the course (just barely) and be able to walk the stage at graduation. Kate finds the solution less than ideal calling it “disgusting” and “ridiculous.” The student ends up without any discomfort because of the plagiarism. She is able to “cheer and dance” across the stage. This public celebration undermines the sense of punishment that Kate was hoping that the F on the project should create. Part of Kate's dilemma is that the student does not seem to have learned from this moment. Kate wants the student to be contrite, to “have some freaking humility.” Instead, the student's celebration is read by Kate as a sign that the student got away with something.

Kate wonders if she made the wrong decision. She blames it on the fact that she is the “big stupid hippy liberal.” Kate's talk seems to draw from the political discourse of radio talk shows in which those who do not punish wrong-doers to the fullest extent possible are labeled “hippy liberals.” Although she is laughing as she says this, and she is clearly making fun of the terminology, she still seems to evoke the sense of being “soft on crime” as a left-leaning political stance. Kate use of this image appears to come only after the student publically celebrates her graduation. When Kate was dealing with the plagiarism in a contained environment, she sees her more personal approach in a favorable light:

**Kate:** Yeah. Like you've got to make this decision because we're holding the printer [for the graduation program] right now. Well, Jesus, okay. You know, so it's — yeah, there's — and again, if I had said I can't live with it, she's got to just eat it, she can't graduate, I believe truly that administration would have had my back. And I think grandma would have too.

It was interesting. When the kid walked in, grandma was mad. She was furious 'cause she had the kid. She said Maggie, what do you have for Ms. O'Connor? And the kid pushes across the table a five-page short story and a two-page essay on honesty that grandma had made her write the night before as soon as she found out they were having that meeting.

And that's the only thing that made me think okay, maybe I did the right thing because this grandmother is trying so hard to teach this kid, and she looked at me, and she said I'm so grateful to you. Thank you so much for giving her this opportunity to redo things.

You know, so I don't know. We're not teaching the parents, you know. It's not very clean, unfortunately.

Kate's response to the plagiarism feels like the "right thing" when her decision does not feel as public. When she is dealing with the grandmother, who is "grateful" to Kate for giving her granddaughter the opportunity redo the assignment, Kate gets the humility that she doesn't see in the granddaughter.

Kate is a reader who is embedded in a network of relationships. When she encounters plagiarism, these connections are strained. When the writing of a student is not contested or deemed inappropriate, these connections can remain submerged. In this case, Kate does not have to actively attend to her other students' families and the relationships with the administration about the dozens of other projects that she read for that class. The accusation of plagiarism thrust Kate's reading into a public light and these relationships force Kate to consider the social element of schooling and writing.

## TURNITIN

If Kate's reading and evaluation of plagiarism change as she is placed in a more explicitly public space, the use of plagiarism detection software likewise changes the ways in which teachers and students share and evaluate their writing. The teachers at Hopkins expressed some dilemmatic ideas about the ways in which Turnitin.com operated in their school. Some of the concerns they expressed were associated with community, especially in relationship with the ideals of establishing a safe learning community built on trust. In large measure, my participants thought that Turnitin.com was helpful in preventing plagiarism. Yet, several teachers worried about the negative effects on the community from the use of the plagiarism detection software.

Hopkins High had been using Turnitin for a little more than a year before I spent time at the school. In general, the teachers appreciated the secondary features of Turnitin, which allowed

students to submit papers electronically, teachers to respond and grade these essays online, and students to peer edit each other's work. In fact, the teachers talked more about these features than the service's primary plagiarism detection function. For teachers like Kate, Turnitin was providing teachers the opportunity to alter the ways they interact with student writing in the classroom:

**Kate:** Um, and then we've been doing a lot with Turnitin.com. I'm sure you've had a lot of people talk about that today. That's changing how we look at student work, and I know Reed is way ahead of the curve on this. He's having kids look at each other's work, and I'm going to get there.

Kate notes that Turnitin facilitates peer editing and although she doesn't yet use that feature, she sees it as a direction she would like to go. Kate highlights how the service is "changing" how they "look at student writing." She seems to be indicating that Turnitin isn't merely making the grading process more efficient but that it has revolutionized the interactions between students, texts, and teachers. Kate points out how her colleague Reed is "way ahead of the curve" in his use of the peer editing features. Kate seems genuinely excited about the transformative power of the course management tools embedded in Turnitin.

Barbara expresses a similar excitement about what Turnitin offers her classroom. She connects the peer editing feature as a way for students to become more invested in their writing as well as a way to share their writing to a wider audience:

**Barbara:** I try to actually—I try to talk about the importance when we're writing something we're writing, we're writing for it not just to be shared with the teacher, and I try to take time to have them share with each other. Um, I'm sure a lot of people have brought up Turnitin and it has a revision or it has a peer option where you can have them read each other's, uh, and they can pick like one or two and do comments. I've done that a few times this year and they've enjoyed it because I think that it's important for them to attach meaning to what we're writing. We're not just writing it for a grade; we're not just writing it for our teacher or ourselves. When we write something we're writing it to be shared.

And Turnitin actually enables us to share their writing easily, so I'll show the kids from one period stuff from kids from another period and they get a little shocked, "Oh, you're pulling up so-and-so's paper," but I'm like, "Well things are written to be shared."

For Barbara, Turnitin helps her build a sense of community in her classroom. Barbara feels that students are able to attach meaning to their writing if they begin to share their work with a wider audience than just the teacher. Turnitin creates situations in which writing is enjoyable and important. She notes that the students "enjoyed" commenting on each other's essays. Barbara

sees it as a way to get students to write for more than just the grade. The students, through the sharing enabled by Turnitin, begin to create the community of writers that Barbara hopes to foster in her classroom. Barbara also uses Turnitin to share work between her classes. Although the students in Barbara's classes might be "shocked" that other students' work is being shared so easily, Barbara responds by telling them that "things are written to be shared."

Barbara also sees another benefit to Turnitin. As the students become more familiar with the process of using the software as the vehicle through which they submit papers and receive feedback from both their peers and their teacher, they also have a better awareness of plagiarism. When she was talking to me about a scenario where a student's essay contained two sentences from Wikipedia (see Appendix B, Scenario 2), Barbara points out that students would most likely know that Turnitin would flag any sentences taken from common websites like Wikipedia:

**Barbara:** Like, if they were really trying to get away with something, they're going to be pretty smart about it. Um, but also if this girl is showing you that she doesn't – she might – like, in middle school they don't use Turnitin right now. Um, if you do that knowingly with Turnitin, you're asking to get caught now, because they're all quickly – I mean, they all understand now. Th-they actually don't understand the originality report, but it definitely creates some buzz or awareness.

In her response, Barbara isn't quite sure about how the students understand the originality report generated by Turnitin, but the fact that their papers are being checked for plagiarism "creates some buzz or awareness." Turnitin has not only changed the ways in which teachers look at students' essays (as Kate noted) but it also changes the ways in which students think about their essays once they submit them.

Turnitin.com acts an omnipresent second reader for students' work. Adding this new reader alters the sense of community at the Hopkins High. In some ways, the service makes students' writing more social as it analyzes everything they turn in for similarities to other texts. It places each essay into relationship with other documents. Once students turn in a paper, the possible connections to every other similar document in Turnitin.com's database is highlighted. A student's paper is changed into a hypertext with links out to other websites and essays. Yet, Turnitin.com can also undermine the sense of community that the teachers of Hopkins High reported trying to construct in their classrooms. By requiring students to demonstrate their papers' originality upfront, teachers might diminish the sense of trust that their pedagogy has attempted to build. At the same time, Turnitin.com can only analyze the students' texts in

isolation. That is, the plagiarism detection software can only scan the words on the page without attending to the student or the context of the writer.

One teacher, however, explicitly expressed a concern about Turnitin. At the end of an interview, I asked Thomas if he had anything else he wanted to talk about or wanted to clarify anything we discussed. Thomas alludes to the “ethical debate” of using Turnitin, whether students should need to prove their innocence/originality before they can get feedback from their teachers. He wonders if using Turnitin undermines the trust between the students and teachers.

**Thomas:** I guess just the idea of Turnitin...Ah, because I’ve been—there’s that kind of—I think I mentioned before, that kind of ethical debate. Like is it—what is that saying about teachers, professors, and is it that like do they really have that little trust?

Thomas questions if it is possible to create the safe learning community when teachers require students to prove that their essays are their own before teachers will read and respond to them. Does the loss of trust caused by the use of the plagiarism detection software outweigh the loss of trust caused by discovering plagiarism? But Thomas quickly dismisses this as a problem at Hopkins High. Although some students “hate” using Turnitin, Thomas’ tenth graders are “fine with it.” The tenth graders have only known using Turnitin in their high school classes and are therefore less concerned with the procedure. Thomas emphasizes the efficiency of using Turnitin (“it’s literally three clicks of the mouse”), which seems to minimize any ethical concerns. The convenience of Turnitin for the student should

**Thomas:** But I think—I don’t even see if it’s that much of an issue, really. Um, like kids now they say like—when I say I’ll Turnitin they’re like, “uh” it’s a gasp. They don’t — they hate it for some reason. But like it’s literally three clicks of the mouse....So I don’t — I don’t think it’s part of the culture yet.... because I think we got it last year, and mostly from upper classmen I’m seeing it. So like my tenth graders have done it last year. They’re—they’re fine with it.

Thomas continues by talking about the positive attributes of Turnitin. He catalogs the ways in which he is able to teach using the software by providing more feedback to students and by having students complete peer reviews and reflective pieces.

But I—I love all the other uses. Like to be honest, I rarely—like rarely is that indicator ever like 20 or 30 where I need to check it, you know? But just everything else is on there, like just peer review and reflective pieces and revision pieces, and just the feedback itself....I find myself getting more feedback on there because on it’s on “Turnitin” and it’s just so easy to leave feedback....

Finally, Thomas circles back around to his initial unease about Turnitin. He is concerned about the “whole trust thing” while noticing that the features of Turnitin “allow [teachers] to build a nice relationship through writing.” He goes back and forth on the debate.

Um, so I don't know. Like I just kind of felt that that was a whole—I don't know. I don't know how I feel about the debate. Because sometimes I feel—I want to trust people but then I don't know. I'm back and forth on it, but. I'll like everything else it's used for too, so...it becomes really—I think it makes it even harder you know, so if you don't like the—the whole trust thing, all the other features which allow you to build a nice relationship through writing, ah, get really complicated. So that's really cool.

Thomas seems to recognize his own ideological dilemma. He acknowledges that trust is important for a safe learning environment and that Turnitin might undermine that trust. However, he also knows that the features within Turnitin allow him to build stronger relationships with students that make for better writing instruction. The tool that can help create a community of writers might also be a force that places strain on this community.

## CONCLUSION

The teachers of Hopkins High were concerned about creating safe learning environments for their students. They wanted to encourage students to share their work with other readers beyond the teacher for a grade. By having multiple readers, my participants believed that the writing their students were doing would be more meaningful. Yet, when a student's essay was accused of being plagiarized, the teacher's reading and assessment of the originality of the work became more public. Administrators and other members of the department would be enlisted to re-read the essay to determine whether it was a case of plagiarism and what the possible consequences would be. As the assessment of the student's essay moved from a more private reading to one that was more public, the teachers often felt stuck. Their interpretation of the student's essay and their decisions on the punishment for the plagiarist were often described as dilemmatic. Teachers wavered between focusing on the text evidence and the human element. That is, participants talked about the similarity of text in the two documents as being proof of plagiarism while still returning to discussing the student writer as a “kid” whose actions needed to be considered through the lens of a more personal context. The social aspects of both the writer—or the plagiarist—and the reader factored into the teacher's decision-making process.

The teachers of Hopkins High were deeply situated in a community of students and teachers, and each of their actions would have consequences.

In addition, as Hopkins High began to use Turnitin.com for both plagiarism detection and for its course management software, students' writing was subjected to an omnipresent second reader. However, Turnitin, as an additional reader, did not take into consideration anything except the textual data that was submitted. Turnitin didn't know anything about the writer's grandmother or the previous instances of academic honesty violations. The originality report did not note the writer's grade level or ability. All papers are treated the same for the plagiarism detection software. Yet, the teachers in this study continually noted that these factors were important to determining their response to plagiarism. The teachers of Hopkins High were often reading their students' papers as social readers.

My participants talked about multiple understandings of community, which revealed dilemmatic positions about issues of trust, learning, and place. They felt a sense of belonging in the department and often reported sharing suspected cases of plagiarism with other members in order to come to a decision. The teachers of Hopkins High met with their students for writing conferences and described strong personal connections to their students as writers and as young adults. The participants described a school community that was committed to education and one that promoted academic honesty. While none of the teachers would say that Hopkins High was perfect, all of the teachers I interviewed were happy to be working at Hopkins High. It was when they were talking about plagiarism, however, that some of their beliefs about community began to feel dilemmatic. For instance, many of the teachers talked about the importance of creating a trusting and safe classroom environment. Yet, when students submit written assignments, these teachers would use Turnitin to check for the originality of their students' papers. The teachers had to navigate the tension between wanting to trust their students, to give them the benefit of the doubt, but at the same time to scan all of their work for possible academic dishonesty. But even the "trust but verify" approach was not without challenges. The participants noted that they wouldn't always act on a borderline score on an originality report. Sometimes a flagged passage would cast a shadow of a doubt on the rest of the paper. The processes by which teachers encouraged a trusting environment, especially with the possibility of plagiarism in the air, was filled with potential dilemmatic moments.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

**Kate:** *We don't have [administrative pressure to smooth things out] anymore, but when kids suddenly became much more capable of finding things everywhere is when we had to turn to other ways where we weren't spending our time looking for that, where we could be teachers, not detectives, and again I think it comes off—I think to the general public it comes off like we're just so interested in busting kids, but really I think sincerely all of us, and I can only speak for this department, really just want kids to have an idea in their head and be able to support it, 'cause if we don't send thinkers out into the world, what are we doing here?*

### INTRODUCTION

This project started with the question, *how do high school ELA teachers make sense of their experiences with and understandings about plagiarism through their talk?* I knew from personal experience that dealing with plagiarism was a vexing issue, and I had heard plenty of teachers tell stories about plagiarism in their own classrooms. A thread on the WPA-L listserv a few years back consisted of composition instructors attempting to present a “better” plagiarism story than the one before. I knew in reading through those stories that the posters were doing something more than just telling amusing anecdotes. What these writers found funny, dramatic, or climatic in their stories was not about the similarity between the two texts. Instead some of the stories worked toward moments in which the plagiarist did something that “real” authors wouldn't do while others highlighted some seemingly random connection between the reader and the text that brought the plagiarism to light. Admittedly, some of the stories teachers tell about plagiarism amount to student-bashing or just complaining. Still, these stories operate as stories because they resonate with the speakers in some way. That is, the speakers get something out of telling the story. And teachers have been telling stories about plagiarism for a long time.

From the earliest days of *English Journal* and *College Composition and Communication*, teachers have told anecdotes about plagiarism in their classrooms and have attempted to draw conclusions and offer solutions. This study adds to that literature in two distinct ways. The first is that I investigate high school ELA teachers' talk about plagiarism, attending to not only what the teachers said but how they said it. Most studies about teachers' attitudes and beliefs about

plagiarism use surveys or questionnaires, and the majority of these focus on college-level instructors. These studies tend to try to capture the prevalence of plagiarism or tease out what instructors consider plagiarism from what they deem appropriate. This study does not try to find that imaginary line that divides plagiarism from good writing. Instead, I present the multiple interpretations that the teachers had about plagiarism. The second contribution is application of the lens of ideological dilemmas in considering teachers' attitudes and beliefs about plagiarism. By valuing not only the presence of multiple interpretations but also the generative nature of these interpretations, I am able to present a nuanced picture of teachers' actual experiences and understandings about plagiarism.

I used the themes of authorship, ownership, and community as a means to explore the key constructs of the writing classroom. While these three themes overlap and intertwine with one another, they allowed me to look at teachers' talk about plagiarism and discover possible generative moments. Using the lens of the ideological dilemma as "a wonderfully rich and flexible resource for social interaction and everyday sense-making" (Edley, 2001, p. 203), I have discovered that my participants' understandings of authorship, ownership, and community—especially in relationship to plagiarism—are rich and complex. This complexity can give teachers, if they are aware of it, the language and launching pad to engage in constructive conversations about plagiarism and writing.

In Chapter 4, I outlined five distinct ideologies of authorship drawn from teachers' talk. The participants in this study could imagine students as Romantic authors and as school-based authors. They could see these ways of understanding authorship being enacted in the same classroom, sometimes during the same assignment. As I have argued throughout this project, the presence of these multiple interpretations is not a sign of inconsistency or a lack of conviction. Instead, by having these multiple lived ideologies to draw from rather than confined by a single intellectual ideology, the teachers were able to adjust to the specific social moment of the literacy practice in order to respond thoughtfully. Yet, when the suspicion of plagiarism is introduced into these moments, it is often seen in a way that limits authorship to a Romantic construction. Likewise, in Chapter 5, I argued that the ideologies of ownership are being pluralized by the increasingly digital nature of student composition. The use of online resources, digital images, and digital technologies in the writing process has made it more difficult to say who is the owner of a text. The accusation of plagiarism, however, often hinges on the ability to prove that

students' have appropriated work that isn't theirs. The idea of community is also problematized by plagiarism and in Chapter 6, I illustrated how the social nature of the reader can be clouded by the use of the omnipresent, but limited, reader in the form of Turnitin. The importance of the interpersonal relationships between teachers and students could become challenged through Turnitin, especially if teachers and students don't engage in conversation about the various ways community is encouraged and how plagiarism can be disruptive to this process.

In the conversations I had with teachers at Hopkins High, we were able to investigate these various ideologies and critically engage with how teachers understood these constructs of authorship, ownership, and community, as well as explore the possible ways to enact these understandings in the classroom. From Samantha's "aha moment" to Kate's declaration that she was going to go look up the difference between author and writer after the interview, the teachers in this study were eager to wrestle with their dilemmas and could see the value in working through the "gray areas" of plagiarism. What this study shows is that rather than looking for a single answer to preventing plagiarism, we need to engage with plagiarism through its complexity.

## IMPLICATIONS

When I was working with beginning teachers, I would often see a look of frustration when the answer I gave to their question began with "it depends." They wanted quick fixes and absolutes. They were hungry for answers that eliminated tough decisions or internal debates. Because they felt the weight of each and every decision, they longed to have some of the choices removed. If they could have a list of if/then statements, then they could focus on the teaching, they thought. *If a student is late to class, then you give him afterschool detention. If a student has trouble understanding an assignment, then you diagnose the problem through a series of well-constructed questions. If a student has trouble organizing an essay, then you provide a graphic organizer.* What they soon realized once they were in the classroom is that there were too many *ifs*, and they often had to try more than one *then* before they saw the results they were hoping for. They also realized that what worked in their morning class failed miserably in the afternoon. So we would talk about what were good places to start thinking about the situation. What were ways to understand the problem so that they could work with students and not against them? What were ways to act that were grounded in their beliefs but were responsive to the situation? How

could they think about the language they used in the classroom and outside the classroom that shaped the situation? While this approach was harder to fit into a single sentence policy or on a bumper sticker, I believe that it would provide beginning teachers with the habits of mind to think through the complexity of the classroom. I hope that I would provide them with ways of understanding the network of social interactions that intersect in the classroom and to see their role in the co-construction of knowledge. Part of what I tried to do with this group of teachers was to give them permission to work through the uncertainty. I wanted them to know that the ambiguity was not a sign of weakness but rather a mark of the complexity of the moment. And so, we would discuss the events that happened in their field experiences and work together through the challenging moments—and the successful ones—trying to understand the elements that these moments “depended” on.

Yet, none of my students asked what they should do if a student plagiarized in their class. I’m sure that they had considered the possibility. As soon as they were in the classroom for the first major writing assignment, they most likely had a conversation with their mentor teacher about plagiarism. These beginning teachers thought they knew what they had to do. They had to hold the line. They were the gatekeepers and in order to establish order in their classrooms they could not be “soft” on this kind of transgression. At the same time, these beginning teachers often assumed a position of being friendlier to the students: they were closer in age, shared similar experiences with their students, and were given tasks in the classroom where they worked one-on-one with students. These beginning teachers were in a bind, but because they were overwhelmed with so many dilemmas and questions, the issue of plagiarism wasn’t one that rose to the surface.

In my work with novice graduate student instructors (GSIs) about to enter their first-year composition courses, I have seen the same concerns. Although these teachers are often in the middle of their own research about the complexity and nuanced understanding of a particular topic, they still hunger—like the secondary ELA teacher candidates—for a straightforward answer. While these GSIs might enter into the classroom with well-theorized positions on authorship, they are often challenged when they come across a paper they suspected to be plagiarized. In my role as the Graduate Student Mentor to these GSIs, I worked with these teachers as they debated how to respond to a student’s paper that contained unattributed sources. They weren’t sure if what they saw on the page was a symptom of a writing problem or a result

of dishonest behavior. They were looking for ways of dealing with these papers that seem to destabilize the routines and assumptions of the first-year composition class. These teachers knew that their section of first-year writing and its smaller class-size might be a class in which their students would be able to establish a more personal relationship with their instructor; however, this relationship felt compromised by the plagiarist. Like their beginning ELA teacher counterparts, these GSIs wondered how to resolve the tension between what they felt they should do, what they thought they could do, and the consequences of these decisions.

These dilemmas about plagiarism in the writing classroom traverse contexts. They are not dilemmas that are limited to a particular level or demographic. They are not dilemmas that can be eliminated at one level or corrected at another. This project aimed to give voice to the complexity teachers face when dealing with plagiarism. In this chapter, I explore how the findings of this study can be applied to both teacher education and college composition. These two fields are one step away from the site of this study. How do we prepare beginning teachers to step into the complexity of teaching about plagiarism in the high school setting? How can composition instructors examine their own dilemmatic beliefs about plagiarism and how can knowing about the ways in which plagiarism is conceived in high schools help them anticipate the ideologies students will bring with them to the first year composition classroom?

## REVISITING BRENT

First, I'd like to return to the original anecdote that started this dissertation and my research interest. In my class with Brent, I had tried to empower the students to be authors through a low-stakes assignment that could foster conversation. I tried to allow students to claim their experience as a valuable and valid source of knowledge. But things went wrong in that encounter:

*I could hear myself saying, "This is bad. This is really bad." I wanted to hear an apology or hear some sense of contrition in his explanation. Instead, I heard excuses. Many excuses: he wasn't taught how to cite, he didn't have a handbook, he was taught how only to cite literature, he thought it was common knowledge. I walked down the hall and made a photocopy for myself and sent him off to rewrite, or perhaps to re-right, his wrongs.*

It was his essay, but not his words. His name was on the top of the paper, but he didn't author the piece. I had hoped that the assignment would encourage a feeling of community, but our actions

(and reactions) undermined any sense of shared purpose or trust. I was surprised, disappointed, and mad. What could I have done differently?

## RETHINKING PLAGIARISM

This project offers several productive ways of thinking about plagiarism. These ways are not magic fixes or steps to create plagiarism-proof assignments. Above all, this project reveals the complexity of plagiarism, the deeply embedded network of ideologies and practices, and how this literacy practice cannot be addressed with a “one-size fits all” solution. Yet, an awareness of the various types of dilemmas that surround authorship, ownership, and community can provide places to start meaningful conversations for both teachers and students.

One approach deals with the ways in which we frame our discussions of plagiarism in official policies. My own plagiarism policy was tucked into my syllabus as just another point in a list of classroom rules and procedures:

7. Statement on plagiarism: Plagiarism undermines the core principles of this course, the University, and your education in general. The English Department Writing Program requires that I report all cases of plagiarism to the Director of the EDWP. If you are found to have plagiarized, you will fail the assignment and the course. We will discuss this policy in class. If you ever have any questions about this policy, contact me for clarification. Please review the handout or find it online:  
<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/plagNote.asp>

Clearly this warning about the dangers of plagiarism and its deleterious effects on the principles that sustain the university and learning in general did not prevent Brent from plagiarizing. And our discussion in class—which if I remember correctly consisted of cautionary tales about students who had plagiarized and been caught—did little to inform Brent about what plagiarism was and what he should do. This is not to say that my statement on plagiarism was completely flawed or undermined my instruction. It did provide an avenue for conversation both through class discussion and outside of class (“If you ever have questions about this policy, contact me for clarification”). Yet, it did not encourage this dialogue. Even in my short description, plagiarism is framed as an insidious force with severe consequence: it is the only thing in my syllabus that would trigger a report to the administration. Students were able to skip class a handful of times before they were in danger of failing. But for plagiarism, the consequences are offered without any possibility of adjustment due to circumstance; if students were caught having plagiarized, they would fail the class. There seems to be little room for debate. And still, I

did not follow my own policy. I did not report this case of plagiarism to the Writing Program Director. I did not fail Brent for the course.

I now believe that these types of plagiarism statements that are found in syllabi need to be framed in ways that not only offer up opportunities to talk about the particulars of the policy but instead demand that broader discussions of plagiarism occur both in the classroom and in individual conferences. As this research illustrates, plagiarism engages issues of authorship, ownership, and community—important intellectual and pedagogical concerns for writing instructors—and so, time spent interrogating plagiarism is time spent exploring what it means to be an author, what it means to own a text, and how writing creates a sense of community. In writing classes students could draft their own plagiarism policies. With their drafts in hand, the class could explore scenarios like the ones I presented to my participants. The students could then determine what should happen according to their policies. In this type of activity, it is critical to make sure that the conversation moves away from issues of merely crime and punishment. For instance, if the students create policy statements that frame plagiarism as the stealing of ideas or words, and the scenario presents a situation in which the student uses text that emerges from a collaborative and generative conversation, the class would need to interrogate how the example complicates their understanding of where ideas come from and how we attribute these paths. With my participants, the discussion of the scenarios was productive for their thinking about plagiarism. Often times, they would mention that they hadn't thought about a certain way of thinking about plagiarism. They enjoyed the opportunity to work through some of the challenges that the scenarios provided. While they also expressed some mild frustration because the scenarios were familiar and reflected moments in which they had to make some difficult decisions, the process of talking through their thought process provided them with ways to work with their own classes.

My participants noted that plagiarism seemed to emerge toward the end of the school year. Some of this can probably be attributed to the higher stakes of these end-of-year assignments and desire of students to finish as quickly and easily as possible. I also think it can be related to the ways in which we tend to talk about plagiarism. Any discussion of the policy or what plagiarism is might happen at the start of the course. Conversations about plagiarism might re-emerge during specific assignments—in the case of the teachers of Hopkins High—like research papers. However, given the apparent increase in plagiarism at the end of the term, it

would be ideal to return to the scenarios and policies that students generated at the start of the course. By revisiting these documents and exploring what the students have learned and experienced over the course of the class, teachers could work with students to see what has changed in their understanding of authorship, ownership, and community. If instructors only talk about plagiarism after they discovered problematic student texts, it is too late. Again, rather than framing this discussion in terms of punishments and warnings, a more productive approach would be to focus on the literacy practices that teachers would like to see students take up.

In a teacher education classroom, this approach to plagiarism takes on an interesting twist. It is common for mentor teachers to tell their student teachers to “steal” anything they want in terms of lessons, handouts, or activities. And this type of circulation of texts is what makes that field experience so valuable. In fact, one could make the case that the more willing the mentor teacher is to open his or her warehouse of experience and documents without concern for being attributed or acknowledged, the more opportunities for learning the beginning teacher has. Still, having these beginning teachers examine the differences in between their own textual practices in their methods classes versus the types of practices their students enact vis à vis a plagiarism policy could generate interesting conversations about authorship, ownership, and community. These beginning teachers would be able to explore how the community expectations shape our understanding of appropriate textual use. They could investigate the possible benefits of attribution of the source of their handouts and the reasons teachers might be reluctant to indicate this connection in their work.

## ATTENDING TO THE DIGITAL

My research calls teachers and teacher educators to attend to how the shift to the digital in writing classrooms affects our understanding of plagiarism. The increased access and ease of working with text may make it easier for students to plagiarize; yet, this changing landscape does more than make old ways of copying faster and easier. The participants in this study noted that they sometimes struggled to talk about texts in ways that the students seem to understand. Some teachers tried to compare online texts to CDs. They wanted students to see that cut and pasting someone’s online text was the same as stealing a CD. However, these same teachers would later express an understanding that even the analogy of the CD was an outdated one. Students were accustomed to dealing with music in entirely digital environments where the music was never in

a physical format. The music was a digital file that was transferred from iTunes to their music players. The idea of text as property becomes hard to imagine when the text is never tangible. In order to help students understand the ways in which writers can appropriate and acknowledge text and inspiration teachers need to employ language that resonates with their students' current experience with text. Instead of co-opting digital literacy terms like the plagiarism.org's Plagiarism Spectrum (i.e., ten types of plagiarism with monikers such as "retweet," "mash-up," and "remix"), teachers should investigate these digital literacies with students to trace how artists, musicians, and writers interact with digital texts. For instance, classes could explore the textual practices of Girl Talk, the stage name of musician/producer Gregg Gillis. As Girl Talk, Gillis layers hundreds of fragments of sampled music to create elaborate sound collages. Girl Talk's mash-ups are more than just plagiarism.org's definition of mash-up as a type of plagiarism where the student "mixes copied material from multiple sources." It is more complicated than the comparison to theft of CDs would capture. The lack of attribution and permission in Girl Talk's songs has raised legal concerns. While none of the samples are explicitly acknowledged in the songs, fans of Girl Talk have created a "wiki of video annotations."<sup>32</sup> These annotations identify the samples and link out to YouTube videos of the original songs (see *Figure 6*). As the mash-up plays, the citations appear in a timeline visually representing the different layers of the song's texts. Clearly, listeners of Girl Talk had some desire to identify and acknowledge the various components that made up the song. By examining both the song and the annotations, students can explore the affordances and limitations of citation and attribution. They can ask questions, such as, why would an artist use pre-existing elements to assemble his music? What is gained through the annotation of this song? What is lost when we must rely on our ability to identify music without the assistance of a citation? What are the similarities and differences between writing and mash-ups? By highlighting the complexity of both mash-ups and more traditional writing assignments—in terms of the practices and the ways in which we describe them—instructors could help students talk in terms that capture the various practices that fall under the general term of plagiarism.

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<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, *toob*, which describes itself as "Animated, anyone-edited annotations for YouTube videos." <http://readyrickshaw.com/toob/>

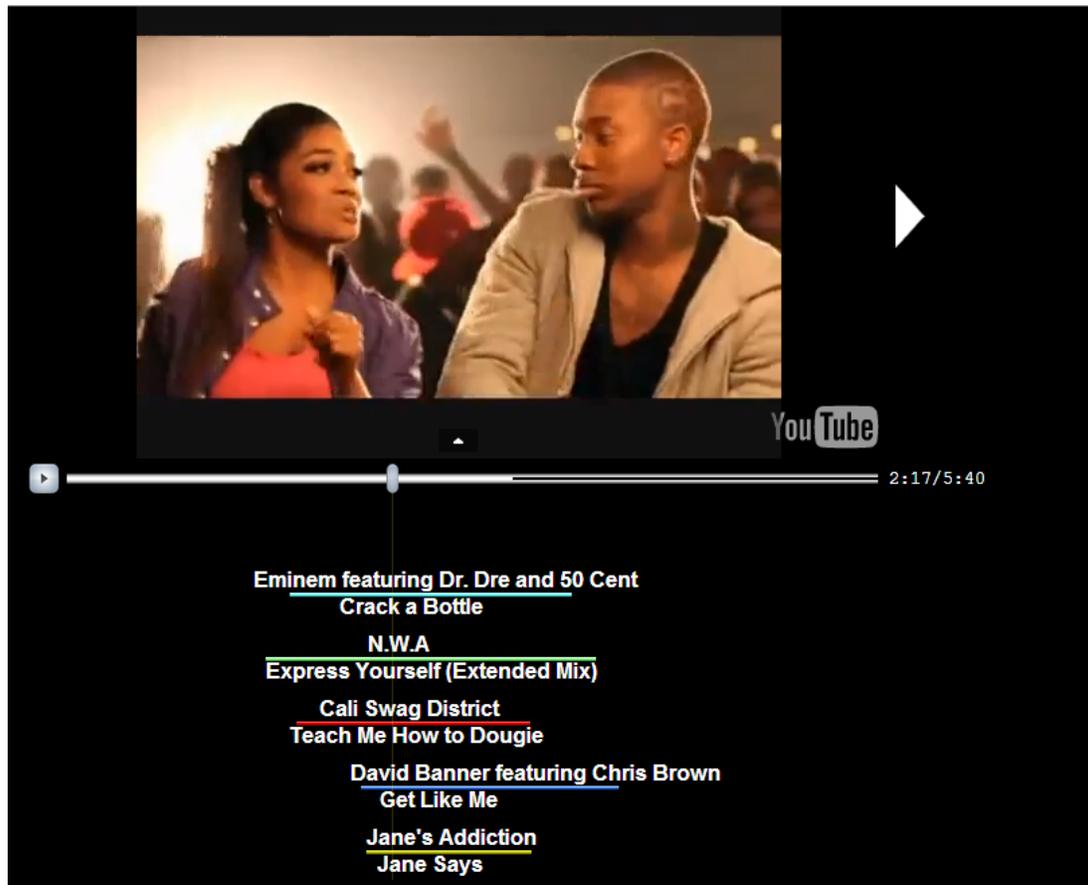


Figure 6. Fan-created Visual Citations of Girl Talk song

## PLAGIARISM AND THE NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS

This project also foregrounds the importance of considering how plagiarism involves the reader and the reader's role within the school communities. Kate's story of how her discovery of her student's fraud and how her inability to take swift and decisive action made her feel like a fraud brings into sharp relief the binds in which teachers are placed when they encounter plagiarism. A teacher's response to plagiarism influences that wider community of the students as well as the teacher's own department. While Rebecca Moore Howard (1999) argues that plagiarism has to include the reader and the reader's reaction, my research highlights how this reader is also embedded in a network of relationships. As writing in classroom settings move to being more connected (both because of the increasingly digital environments and through community-based projects), the importance of the wider network of relationships will be surfaced.

## THE USEFULNESS OF THE TERM “PLAGIARISM”

As this study has demonstrated, when teachers talk about plagiarism, they are talking about many different practices. The teachers at Hopkins High described the following acts as forms of plagiarism:

- Cutting and pasting from the internet
- Downloading papers from online papermills
- Copyright infringement
- Excessive editing by someone other than the writer
- Forging a teacher’s handwriting
- Obtaining writing help without acknowledgment
- Using a ghostwriter
- Excessive imitation
- Improperly constructing a works cited list
- Retweeting without acknowledgment
- Reusing your own work
- Turning in someone else’s work
- Unintentionally plagiarizing
- Using an image without attribution
- Using Wikipedia for common knowledge without attribution
- Breaking the rules of writing contests
- Borrowing too heavily from someone else’s organization or structure
- Paraphrasing without citing

In addition, the literature from *English Journal* and *College Composition and Communication* contains these practices as examples of plagiarism:

- Assemblage (Johnson-Eilola and Selber, 2007)
- Counter-conquest (Randall, 2001)
- Patchwriting (Howard, 1999)
- Voice merging (Canagarajah 1997)

In both the literature and my interviews with the teachers at Hopkins High, plagiarism was described as a temptation, as anti-writing, as a betrayal, as cheating, as a crime, as collusion, as a culturally-defined concept, as a disease, as dishonesty, as ethical weakness, as ignorance, as an immoral act, as laziness, as personnapping, as a sin, as stealing, and as an intimate violation. The activities that fall under the general umbrella term of plagiarism range from the outrageous to the mechanical. Some scholars have advocated for a move away from the term because of its inability to capture the variety of practices and the appropriateness of a similar variety of institutional responses to these practices. Rebecca Moore Howard (2000, p. 488) has argued that the term *plagiarism* is “unwieldy, unstable, and insidious.” While I agree with Howard about the importance of terminology that better captures the practices that we as writing instructors want to discourage, I am reluctant to discard the term *plagiarism* altogether. I believe that it is the term’s unwieldiness and instability that offers an avenue to interrogate the wide-range of practices with students. It is also the term’s emotional resonance that can make it the site of important conversation with students and other teachers. It is hard to image how a school district can launch a meaningful debate about the role of inappropriate *repetition* in student writing. As much as the term *plagiarism* can overwhelm the discourse about student literacy practices, I feel that it is a better position to start.

In addition, there are still some practices that fall under plagiarism that writing instructors should respond to with moral outrage. Buying papers online in order to willfully circumvent the learning activities of a class in order to obtain the highest grade possible should be met with indignation. Plagiarism is a literacy practice, but it does not mean that educators have to respond to all of its variants with the same disinterested stance. In the most outrageous cases of this kind of academic dishonesty, it is helpful to have the weight of several centuries of connotation of the term *plagiarism*. I believe that writing instructors can strategically use the term *plagiarism* to engage students and school communities in significant conversations about appropriate engagement with sources. Teachers can use the power of the word to frame those behaviors that are detrimental to the students’ learning and the academic community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS FOR PRACTICING TEACHERS

Below, I offer suggestions based on the findings from my interviews with the teachers of Hopkins High. Although the study investigated a particular high school English department, I

believe that these six interventions can help teachers of writing at a wide range of institutions and levels better navigate through the challenges of dealing with plagiarism. These suggestions are directed at teacher education programs, college writing programs, and practicing secondary ELA teachers, as it will take a multi-prong approach change the ways in which teachers address plagiarism in the classroom.

### *1. Provide explicit instruction about plagiarism for pre-service teachers*

My participants acknowledged that they did not have any instruction about plagiarism in their teacher preparation coursework. They expressed similar thoughts to Emma Lou who told me that she “learned about plagiarism...while teaching.” While English methods courses are already challenged to cover a nearly impossible range of topics in order to prepare beginning teachers, the inclusion of specific instruction about plagiarism seems critical. As the teachers at Hopkins High described, dealing with plagiarism can be a stressful and difficult experience. These moments include challenging meetings with parents, students, and administrators. The teachers talked about the ways in which making decisions about what to do regarding plagiarism and the plagiarist placed them in difficult positions. I believe that we do beginning teachers a disservice if we don’t provide them with ways of thinking about plagiarism before they encounter it in the field.

Teacher education courses can be places where beginning teachers can practice these encounters through role-playing or examining video of hypothetical situations. By investigating the various forces that come into play when teachers make accusations of plagiarism—and more importantly, working backward to examine how this situation came into being—the class could unpack the issues that surround plagiarism, including the role of talk in both the framing of plagiarism to students and the interaction with parents and administrators.

### *2. Implement strategies for designing writing prompts that acknowledge multiple ways of authoring*

Teachers of writing have long been aware of the different types of writing tasks that students must take up to be successful in school and in the workplace. This increased attention to genre and the various approaches writers must use to engage in these genres can be a powerful framework for teaching writing. My research indicates that although teachers are cognizant of

the multiple genres their students work in, the ways these teachers talk about students as authors are not as flexible or fluid. As I showed in Chapter Four, teachers in this study readily identified the types of writing students at Hopkins High were asked to undertake: college admissions essays, literary analysis, creative writing, or research papers, for instance. Yet, the teachers would describe the students in much more fixed terms, even when these students were enacting a variety of authoring approaches. Students were positioned as student writers no matter what type of writing they were doing, what purpose they were striving for, or what part of the process they were in. Even as these teachers described students authoring through a variety of ideologies, the teachers still seemed to have a limited way of identifying the student writers.

Writing prompts that could tease apart the various purposes and positions of the student writer would provide instructors ways to engage students in conversation about appropriate textual practices. For example, my participants described situations in which their students enacted a more professional ideology of authorship. At other times, they talked about students in a way that emphasized the development aspect. Writing prompts could identify these types of authorship and allow students to see how they might move from one to the other or inhabit more than one type for a given assignment.

### *3. Promote awareness about how language shapes--and is shaped by—ideologies of plagiarism*

ELA teachers often enter into the field because of a love of language. They revel in the power of words and are moved by the ability of language to persuade. This attention to language doesn't always extend to their own talk and especially to their own talk about plagiarism. When prompted, my participants reported that it was valuable to think about their own language choices about plagiarism and writing instruction. They enjoyed the challenges of trying to define terms like author and writer. During our group interview, I asked teachers to react to various metaphors used to describe plagiarism (e.g., plagiarism as a disease, plagiarism as a crime, plagiarism as a physical violation). My participants, because of their training with and their dispositions toward language, were able to enter into conversations about the usefulness of these metaphors even while engaging in discourses that enforced or contradicted these frameworks.

By building on teachers' interest in language and providing them tools and a vocabulary to think about the language choices that they make, teachers would be able to become more aware of the interplay between language and plagiarism. They could investigate their classroom

and institutional policies about plagiarism to uncover resonate and dead metaphors used to describe the writing process.

#### *4. Help teachers listen to narratives*

Similarly, teachers can be more mindful of the ways in which their own pedagogical stories work with, or against, their writing instruction. In my interaction with the teachers of Hopkins High, I was struck by the telling of a story about how the department attempted to discover the original source of a suspected case of plagiarism. The entire department aided in the search. Reed tried to track down an out-of-print graphic novel. The story was framed as a failed attempt to find the evidence even though all of the teachers felt that the student's paper was plagiarized. This was not a story that the teachers would tell their students, however. How do the stories we tell about plagiarism work as informal writing instruction? These stories tend to be the examples of plagiarism that follow more predictable paths—that is, the teachers discover the plagiarism and the students face some sort of consequence. More rare is the story of plagiarism teachers tell their students about plagiarists who don't get caught or students who move on to have successful careers after plagiarizing in high school. Much like Elias Lieberman's (1956) story about Lily, the suspected plagiarist who is cleared of any wrong-doing and goes on to live a happy and bountiful life, I believe that is important to tell stories about all types of practices and the implications of these practices across the learning community. In addition, teachers need to be mindful of the stories we tell as well as the stories we don't tell.

#### *5. Supply teachers with language to talk about digital composition*

The teachers at Hopkins High were aware of the increasing digital components to their classrooms. They were able to point out which teachers were more comfortable with incorporating technology into their teaching. Many of the participants expressed an interest in and a responsibility to teach digital modes of composition. And yet these teachers were sometimes at a loss for how to describe these digital spaces. For instance, some teachers were unsure about the stability and authority of a Wikipedia entry. Other teachers were not certain about how to include references or links for pictures in PowerPoint presentations. Some of these moments were caused by a lack of experience or opportunity. Still others, I would argue, stem from the lack of a working vocabulary to talk about digital composition. The landscape of writing instruction is changing as more composition is either born-digital or is mediated through

the digital. Students are coming into classrooms with more experience with digital texts. Some students are more familiar with online news websites than their traditional print counterparts. These same students might talk about mix-tapes or albums without immediately visualizing cassette tapes or vinyl. Students might write thousands of words in a day without picking up a pen. Writing is changing—sometimes dramatically, often more subtly. The ways in which we talk about writing needs to be able to keep up with these changes. The language of plagiarism likewise needs to adapt to capture the various digital literacies that writers use that can fall under inappropriate textual use.

#### *6. Ask students about experiences with plagiarism*

One of the powerful moments for me in my time with the teachers of Hopkins High came when Samantha had her “Ahh” moment (see Chapter Five). Through our conversation, Samantha began to rethink her approach to teaching source use in digital spaces. I would argue that the same value that I saw in having teachers pause to think about their experiences with plagiarism can be applied toward students. By having students explore their own experiences with plagiarism, teachers can help students discover where their muddiest points are. Much like literacy narratives, students could capitalize on the notion of plagiarism as a literacy practice and compose forms of their own “plagiarism narratives.” Rather than casting this narrative as a moment of confession or as a place to show how the student has finally learned right from wrong, these narratives can explore the nuance and messiness of where writers get their inspiration and ideas. These narratives could allow students to address their own “Ahh” moments.

#### FURTHER RESEARCH

The direction for my future research falls into four major domains: (1) investigating teacher talk about plagiarism in other settings, (2) exploring students’ talk about plagiarism, (3) testing the effectiveness of these recommendations in the field, and (4) creating professional development programs to disseminate these findings. These three arms are interrelated and the work from one project will inform the other three.

As I have noted throughout this project, Hopkins High is an unusual school in which the conversations about plagiarism were common, invested, and rich. Further studies of teachers’

talk about plagiarism in other types of schools would yield interesting results. By repeating this study in other high schools in different locations and with different demographics, we could begin to expand the various dilemmas that teachers face in dealing with plagiarism. How do teachers talk about plagiarism in schools that do not place a similar emphasis on writing as exists at Hopkins High? What role does the highly-involved parental community of Hopkins High have on the ways in which teachers talk about plagiarism? What role does the teachers' and students' race or socio-economic status have on their talk?

In addition, I am interested in expanding this type of research to the post-secondary level. While I have noticed similar themes in my own experience in dealing with plagiarism at both the high school level and at the college level, a more systematic investigation of how college writing program instructors talk about plagiarism might provide a way to bridge the perceived gap between the two levels and allow for a more unified approach to working with students on appropriate literacy practices. Furthermore, the wide range of types of post-secondary institutions poses interesting questions about how the structure of the school and department influences the ways in which the instructors think about plagiarism. Are there differences between large, public research universities and smaller, liberal arts colleges in terms of the faculties' talk about plagiarism? What effect does the professional status of the instructors have on the ways in which they talk about plagiarism? Do adjunct instructors and tenured, full-professors have similar dilemmas about authorship, ownership, and community? How does the perceived role of the writing courses influence instructors' talk about plagiarism? Do teachers of required writing courses describe plagiarism in different ways than teachers who work in elective courses?

This study has focused on teachers' talk about plagiarism. An extension of this line of research would be to investigate students' talk about plagiarism. Again, an exploration of a wide range of students from different backgrounds and in different learning environments could help to identify where there are misalignments and overlaps with patterns in teachers' talk.

Third, a study to test the effectiveness of the interventions offered in this chapter is called for. It has always been my intention that this project would not only contribute to the scholarly conversation about plagiarism but also offer practicing teachers a way to improve their own instruction about plagiarism and to help their students succeed. To this end, I propose an

examination of the impact of these recommendations on the practice of high school teachers. How best can we tailor these six suggestions to specific school environments?

Finally, I hope to create a professional development program to disseminate the findings of this project and my future work. Plagiarism is not a new concern for writing instructors. For a century, there have been articles in *English Journal* exploring the best practices to eliminate plagiarism. This approach to coming up with better assignments has not prevented students from plagiarizing. Perhaps the approach outlined in this project offers some hope for addressing this issue. By creating a program to help teachers at all levels attend to the ways in which they talk about and understand plagiarism, I aim to give teachers the tools to engage in critical conversations about plagiarism with their students—conversations that can generate meaningful investigations into what it means to be an author, what it means to own a text, and how these practices operate in the many layers of community in our schools.

## APENDIX A: ROUND 1 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(Because I am interested in allowing the participants to direct their talk about their experiences with plagiarism, some questions may change slightly in the context of the interview. However, this protocol includes all of the themes and subjects that I will ask.)

1. Background questions:
  - 1.1. How long have you been a teacher?
  - 1.2. How long have you taught here?
  - 1.3. What courses do you currently teach?
  - 1.4. Where did you go to college?
  - 1.5. Can you recall any specific coursework you've taken or professional development you've had on teaching writing?
    - 1.5.1. If yes, can you tell me about it?
    - 1.5.2. Was there specific discussion of plagiarism?
2. Three Constructs of Writing:
  - 2.1. What does it mean to be an *author*? What about a *writer*? Is there a difference?
  - 2.2. Are your students authors or writers? Why or why not? If so, what do you do to encourage that in the classroom?
  - 2.3. How do you build a sense of community in your classroom? What activities do you use to do this?
  - 2.4. Describe the steps a student would take to complete a typical writing assignment for your class.
    - 2.4.1. What happens with the papers they write after you read them?
    - 2.4.2. What do you do to encourage students to invest themselves in their writing?
    - 2.4.3. What do you do to get students to feel ownership of their papers?
  - 2.5. What are the hardest things to teach students about writing?
3. Plagiarism:
  - 3.1. How would you define plagiarism?
  - 3.2. Tell me about any cases of plagiarism that you have seen here at Hopkins High. (Please give students pseudonyms.)
    - 3.2.1. How did you discover it?
    - 3.2.2. What type of assignment was it?
    - 3.2.3. When in the assignment did you realize that you were dealing with a case of plagiarism? (Early draft? Final version? After you returned the essay?)
    - 3.2.4. How did you react?
    - 3.2.5. What was the student's reaction?
    - 3.2.6. How was it resolved?
  - 3.3. Have there been any cases where you thought it might have been plagiarism, but then you changed your mind later?

**3.4. Final Thoughts:** Is there anything else you want to tell me that you think is important for me to know?

## APPENDIX B: ROUND 2 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCENARIOS AND QUESTIONS

### *Scenarios:*

1. James is a high school senior who is working on his college admissions essay. He solicits advice from a number of his teachers. Each teacher offers suggestions, and some teachers rewrite sentences that are uneven or unclear. James's English teacher shows a particularly relevant quotation that he uses as an epigraph. James accepts all of the revisions and suggestions. He submits the essay to the university. As part of the online submission process, he checks off the statement declaring that the essay "is [his] own work, factually true, and honestly presented, and that these documents will become the property of the institutions to which [he is] applying."
  - 1.1. Is this plagiarism?
  - 1.2. Why do you think it is/isn't plagiarism?
  - 1.3. *Follow up questions:*
    - 1.3.1. Authorship:
      - 1.3.1.1. What choices did he make that define him as an author?
      - 1.3.1.2. Are there any reasons that you wouldn't consider James as the author of the essay?
      - 1.3.1.3. What is the tipping point? That is, at what point would you stop thinking of James as the author of the essay?
      - 1.3.1.4. Does it matter how the feedback from the teacher was given? The teacher rewriting sentences? The teacher suggesting revisions?
    - 1.3.2. Community:
      - 1.3.2.1. Did James violate any implicit or explicit rules for this type of writing in your school?
      - 1.3.2.2. In your own experience, how much help from the teachers would be too much help?
      - 1.3.2.3. Should he acknowledge the help from his teachers in his essay?
    - 1.3.3. Ownership:
      - 1.3.3.1. What is your interpretation of the statement that the essay becomes the property of the institutions to which the student is applying?
      - 1.3.3.2. What are the implications of this statement?
  - 1.4. Final Thoughts: Is there anything else you want to tell me that you think is important for me to know?

2. Anna, a freshman, turns in a paper that Turnitin.com reveals to contain two sentences taken from Wikipedia. Both of these sentences contain information that is considered common knowledge (i.e., “Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy written early in the career of playwright William Shakespeare about two young lovers whose deaths ultimately unite their feuding families” and “Heartbroken, Romeo buys poison from an apothecary and goes to the Capulet crypt.”) The rest of the essay is an analysis of Peter’s language in Act 4, scene 5.
  - 2.1. Is this plagiarism?
  - 2.2. Why do you think it is/isn’t plagiarism?
  - 2.3. *Follow up questions:*
    - 2.3.1. Authorship:
      - 2.3.1.1. Does the inclusion of the two copied sentences change how you think of the student as an author?
      - 2.3.1.2. Is the essay no longer the student’s original work?
      - 2.3.1.3. Do you see this as something the student did wrong or something that is a developmental step for the writer?
    - 2.3.2. Community:
      - 2.3.2.1. If this student were in your class, would you see this essay as a violation of trust?
      - 2.3.2.2. How would you deal with this if Anna were your student?
    - 2.3.3. Ownership:
      - 2.3.3.1. How should the student cite or acknowledge these two sentences?
      - 2.3.3.2. Does the fact that Wikipedia is collaboratively written by virtually anonymous contributors change the way you think about whether the text is common knowledge?
  - 2.4. Final Thoughts: Is there anything else you want to tell me that you think is important for me to know?

3. For part of a multi-genre project on The Great Depression, Monica uses Dorothea Lange's photo of the migrant mother from the Library of Congress website (see picture below). This image is part of the public domain and is not protected by copyright laws. The student does not cite nor acknowledge the source of the image or the name of the photographer.



- 3.1. Do you consider this use of the picture plagiarism?
- 3.2. Why or why not?
- 3.3. Is it as serious as plagiarism using printed text?
- 3.4. *Follow up questions:*
- 3.4.1. Authorship:
- 3.4.1.1. Do you think there is a difference between authors of printed text and photographers of documentary images? Can you explain the differences?
- 3.4.1.2. Does the fact that the image is so familiar change the way you think about how a student should acknowledge or cite the image?
- 3.4.2. Ownership:
- 3.4.2.1. Is there a difference between using a photo and using an excerpt of a text (for example, a well-known quote from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*)?
- 3.4.2.2. Would it matter if the image were a copyrighted image, such as a picture of Mickey Mouse?
- 3.4.3. Community:
- 3.4.3.1. Do you ask students to cite or acknowledge images in their work?
- 3.4.3.2. Do you think it is the part of the job of an English teacher to teach students about how to use images in their work in the same way as teachers talk about using texts?
- 3.4.4. Final Thoughts: Is there anything else you want to tell me that you think is important for me to know?

## APPENDIX C: ROUND 3 GROUP SCENARIOS AND QUESTIONS

*Scenarios:*

1. Michael is a sophomore who is working on an essay on *The Odyssey*. He is uncertain about what to write about, and so he does a Google search to look for ideas. He discovers an overview of the epic that quotes Alexander Pope (“...whoever reads the *Odyssey* with an eye to the *Iliad*, expecting to find it of the same character, or of the same sort of spirit, will be grievously deceived”). In his first draft, Michael uses the quote and cites the quotation as from the postscript to the print version of an 1872 edition of Pope’s translation of *The Odyssey*. He does not indicate that he originally discovered the quotation on the website, enotes.com.
  - 1.1. Is this plagiarism?
  - 1.2. Why or why not?
  - 1.3. *Follow up questions*
    - 1.3.1. Authorship
      - 1.3.1.1. Does the fact that this is occurring in the first draft change how you see Michael as a writer?
      - 1.3.1.2. Would it matter if you noticed this on a final draft?
    - 1.3.2. Ownership
      - 1.3.2.1. Would it make a difference if he found the quote on Google Books but cited the print version?
      - 1.3.2.2. Would it matter if Michael had paraphrased the sentence rather than quoted it?
      - 1.3.2.3. Would it matter if Michael had written, “some critics have commented that the *Odyssey* is very different from the *Iliad*”?
    - 1.3.3. Community
      - 1.3.3.1. If you had spent an entire class going over appropriate use of sources, would you take this personally? Why?
      - 1.3.3.2. Do you think other departments in this school would react in a similar manner?
  - 1.4. Final thoughts: Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share?

2. Morgan is writing a research paper. She searches online for an essay that she can use as a template for her own paper. She uses copies the outline of the paper and reads the articles that are referenced in the online paper. Morgan's essay ends up very similar to the online essay in terms of structure and the logic of the argument, although none of the sentences is an exact copy.
  - 2.1. Is this plagiarism?
  - 2.2. Why or why not?
  - 2.3. *Follow up questions:*
    - 2.3.1. Ownership
      - 2.3.1.1. Would it make a difference if Morgan had paid money for the online essay? Why or why not?
      - 2.3.1.2. Would it make a difference if instead of an online essay, Morgan used her older sister's essay?
    - 2.3.2. Authorship
      - 2.3.2.1. Would it make a difference if a special ed teacher provided her with an outline and a list of possible sources?
      - 2.3.2.2. Would it make a difference if Morgan took the opposite stance on the topic than the online paper?
    - 2.3.3. Community
      - 2.3.3.1. If you had discovered this, how would you feel toward Morgan?
      - 2.3.3.2. How would you decide what course of action to take?
      - 2.3.3.3. What factors would you take into consideration?
        - 2.3.3.3.1. Fairness to other students?
        - 2.3.3.3.2. Morgan's history in the class?
        - 2.3.3.3.3. Your teaching and the assignment description?
  - 2.4. Final Thoughts: Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share?

## APPENDIX D: SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

**Steve:** A couple of questions. I guess, I think I told you that I got that email from Samantha saying that, um, that that there was plagiarism in the final portfolios.

**Kate:** A ton.

**Steve:** A ton. Okay.

**Kate:** [Laughter] A ton.

**Steve:** And um, it seemed something worth following up on 'cause it sounded in our earlier conversations that you guys thought that the Turnitin.com sort of controlled a lot of that.

**Kate:** Well, and it does. I mean, there were a few different scenarios. I thought through it really quickly before I called to make sure that I had everything written down that we – I kept notes on it toward the end of the year.

But there was one for me that never went through Turnitin.com. My second-semester creative writing class, we didn't have enough Turnitin accounts. So they were just handing in paper stuff. And I had a kid hand in a whole bunch of song lyrics and represented as her poetry. It was so obvious too. She was not a strong student or a strong writer. And there were these like, you know, sort of typical garbagy teenage poems, and then I flipped the page, and it was this rhythmically perfect rhyme scheme, flawless, like long pieces that all I did was Google the first line, and I came up with the fact that five of her poems were just blatantly cut and paste on lyrics.

The problem with this is if she failed that final, her grades were low enough that she wasn't going to graduate. So what happened even more is I was getting hauled into administration, and they were saying well, listen, it's your decision. If you want to keep her from graduating, that's up to you [Laughter].

And I'm like well, how is this up to me, I mean, if we go by policy? And then I was told and you'll love this policy is there as a guideline to help us make decisions. So I was like – I didn't know what that means. So I –

**Steve:** So that means you can be the bad person –

**Kate:** – don't –

**Steve:** – if you want to.

**Kate:** Right. I mean, and, you know, again, this is a kid who has been raised by her grandmother, is not – she can go either way. She might be fine someday, and she might crap out in the first semester of community college and start getting into nothing, but bad. And, you know, I don't know.

And I went back and forth, back and forth and decided, finally, that either way, it's a bad decision. So I erred on the fact that I had her come in with the grandmother, we had a long talk

with [Mr. Johnson], the assistant principal, and basically, you know, hash it all out and told her what the deal was.

And the solution, for lack of a better word, that I came up with was she could redo the entire project, and I would give her an F. If she redid the entire project and she got an F, that would give her an exact 65% average and she could graduate.

**Steve:** [laughter], I'm sorry to laugh but I mean, I know, right, that you –

**Kate:** It's disgusting. The whole thing is ridiculous. But again, you know – and didn't she like cheer and dance as she crossed the stage at graduation? I wanted to tackle her. I thought [laughter] have some freaking humility. You shouldn't even be here. So, you know, I maybe made the wrong decision, but if it had been first semester, she would have had a chance to take over a course.

So I decided to be the big stupid hippy liberal [laughter] and, you know, give her a shot. I probably did the wrong thing. So that was one.

You were around when that girl forged my signature and the grade and everything else, right?

**Steve:** Yes. Yes.

**Kate:** She said that I had graded the poem that she had supposedly handed in, and she forged my handwriting. So that was another one. That wasn't on the final portfolios, but that, again, was in that creative writing class where I hadn't used Turnitin. So the lesson there is if you don't use Turnitin, you're screwed.

The next ones there were two final exam portfolios that were – one of was mine and one was Liz Robertson's where kids copied and pasted huge chunks from Spark Notes and Cliff Notes into their portfolio. One was a sophomore, one was – actually, I think they were both sophomores. A Ten honors kid and a Ten Regents kid. Mine was Regents. Hers was Honors. Also both girls.

These are all – I actually think every single one of these cases was a girl.

**Steve:** Interesting. Why do you – I mean, do you have any thoughts about why that might be?

**Kate:** I feel like – and, you know, we talked about this in the office 'cause we were like whoa! Wait a minute. That's crazy. I feel like there is so much pressure for them to just be perfect. You have to be perfect. You have to get it right.

And if you're not perfect, you better find a way to make it perfect. I think that the girls feel like you have to be pretty, you have to be thin, you have to carry the right handbag, you have to have good grades, whatever it takes, even if it means compromising your principles.

I feel like there's – I think there's the same pressure for boys, but I think it's worse for girls in this town. So both of them, the way it ended up being handled is that because they were portions of the portfolio, they got zero credit for those portions.

So with mine, it was, unfortunately, 60 points of her final. So she ended up getting, I think, something like a 38% on the thing. And mom thought that was totally ridiculous. And I said well, I could give her, you know, a zero for the whole thing, if you'd like, you know. It's a final exam and she cheated.

And so that's when she started, you know, backing down a little, but promised to go to administration and have my head on a platter, and then I never heard anything after that.

And Liz ended up doing the same thing where the kid was given a zero for that portion of the exam, which made the grade low, but both of them ended up passing for the year. It wasn't contingent on whether they would pass for the year or not.

So there were those two. And then there were two more where one – and again, the two copy and paste from SparkNotes and CliffNotes all had gone through Turnitin. And the next two went through Turnitin also, which is how we caught 'em. But one was a girl who borrowed her boyfriend's essay from the previous year that had already been submitted through Turnitin, and it popped up as a match to Thomas's class. It was also – I think it was Liz's also where, you know, it had been submitted through Turnitin last year.

So we had to go through that whole thing where they – I don't think it occurs to them that if it's already been submitted that it can't be used again because it'll pop up.

And the other one was one that was borrowed from a friend over at Northland. It had been submitted through Turnitin over at Northland High School, but I guess they just thought it wouldn't translate over here. I don't know why, but, you know, there you go.

So four of the six were Turnitin issues where the kids just didn't seem to think it would pop up, and it did. And actually, my girl that was a copy and paste from spark notes and cliff notes also found some essay like American Association for, like, English Writing, some weirdo website where she picked up a bunch of stuff, and it came up as the first match on Turnitin.

So, you know, I don't know what the hell they're thinking. We keep telling them, listen, this is how it works. I pop it up on the screen and show them. Like I know for a fact that my two who did it knew exactly what they were getting themselves into. And I guess it's just worth a shot. I don't know. But yeah, six issues.

**Steve:** Wow! That's... crazy.

**Kate:** That's a lot.

**Steve:** That's crazy. I mean, especially when you're thinking that you're going to eliminate a lot of the cut and paste from the Internet or turning in somebody else's essay. You know, you think those cases are going to be gone and –

**Kate:** Yeah. And I guess not, although maybe there used to be a thousand times more. I don't know. Maybe we are eliminating 96% of it and we're just catching the little bits and pieces that people are still being stupid enough to try.

And I guess maybe – you know, we don't have any data to show us how bad it was before. So maybe it was worse than we realized. It's possible. I don't know.

**Steve:** Right. And so it sounds like – the one thing that I've been noticing in conversations with the department is how much conversation you guys have amongst each other, you know, with each other about these issues, which, you know, a lot of times I was finding plagiarism would just be individual teachers struggling with the issue, but it seems like you guys talk a lot in the department.

But it sounds like the administration was pretty hands off. Is that accurate?

**Kate:** You know, it's funny because especially with mine that was that like graduation-wavering one, the principal was like listen, whatever you decide, I'll support you. And I do believe that's true. I don't think he was just saying that and like just washing his hands of it and walking away, but it shouldn't be put on me to make decisions about graduation. It just shouldn't be a teacher decision.

And, you know, I went home that day and stormed around my house and kicked everything I could that wasn't a child [laughter] 'cause I felt like a big stupid fraud in front of my whole department because I caved.

You know, we've been toting this big, that's it, you got to stand strong, you got to – and, you know, I'm looking at this kid who's a disadvantaged kid to begin with, and what am I teaching her by not graduating? And at the same time, what am I teaching her by letting her graduate?

So I felt like the biggest scam artist ever where I'm sitting there saying well, this is what you have to do, you have to give 'em a zero, they have to – and then when push came to shove and it's graduation and everybody's staring at you, you know, what are you going to do?

Do you worry about the kid? Do you worry about your reputation? Do you worry about the integrity of the program? So, we're all teachers, and I think we all end up going with like the human solution every time we can, which is probably stupid. But, you know, sitting around talking with everybody about it, we were grading Regents exams when it came up, and everybody's like well, you have to fail her, right? She can't graduate.

And I'm sitting there going well, technically. And, you know, I'm the stupid boss lady [Laughter]. So what I do is, you know, precedent setting. And I don't like it that, you know – it's unfortunately, not as much of an exact science as we would like it to be. Because we're dealing with people. We're not dealing with business proposals and data entry and all kinds of other stuff. We're dealing with little kids.

So I think that's where no matter how many policies and safeguards we have in place, we're still going to run into the human element where we have to sit down and make decisions.

And that's when talking to each other and banging it around the office and trying to figure it out together helps. But, you know, I had to walk back in this room, and everybody's like well, what'd you decide? And I had to say I'm a big wimp and I caved in. The kid's going to graduate.

**Steve:** Yeah. So you had mentioned some of the sort of decision-making process that you went through.

**Kate:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve:** Right. And I'm wondering if it's a lot easier for people who are just looking at the essay to say this is plagiarism, fail the kid, than here's a kid, even if they weren't a great student, but you've been sitting in a classroom with 'em for twenty weeks where it gets a whole lot trickier, right?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Steve:** So that if you just look at the Turnitin report and not the kid, then it's a lot easier, but once you add that kid in there and then the emphasis on graduation and their transcript and where they're going to go to college with that 38 on their final exam in sophomore English.

**Kate:** Right. Yeah, you know, it turns into a whole different deal. And I think with the underclassmen, we're much more likely to say tough crap, lesson learned, you got to deal with it. I mean, even with the freshmen, I think we're a little more likely to give them a second chance. Then once you're a sophomore and a junior, sometimes your lesson is going to have to be a little painful and it's going to cost you something.

But then when we start looking at a kid – and here's the other thing about this one where the graduation was an issue. This was not the first time she had been caught cheating. And, you know, it came to me from another teacher in the social studies department. Listen, I busted her when she was a sophomore, and then – and that came up in the meeting with the assistant principal and the kid and the grandmother and me.

And the kid looked at the assistant principal said I don't even know what you're talking about. Nothing ever happened sophomore year. And it sounds to me like she had gotten it weaseled around enough that grandma never found out.

And so then I'm sitting there going oh, my God. I'm such an idiot because this kid's like laughing up her sleeve. And maybe that's the case. And, you know, I don't know. I don't know what the solution is, but when you're dealing with – all I could think of was this grandmother – here's this 70-year-old woman who's raised this teenager on her own, which I'm sure she didn't bargain for.

Now I'm going to tell her this kid isn't going to graduate? And that's – you know, you start thinking of the whole big picture with the family and the whole thing, and it's like ah, man. I don't know. So that's when it gets sticky.

**Steve:** Yeah. Yeah. And I just – it gets – with, I think, especially the emphasis on getting those kids graduated, right?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Steve:** I mean, not that you've got a lot of kids on the bubble at your school, right? I mean, it's not like in some districts where, you know, you're trying to just get as many through as you can. And it's sort of the expectation, I'm assuming, that you get everybody through.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Steve:** Right?

**Kate:** Unless they drop out or get kicked out, which hardly ever happens either way.

**Steve:** Right. And so if you have somebody who's done the work, maybe not their own work [laughter], but at least has played the game –

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Steve:** – then, you know, there's a tremendous unspoken pressure to do that, right? Because if they don't graduate, all the – you know, all the public discourse about this is that their lives are ruined.

**Kate:** Right. Absolutely ruined. I mean, you know, the reality is she was going to RCC anyway, so she could go to community college over the summer, take the one credit and be rocking out and ready for community college in the fall. It would have been just a painful lesson. It wouldn't have ended her life. Whatever.

But oh, yeah, there's a huge pressure on us to make sure that happens. And, you know, I've got people saying well, we're waiting on your decision before the graduation brochures go to print.

**Steve:** Oh, no. Yeah.

**Kate:** Yeah. Like you've got to make this decision because we're holding the printer right now. Well, Jesus, okay. You know, so it's – yeah, there's – and again, if I had said I can't live with it, she's got to just eat it, she can't graduate, I believe truly that administration would have had my back. And I think grandma would have too.

It was interesting. When the kid walked in, grandma was mad. She was furious 'cause she had the kid. She said Liz, what do you have for Ms. O'Connor, and the kid pushes across the table a five-page short story and a two-page essay on honesty that grandma had made her write the night before as soon as she found out they were having that meeting.

And that's the only thing that made me think okay, maybe I did the right thing because this grandmother is trying so hard to teach this kid, and she looked at me, and she said I'm so grateful to you. Thank you so much for giving her this opportunity to redo things.

You know, so I don't know. We're not teaching the parents, but you know. It's not very clean, unfortunately.

**Steve:** No. Oh, my.

**Kate:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve:** And so looking back, would you do something different?

**Kate:** I don't know. I thought about it way more than I should over the summer, and I don't think I would. I think I'd do the same thing. I was disgusted with her behavior at graduation, and I almost wrote her a little note and said – on her reworked exam that she handed in, I almost wrote, "I hope you appreciate fully and publically the grade you're being given." And I did write something that – she sent me an email, and I said listen, you know, I expect to hear great things from you. I tend to put a positive spin on it.

And said you've been given an opportunity, and I hope you don't blow it. And then, you know, she dances across the stage at graduation with a big whoop, whoop and everything, and I was like, ugh.

But, you know, she's a kid too. So I don't know. I think I'd do the same thing, and I'd probably still be mad at myself about it [Laughter]. That's this job, though.

**Steve:** It really is. It really is. Do you think it's going to change how you introduce the, you know, portfolio or are you going to try to do anything different in your classes?

**Kate:** I think I will – without, obviously, using names, I think I will absolutely cite the issues that came up this year when I introduce Turnitin to my students, especially the freshmen. But

even the – you know, the junior Honors kid and say listen. You don't have options. This is how this is going to – and I'm sure as hell using it for creative writing this year too.

You're locked into this, these are the expectations. And I will say to creative writing, especially my second semester class, last year I had to make this decision. If you put me in the position again of making it, I'm going to make it the other way because I feel sick about how that went. You guys know the deal. You're big kids. So yeah, I think I will do things differently. I think I will – you know, I feel like I had to eat that one, and now I'm going to make sure that it's crystal clear.

I mean, it was clear before, but that I use that as an example to say this isn't going to happen. This is unacceptable. Let's make smart choices. And again, I hate to use it as such a punitive thing because I really – the way we've tried to explain it to the kids over and over, and I'm sure you've heard this from all of us is you need to be proud of your own work. You need to stand up for what you've created, and so you don't want anyone else citing your stuff. And you need to put your name on your work and stand by what you've done.

And that's kind of – it's more of an honor thing than a punishment thing. I think that's kind of how we've tried to explain it to the kids. You should be proud of what you do. Even when you screw up: Good. You made a mistake. Now the next time you've got a document there that you can learn from.

So I think that's how I sort of still plan to start out 'cause I believe that's a lot more constructive with kids, but I will have to make the rest of it kind of clear that bad things happen if you decide to try to buck the system.

**Steve:** Right. Right. Yeah. I mean, you hate to set up some kid to be an example –

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Steve:** – which, you know, doesn't feel good at all.

**Kate:** No. And that's not why – that's not what we do. And so I think that's also why I just feel so gross because we spend our lives trying to defend them and give them the benefit of the doubt. And then when they sort of take advantage of that, and we feel like okay, well, this is another loophole or another mistake, we need to use it somehow so that's constructive, but yeah, you don't want to – I mean, I'd never use the kids name.

And to be honest with you, I don't even think very many people even found out. I think she was really good about keeping her mouth shut about it. And I don't feel as badly about talking about a situation with a kid who graduated. She's gone, isn't going to have to see me in the hallway knowing that I've talked to my classes, you know.

And again, I would never use a name, but this is a small town. But yeah, I think I will, you know, at the beginning of the semester with each of the senior classes, especially, say don't put me in that spot. You have to own your own stuff. You're a big kid. You drive cars. You're going to college. Enough is enough.

So I think I will at least try to use it that way in some sort of positive approach. We'll see how that works out, but –

**Steve:** All right. I don't know. Anything else about this situation here the last – over this, you know, month of school that you think I should know about or is important for me to know?

**Kate:** No, I think, you know, that's pretty much what we did the last month is dealing with those portfolios and getting through the Regents exam, which, you know, was a breeze, so that's no problem here. And that was pretty much it.

I think we'll probably – at the beginning of the school year, we have a day that we cover – and I believe it's like September 1<sup>st</sup> or something that's mostly meetings, but no kids are around. And I think at that point, we probably will put our heads together about okay, what are we really going to tell them about Turnitin and the importance?

And, you know, I think we need to make sure we're all giving the exact message. And so I think it's a conversation that we'll have at least at our first department meeting, if not before the kids even roll in just to say listen, you know, this is something we've committed to, this is something – they need to be all getting the same message, and hopefully, you know, we'll have a better year.

And again, it was only the second year we used it, so maybe it's still – so maybe we're still on the learning curve, you know. I hate to think that they're that slow, but it's possible [Laughter]. Usually it takes a generation for that kind of stuff to really kick in. So maybe we'll see more results next year. I don't know. I hope.

But no, nothing else new. That was pretty much it. That kept us on our toes for the last month or so.

**Steve:** Yeah. Well, it sounds like not a fun way to end the semester.

**Kate:** No, it was kind of gross [Laughter].

**Steve:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Kate:** It kind of felt dirty.

**Steve:** Yeah. Yeah. But you're heading out of – not so bad that you have to leave the country. Is that –?

**Kate:** Right. Not so bad. Nobody was hurt.

**Steve:** Okay. But you are leaving the country, aren't you?

**Kate:** I am. My boyfriend's parents have a place in the Bahamas, and we're leaving Thursday, and we go completely off the grid. We have no cell reception. We have nothing down there.

**Steve:** Oh, that sounds wonderful.

**Kate:** It's just sitting still on white sand, and we read books. And our kids – you know, the only benefit of being divorced is the kids can stay with their other parents for a week, and it's like going to other parent camp 'cause we have our kids most of the time, both of us do. So everybody wins. That's kind of a nice little trip.

Now, are you almost done with all your stuff or do you still have a lot more to do?

**Steve:** Oh, well, I've got to take all of the stuff that we've been talking about and turn it into something brilliant.

**Kate:** Oh, good [Laughter].

**Steve:** Yeah. So I think – so the plan is to try to get the dissertation written in the next year and a half, and then get on the job market, you know, this time next year.

**Kate:** Wow!

**Steve:** Yeah. Yeah. Things move slowly in academia.

**Kate:** Well, and they move slowly here too.

**Steve:** Yeah.

**Kate:** The kids move faster than we do, which is probably part of the problem, but that's the way it works, I guess [*Laughter*].

**Steve:** That's right.

**Kate:** Well, good.

**Steve:** But yeah, I mean, things are moving along.

[*End of Audio*]

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