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A Phenomenological Exploration of Suburban Public Southwestern Pennsylvania High School Teachers and Digitally Plagiarized Content Received from Their Students

Cheryl Ann Kohler

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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ONLY COVER PAGES AND ABSTRACT ARE AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF SUBURBAN PUBLIC SOUTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND DIGITALLY PLAGIARIZED
CONTENT RECEIVED FROM THEIR STUDENTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Cheryl Ann Kohler

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Communications Media

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Cheryl Ann Kohler

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

6/12/2013

Signature on file

B. Gail Wilson, Ed.D.
Professor of Communications Media, Advisor

6/12/2013

Signature on file

Mark Piwinsky, Ph.D.
Professor of Communications Media

6/12/2013

Signature on file

Nurhaya Muchtar, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Communications Media

ACCEPTED

Signature on file

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.

Dean

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: A Phenomenological Exploration of Suburban Public Southwestern Pennsylvania High School Teachers and Digitally Plagiarized Content Received from Their Students

Author: Cheryl Ann Kohler

Dissertation Chair: B. Gail Wilson, Ed.D.

Dissertation Committee Members: Mark Piwinsky, Ph.D.
Nurhaya Muchtar, Ph.D.

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation is to explore the experiences lived by public high school teachers in a Southwestern Pennsylvania suburban area and digital plagiarized content they have received from their students. The study provided real world accounts of teachers and how they have dealt with digital plagiarism in their classrooms and what methods they have used to help combat the issue of digital plagiarism by their students.

The theoretical foundation of constructivism was used for the focus of the research. Qualitative research methods were used for this dissertation. The goal was to capture the lived experiences of the nine teacher-participants who have faced digital plagiarism by students in their classrooms therefore, phenomenology was the method used for this dissertation. This type of inquiry permitted gathering information from the suburban public high school teachers about how they dealt with digital plagiarism from their personal experiences in teaching. The data was collected using a Qualtrics™ initial online survey given to teachers at a suburban public Southwestern Pennsylvania high school who teach in the school's core subject areas (Math, English, Social Studies and Science). Data was collected from document analysis, individual interviews and a focus group. The data was condensed from meaning units into themes during the process of analyzing the data. To establish trustworthiness, researcher bias was identified, thick description was used, and member checks were conducted. The study was influenced by

the researcher's background as a teacher at a suburban public high school in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

The themes that emerged from this study were: what constitutes plagiarism; the increase of technology initiating a rise in plagiarism; the types of plagiarism; reasons why high school students plagiarize; the consequences for students who plagiarize; and preventative and policing strategies. These themes were collected through the analysis of data from interview transcriptions, a focus group, and collected documents. The study explored high school teachers' experiences with digitally plagiarized content received from their students. The findings of this qualitative research study support the literature that was reviewed for this study.