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# Redesigning Assignments to Dissuade Plagiarism in a Research Course



# Background Information

- Hired 2017
- Teaching mostly research courses in Library Science
- Library Science (LIBS) is a master's degree
- Three concentrations:
  - School librarianship
  - Public librarianship
  - Academic librarianship

# Final assignment

- ***Assignment:*** Create a research proposal on a library and information science topic
  - Introductory research class, ***Research Literacy*** final assignment is a portfolio requirement as well
  - Proposal:
    - Research question
    - Definitions
    - Literature review
    - Methodology
- Original Requirement:  
5 sources cited

# Problem

- During the second semester (spring 2018) teaching the class noticed an eerily familiar topic for the research proposal:
  - Thematic organization of the school library collection in order to facilitate independent choice of books among elementary school students
  - The next semester (summer 2018): 3 students with the same topic in their proposal

# Help from a Colleague

- Total 8 assignments, 5 of which are completing different components of the research proposal
- Consistent use of Turnitin (with heavy supervision from me)
- New course requirements:
  - At least 7 sources cited
    - At least 1 source must be from a field outside of the LIS literature which responds to the problem researched
    - Journals articles must be no older than 5 years
    - Monographs must be no older than 10 years
- Moratorium on topic of thematic rearrangement of the library collection

# Effects

- Higher quality of work
- No detected plagiarism
- Incorporation of more interdisciplinary sources which make for more varied topics

# Recommendations

- Do not let plagiarism detecting software work alone, revise what has been detected
- Alert students you are requiring them to use of plagiarism detecting software
- Make assignments granular enough to help students to personalize the topic
- Give the benefit of the doubt, but check anyway
- Allow room in the rubric for originality and presentation of the topic

# Questions?

