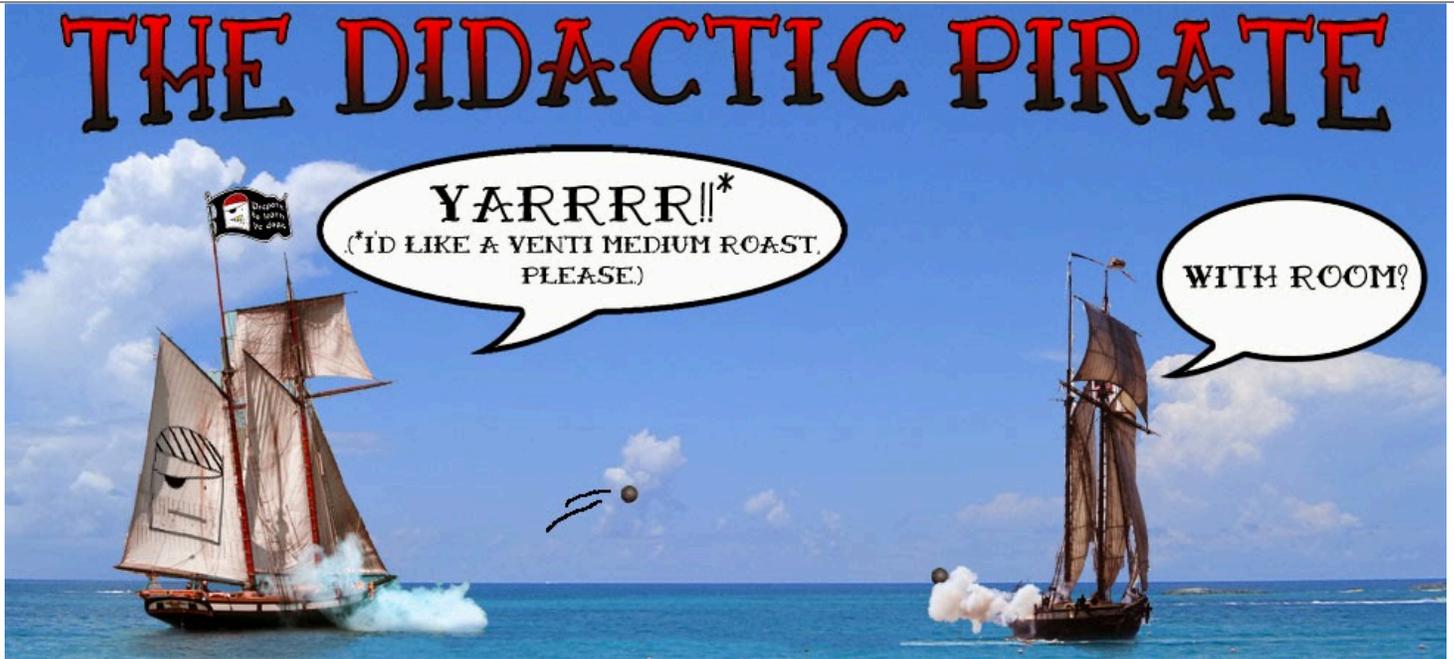


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Friday, February 19, 2010

## The Six Steps of Plagiarism (Thoughts on Cheating, Part Deux)

I posted some thoughts on plagiarism (*J'Accuse!*) a couple months ago. The new semester has hit, I've just collected the first big assignment from my students... and I find myself really really really really needing to share a little more.

Decades ago, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross introduced her theory of the five stages of grieving -- you've heard them. They take you neatly through from Denial to Acceptance, with fun-filled stops along the way (Anger Town, Depressionville, etc.). After serious, big-time research, I've determined that there's a similar process students go through once they've been caught cheating -- but with a few extra steps in there. Some students are able to move through the stages more quickly than others, but I swear you'll see them all if you pay attention. Teachers, back me up.

### The Six Stages of Plagiarism:

#### 1) DENIAL

Teacher: You plagiarized on this paper.

Student: No I didn't.

#### 2) IGNORANCE

Teacher: You cut and copied these paragraphs from an article, pasted them into your own paper, and tried to pass it off as your own work.

Student: Wait a minute -- THAT'S plagiarism???? I had no idea. If I'd know that was plagiarism, I never would've done it. Now I know. Sorry. My bad.

#### 3) BLAME

Teacher: We talked about plagiarism in class. You knew what you were doing.

Student: You forced me to plagiarize by having so many essays in this class. I didn't have time to write it right. This is your fault.

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**4) GUILT**

Teacher: Blaming your teacher really isn't a good idea. This is very serious.

Student: Ok, you're right. I'm really sorry. I feel awful that I did this.

Teacher: We need to talk about the ramifications of what you've done.

Student: I'm really, really sorry. You're totally right. I have no excuse. (Sniffle.) My parents are going to be so mad at me. I totally deserve to fail your class.

Teacher: Yes.

**5) BARGAINING**

Teacher: You now have an F in the class. You'll have to retake it next semester.

Student: Wait. Seriously? Hold on. Is there anything I can do to make this better?

Teacher: No. You cheated, so now we have to deal with the repercussions.

Student: Can I rewrite it?

Teacher: No.

Student: Can I rewrite it for partial credit?

Teacher: No.

Student: Is there any extra credit I can get later?

Teacher: No.

Student: (Long pause) So what are you saying?

**6) ACCEPTANCE**

Teacher: I hope this teaches you never to plagiarize again.

Student: (sullenly) Whatever.

Teachers, check it out next time you bust someone. You know I'm right. P.S. You can go [here](#) for Plagiarism Thoughts, Part One.

Next time: "Eight Creative (and Fun) Ways to Use Emotional Blackmail in the Classroom."

**You might also like:**



J'ACCUSE!!! Some Thoughts on Plagiarism (Part One)



The Mighty Cheating Weasels of UCF



High Maintenance

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## 6 comments:



**Anonymous** February 19, 2010 at 7:12 PM

Brilliant. And I can't stop laughing.  
Caecelia The Sea Witch

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**amoebamike** February 22, 2010 at 10:42 AM

Cheating is so prevelant in our country, it's no wonder students think 1) there's no reason not to cheat, 2) if they get caught they can just redo the work, 3) there will be no consequences.

Granted I may have some academic history I'm not proud of, but my gamble was always in accordance with the risks--I never cheated in college.

[Reply](#)



**Didactic Pirate** February 22, 2010 at 6:28 PM

I'm with you, amoebamike -- I feel like if a student cheats at the college level, it's because when they did it in high school, they got too many second chances. The idea of consequence isn't even rattling around in the brain pan...

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**dr. b.** October 16, 2010 at 7:44 AM

So freaking fitting. Thanks for the link here! I love it.

I'm big on busting the cheaters. Too many people let them off with a warning, only to discover it's their third, fourth, or fifth such "warning" in that department alone!

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**francine** October 29, 2010 at 11:43 PM

i had that conversation once. word for word. truly. thanks!

[Reply](#)



**Beverly** December 1, 2010 at 7:29 PM

I had this conversation just today!!! The student finally stomped out of the room without saying anything when she asked about redoing the work or extra credit and I said no.... thanks for the laugh today- I needed it!

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**Beta Dad**  
That's Not Fair: Teaching Kids to Share

**As Vinny C's It**  
Lacy's Winning Rack.

**think.stew**  
Things that deserve the stink-eye:

**Luke, I Am Your Father**  
Repeat, Repeat, the Sounds of Joy!