

Overview of Safe Assignment (SafeAssign)

SafeAssign is text-matching software that is installed as a part of the UTC Online (Blackboard) system. The software is designed to check paper submissions against other submitted papers, the Web and a number of published journals, newspaper and magazine articles (Proquest/ABI Inform).

The SafeAssign tool can be used to educate students on proper citation and attribution. Once a paper has been processed, SafeAssign provides a score in the form of a percentage. This percentage represents the “amount” of the paper that matches existing sources. Because quotes and properly referenced text may be included in this percentage, a thorough review of the paper is encouraged before taking any action. The report also provides a link to the suspected matching source. It is the responsibility of the instructor to interpret the report and determine if plagiarism has occurred. Instructors are encouraged to attend a training session on the application before requiring students to submit to the software application. Instructors are also encouraged to make the SafeAssign option available for students to submit draft versions of their papers before the final papers are submitted.

SafeAssignments may be added to any existing content area within a course. It is important to know that SafeAssignments and the Assignment feature have no connection. They are separate, so it is not possible to make an existing Assignment into a SafeAssignment. You will need to start from the beginning. Like the Assignment feature, SafeAssignments are automatically integrated into the Grade Center.

If you plan on using the Safe Assign feature, you might also consider including a version of one the following statement as a part of your course syllabus.

Sample syllabus statement #1 [PLEASE EDIT specifically for your class]:

All (some/selected) papers and other written assignments in this class must (should) be submitted to UTC Online (Blackboard) text-matching software (SafeAssign) for review and to analyze for originality and intellectual integrity. By submitting your paper online, you agree to have your paper included in the institutional repository of digital papers. If the results of the review indicate academic dishonesty, disciplinary action may be taken against the student as outlined in the UTC Student Handbook.

Sample syllabus statement #2 [PLEASE EDIT specifically for your class]:

The instructor of this class reserves the right to submit papers to the UTC Online (Blackboard) text-matching software (SafeAssign) for review and analysis of originality and intellectual integrity. If the results of the review indicate academic dishonesty, disciplinary action may be taken against the student as outlined in the UTC Student Handbook.

The following types of files can be used with the SafeAssign feature:

- Microsoft Word Docs: .doc .docx
- Rich Text Format: .rtf
- HTML: .htm or .html
- Text: .txt
- Zip Compressed Files: .zip

There are several steps to follow before you can create an assignment using the SafeAssign feature.

FIRST, ADD THE SAFEASSIGN FEATURE

1. Access the Control Panel within your course.
2. Under the Course Options menu, click on Manage Tools.
3. Click on Content Type Availability.
4. Click the box titled SafeAssignment to make it available.
5. Click Submit.
6. Return to the Control Panel.
7. Under the Course Options menu, click on Manage Tools.
8. This time, click Building Block Tool Availability.
9. Click the box titled SafeAssign to make it available.
10. Click Submit, and you have added the SafeAssign feature.

SYNCHRONIZE YOUR COURSE WITH THE SERVER

This step links your course to the SafeAssignment server to allow information sharing.

1. Access the Control Panel within your course.
2. Under the Course Tools menu, click on SafeAssign.
3. Click Synchronize This Course to establish the link.
4. Click OK.

ADD A SAFEASSIGNMENT TO THE COURSE

1. Access the Control Panel within your course.
2. Click on the content area in which you would like to add the SafeAssignment.
3. From the drop down menu next to Select, click on SafeAssignment.
4. Click Go.
5. Enter a Name and the Points Possible for the SafeAssignment.
6. You may enter Instructions, although this is optional.
7. Make sure Yes is selected next to the word Available.
8. You may add Date and Time restrictions, but this is optional.
9. If you click Yes next to Draft, student papers will NOT be added to the institutional database of papers.
10. If you click Yes next to Student Viewable, students will be able to see the report generated by SafeAssignment.
11. If you click Yes next to Urgent Checking, papers will be set to high priority.
12. You may also choose to provide students with an Announcement about the SafeAssignment.
13. Click Submit when you are finished.

ALTERNATIVE SUBMISSION

Papers may be submitted for text matching by the instructor through the Direct Submit feature. Instructor can submit the papers one at a time, or many at a time. If you choose to submit many papers at a time, they must be in a .zip file, and contain no more than 100 papers. Also,

papers with over 5000 phrases or that are more than 10 MB cannot be submitted. Submitting more than 300 papers in one session is not recommended.

TO SUBMIT PAPERS THROUGH DIRECT SUBMIT

1. Access the Control Panel within your course.
2. Click on SafeAssign under the Course Tools heading.
3. A list of folders and papers will appear. This list will include papers already submitted through Direct Submit.
4. Click Submit Papers.
5. You may choose to Submit as Draft, which does not add the paper to the Institutional Search Database.
6. You may also choose to Skip Plagiarism Checking, which only adds the paper to the Institutional Search Database, and does not provide a SafeAssign Originality Report. This may be used to upload previous work to ensure current students are not reusing work.
7. You also have the option to either upload a file with the paper in it, or copy and paste the paper into the Paper Text box. If you wish to submit more than one paper, you will choose to upload a file, and then upload a .zip file.
8. Click Submit when finished.

The Direct Submit folders are viewable to anyone that has the Direct Submit tool in the course.

TO VIEW A STUDENT SUBMISSION IN SAFEASSIGN

1. Access the Control Panel within your course.
2. Click on the SafeAssign button within the Course Tools menu.
3. Locate the specific SafeAssignment you would like to see, and click View.
4. A list of all student submissions should appear.
5. You will also see five columns.
6. The first column is Text. Click here to see the Student's Submission and any comments from the student.
7. The second column is File. Click here to download the Student Submission.
8. The third column is Matching. This column shows a percentage that represents how much of the Student Submission matches other sources.
9. The fourth column is SA Report. Click here to view the full SafeAssignment report.
10. The last column is Clear Attempt. Use this option to remove the submission from the database. For example, this option would be used if the student accidentally submitted the wrong file.

TO GRADE A SAFEASSIGNMENT

1. Access the Control Panel in your course.
2. Click on Grade Center under the Assessment heading.
3. Similar to regular Assignments, SafeAssignments are not automatically graded and a “!” icon will appear, indicating that an action is required by the instructor.
4. Follow regular grading procedures to grade the SafeAssignment.

READING AND UNDERSTANDING SAFEASSIGNMENT REPORTS

SafeAssign Originality reports are divided into three sections: Paper Information, Suspected Sources, and Paper Text. (see sample report attached).

PAPER INFORMATION

This section lists the author, or student that has submitted the paper. The name of the SafeAssignment is listed. It also lists the title of the paper and when it was submitted. This section also shows the percentage of matching that has been found. You may also download the report, email the report, or print the report here.

SUSPECTED SOURCES

This section lists the sources where matched text has been found. You have the option of clicking on the link to be directed to the original source. There is also the highlighting option. If you click on the Magnifying Glass next to a source, the text that matches that source will be highlighted in the student submission that is located in the Paper Text area. By clicking on Highlight All, you will see all matched text highlighted in the Paper Text area.

Another option is to exclude some sources and process the paper again. This may be helpful if one of the sources is a previous work from the same student. In this case, check the box next to the source you would like to exclude, and click the Re-process button. The paper will be re-processed without the checked sources.

PAPER TEXT

This section displays the Student's Submission, with all matched text identified. Clicking a matched block of text will provide the source of the matched text, and a percentage identifying the probability that the text was copied from that source.

General guidelines to consider when looking at the percentage of match are as follows.

- **Scores below 15%** -- These papers typically include some quotes and a few common phrases or blocks of text that match other sources. These papers shouldn't require any further analysis as there is little evidence of possible plagiarism.
- **Scores between 15% - 40%** - These papers include extensive quoted and paraphrased material or they may include plagiarism. These papers should be reviewed by faculty to determine if the matching content is properly attributed.
- **Scores over 40%** - These papers present a high probability that the text was copied from other sources. These papers should definitely be reviewed for plagiarism.

Report Information**Author:** Scrappy Doe**Assignment:** test Safe Assignment**Title:** TestResearchPaper.doc**Submitted:** Sep 03 2008 08:48:51 EDT**Matching:**  39%**Paper ID:** 17020475**Suspected Sources****[1]** <http://bul.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/90/4/301.pdf>**[2]** http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Distance_education**[3]** <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/From+virtual+strangers+to+a+cohesive+online+learning+community%3a+the>.**[4]** <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+new+image%3a+online+communities+to+facilitate+teacher+professional..>**[5]** <http://faculty.washington.edu/stkerr/ETHB04.html>**[6]** <http://jolt.merlot.org/vol4no1/mcelrath0308.htm>**[7]** http://www.childcareexchange.com/eoe/view_issue.php?id=833**Paper Text**

Key Issues in Online Staff Development

EDUC 570

Research Paper

12/09/2006

Key Issues in Online Staff Development and Technology

No Child Left Behind legislation and education reform initiatives that effect schools have forced states and school districts that desire federal funds to examine how they are aligning academic standards, curricula, assessments, and accountability, to ensure they are meeting these standards. Highly qualified teachers are expected to develop and use instructional strategies based on effective products, policies, practices, and programs to teach children. As a result, teachers will need ongoing professional development and all stakeholders will need access to more information than ever before, including district, state, and national standards; individual student performance information; and testing information (Deubel, 2005). In order to understand how to meet these goals and to provide a channel to meet these mandates, an understanding of what constitutes learning and how technology can influence this process of understanding should be established.

Learning is an active, constructive, cognitive and social process, by which the learner strategically manages available cognitive, physical and social resources to create new knowledge by interacting with information in the environment and integrating it with information already stored in memory (Shuell, 1988). Technology, and especially educational technology, infused with proven instructional design implemented in the classroom, offers a medium for facilitating this process.

[1; 92%] Rapid innovations in technology help drive educational reforms that affect how schools are managed. [1; 87%] As society increasingly becomes a technology-rich environment, school leaders are faced with how to support the integration of technology into meaningful learning activities and how to evaluate the use of technology within their schools. [1; 100%] School leaders need to recognize their teachers' needs and support them in effectively using technology in their classrooms (Holland, 2000).

Traditional models of instruction and staff development are no longer most effective and suited for today's educational setting. Many school improvement goals and teaching standards emphasize the delivery of improved instruction including the integration of technology. As districts and state education departments revise their requirements for educator recertification and re-licensing, and set higher expectations for the amount of time and the content educators must include in their continuing education programs, online staff development has the potential to provide greater opportunity for educators to access innovative information in a convenient and timely manner (Killion, 2000).

To aid in the attainment of this goal, educators need access to training and methods that enable teachers to effectively use technology in their daily lives. In order to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of technology integration and teacher training, a comparison between two key aspects of instructional staff development is needed. These areas are:

Distance Learning

Technology and Staff Development

Within these primary areas, there are four sub-areas that will be evaluated to determine the effect instruction and staff development in P-12 schools. These sub-areas are:

Mission

Methodology

Community

Cost / Expense

Distance Learning

Distance learning is not a new concept in continuing education. It has

evolved over the years from satellite, videotape, and broadcast television to

Web-based videostreaming, videoconferencing, simulation, team assignments,

and interaction with peers and experts worldwide. It has the potential to revolutionize

staff development (Killion, 2000).

Mission

The mission of distance learning is to provide opportunity to students without the constraints of the traditional setting. For teachers particularly, technology may revolutionize the way they earn recertification or relicensure credits, obtain advanced degrees, keep current with new developments in teaching and their content areas, and network with their peers. Technology has made learning at a distance a reality and opened doors to dramatic changes in how continuing education and staff development occur for education professionals (Killion, 2000).

Methodology

[2; 64%] *Distance education is a teaching methodology used when the student and teacher are separated by time and place.* The key factor in defining distance learning is geography. Student and teacher must be in different locations to be considered participants in a distance-learning program of instruction. Many distance education and staff development programs are open in nature. An 'open' learning environment is a setting where students choose the time and place where learning is to occur. Not all distance education can be classified as open, due to scheduled participation and required conferencing.

Community

Community and connectedness play a significant role in distance learning. Like any social setting online participants have a need to feel involved. The online environment allows for interaction through asynchronous discussion boards. **[3; 100%]** *When web-based instruction provides a medium for learners to interact with one another and their instructors through features such as a threaded discussion board, learners are more able to build their own knowledge and to share this with others (Liaw & Huang, 2000).* **[3; 100%]** *Instructors who teach in online learning environments have the unique opportunity to enhance the interaction of their students through an online threaded discussion board.* **[3; 90%]** *With effective planning and skillful facilitation techniques, this venue for posting messages can be used as a resource to engage learners in becoming an interactive and cohesive learning community (Waltonen-Moore et al, 2006).*

Cost / Expense

Funding distance learning programs typically comes from two sources: local funds or state / federal grants. Maintaining a distance-learning program is unique. Once the initial investment for networking equipment, software and training is expended and the electronic infrastructure is working, the cost for the delivery of instruction is less than traditional training programs. The cost effectiveness and economic advantage of online education is significant as reported in Bishop's report from the Sloan consortium (Bishop, 2000). The costs of time and travel to participate in online learning experiences can be virtually eliminated. Costs related to access to leading experts and consultants in the field could be minimized through technology (Killion, 2000).

Technology and Staff Development

Professional development often refers to skills required for maintaining a specific or general skill set offered through continuing education. Applied to the dynamic field of educational technology it can be identified as training to remain current with changing technology and practices in the education profession, which is congruent to the concept of lifelong learning and student based goals. School systems seeking to develop and implement a program of technological professional development face many obstacles, but should remained focused on learner

outcomes.

[4; 100%] Research through the North West Regional Educational Laboratory (1998) has found professional development needs to be "intensive and sustained; [4; 100%] it occurs through collaborative planning and implementation; and it engages teachers in opportunities that promote continuous inquiry and improvement that is relevant and appropriate to local site" (Barab, S.A. et. al. via Lock, 2006).

Mission

Technology allows flexibility in content (Killion, 2000). Effective technology staff development programs enable skill acquisition, promote utilization, and have a positive impact on the quality of curriculum for both staff and students. Online staff development can focus on technical skills as well as abstract concepts. It is necessary to have a clear vision and well-researched and designed instructional programs that is student based to achieve the goals of the institution.

Methodology

Establishing a set procedures and policies for staff development that utilizes technology should be based on the inherent advantages of the medium used. Technology allows flexibility and freedom for participants. When combined with established pedagogy this tool can be most effective. One of the advantages of the pedagogy of using an online environment is that an online learning environment is learner centered, knowledge centered, assessment centered, and community centered (Moore & Bourne, 2005). This constructivist idea should be foremost at the center of planning for both faculty and students. The online learning environment is, for the most part, asynchronous. This affords the luxury to participants to learn on their own schedule. In order to be effective, participants should feel ownership in the process. The idea of fostering community can help learners become engaged in the process.

Communities

[4; 94%] Hargraves (2003) claimed, "A strong professional learning community brings together the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers in a school or across schools to promote shared learning and improvement. [4; 94%] A strong professional learning community is a social process for turning information into knowledge" (p.170). [4; 94%] The realization of online learning communities to facilitate teacher professional development is a matter of carefully and deliberately designing dynamic learning environments that foster a learning culture (Lock, 2006). [4; 99%] Schlager, Fusco, and Schank (2002) argued that in fostering a community it is a matter of building capacity through a systemic online educational approach that addresses the educator, the provider, and the larger educational community. [4; 81%] They recommend doing this using a three-part process. This process is:

[4; 62%] Provide incentives for teachers to develop their capacity using a technology and begin to develop a network of colleagues.

[4; 96%] Build the capacity of professional developers to provide professional development experiences that are grounded in research and that transform theory into practice in designing and implementing projects for a community.

[4; 82%] By using a systematic model, educational agencies (eg district or state level) can organize and host online activities. [4; 100%] They could provide a public online forum where teachers can work across disciplines, curricula, schools, and districts.

The implementation of such a model and the benefits from such a plan occur at the grass-root school level. In order to foster these communities a staff development and technology support network at the school, system, and state level is obligated to provide the technological vehicle for access. Participants should have ubiquitous access to collaboration made possible through a technological network.

Cost / Expense

Typically there are two types of costs and expenses associated with establishing an online staff development community: recurring expenses and non-recurring expenses. During the initial implementation phase, items acquired for the establishment of the physical network are considered non-recurring expenses. The following costs of the technology and the staff development piece has the following components:

Non-Recurring

Hardware, such as servers, computers, and audiovisual equipment that enable participant access to collaboration

Contracted network set-up fees (if not able to perform in house)

Training and travel costs associated with initial staff development and facilitators

Recurring

Monthly maintenance costs associated with data transmission (T1, T3, and T100 phone lines)

Videoconferencing fees

Webinar fees

Consumables, such as CD-Rom's and material copies

While some of the costs listed above are absolute, some costs can be considered "in-kind." The net impact of such in-kind services is negligible on school budgets after the initial implementation. Although the initial costs of implementing an online staff development program may be significant, after the non-recurring expenses are incurred, the expense is not as costly as the transmission model. The community nature in an online environment encourages collaboration and knowledge sharing and can eliminate the need to incur the costs associated in sending staff and faculty to conferences or other off-site training seminars. In addition, more faculty members are able to participate in an online setting than are able to attend traditional workshops, due to reductions in time and cost associated with an online collaboration.

Conclusion

When analyzing distance learning and online staff development, Jennifer Lock (2006) outlines four critical areas for success:

Reconstruct ideas of online learning by participants. This entails breaking down the idea of putting workshops online and fosters the idea of community in participants.

A structured and flexible dynamic learning environment based on user visions and needs. Designers need to create an environment where teachers have interdependence and inter-influence that will evolve as teachers collaborate with each other.

[4; 63%] Participant enthusiasm, commitment and dedication to the community. This may be difficult to foster in some teachers, but the communal aspect is designed to help address this.

Appropriate selection of digital technology for user skill and comfort level. When users feel like what they are participating in is relevant, appropriate and manageable, they are more likely to willingly become involved. Although reluctance and fear due to lack of understanding may initially impact initial participation, the community and positive experiences by peers can help gain the trust of individuals.

As the world outside the classroom rapidly changes through the integration of technology into students' daily lives, so, too, should the learning inside the classroom. Teachers that are willing to adapt to these changes offer better understanding and more relevant methods to their students. In doing so, they are empowering learners with knowledge of today's world in a context that they can relate to.

[4; 100%] Barab, S.A., Makinster, J. [4; 100%] G., Moore, J. [4; 100%] A., & Cunningham, D. J. (2001). [4; 100%] Designing and building an on-line community: [4; 100%] The struggle to support sociability in the inquiry learning forum. [4; 85%] Educational Technology Research and Development, 49(4), 71-79.

Deubel, Patricia (2005). The Web and Accountability. **[4; 80%]** Learning & Leading with Technology. 32, 30-33.

Shuell, T. (1988). The Role of The Student In Learning From Instruction. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 13, 276-279.

Killion, Joellen (2000). Onlin e Staff Development: Promise or Peril? NASSP Bulletin. 84, 38-46.

[3; 100%] Liaw, S., & Huang, H. (2000). [3; 100%] Enhancing interactivity in web-based instruction: [5; 100%] A review of the literature. [3; 100%] Educational Technology , 40(3), 41-45.

[3; 68%] Waltonen-Moore, Shelley, Stuart, Denise, Newton, Evangeline.

Oswald, Ruth, & Varonis, Evangline (2006). **[3; 92%]** From Virtual Strangers to a Cohesive Online Learning. [4; 87%] Journal of Technology and Teacher Education. 1, 287-311.

Holland, L. (2000). **[1; 100%]** A different divide: [1; 100%] Preparing tech-savvy leaders. [1; 100%] Leadership, 30 (1), 8.

Moore, Janet & Bourne, John (2005). Elements of Quality Online Education Engaging Communities. Sloan-C Series. **[6; 100%]** The Sloan Consortium: [7; 73%] A Consortium of Online Institutions and Organizations Committed to Quality Online Education.. 6, 1-8.

Bishop, Tana (2006). Research Highlights Cost Effectiveness of Online Learning. Sloan-C Series. **[6; 100%]** The Sloan Consortium: [7; 73%] A Consortium of Online Institutions and Organizations Committed to Quality Online Education. 1-3.

[4; 65%] Lock, Jennifer (2006). [4; 100%] A New Image: [4; 68%] Online Communities to Facilitate. Journal of Techn ology and Teacher Education. 14 , 663-678.

Hargraves, A. (2003). **[4; 100%]** *Teaching in the knowledge society: [4; 100%] Education in the age of insecurity*. New York, New York: **[4; 100%]** Teachers College Press.

[4; 100%] Schlager, M.S., Fusco, J. (2004). **[4; 100%]** *Teacher professional development, technology, and communities of practice. [4; 100%]* In S.A. Barab, R. **[4; 100%]** Kling, & J.H. **[4; 100%]** Gray (Eds.), *Designing for virtual communities in the service of learning* (pp. 120-153). Cambridge, UK: **[4; 100%]** Cambridge University Press.

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