

Success Story: Lake Washington School District, Washington

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Bruce Becker
Lake Washington School District
IT Specialist



WHY IMPLEMENT TURNITIN?

“It became clear that using a service like Turnitin was not about ‘playing gotcha,’” says IT Specialist Bruce Becker, of Lake Washington School District. “It was about upholding academic honesty, rewarding those who do their own work, and encouraging young writers to find their own voices.”

Benefits

Veteran Teacher Shares His Experiences With the Turnitin Service

Bruce Becker has taught high school English, social studies and humanities for 28 years in the Lake Washington School District in Redmond, Washington. He shares below his experiences with Turnitin, the world’s No. 1 originality checking and plagiarism prevention service from iParadigms.

Becker says his journey with Turnitin began from an unexpected source: “I got a call from my son at college, and it was not about more money. ‘Dad,’ he said, ‘check out this new anti-plagiarism site I have to turn my papers in to, turnitin.com.’ Soon, I began to hear about it from colleagues. My revelation came when my son told me, ‘I’m tired of competing against professional writers.’ He was right. No student should have to compete against material that others cut and paste from the Internet and submit as their own.

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“I lobbied a proposal through my district, got trained and began training my colleagues. I made many joyful discoveries: a culture of implicit trust in my classrooms, students rededicated to their writing, credible high-stakes writing assessments, and paper grading as it should be — stress-free and focused on the writer’s thoughts and style.

“Turnitin is intuitive, friendly, colorful, and timesaving — a big selling point with my colleagues. I just check my inbox, look at a few Originality Reports, and then do what I am supposed to do: grade papers without being side-tracked by questions of misappropriated prose. Turnitin catches that so easily. In three years I have never had a student push back about being caught. I called one student to my desk and explained that I’d found plagiarism in his assignment. He asked, ‘Where?’ I just spun my display around to show the color-coded report. His response was, ‘Cool!’ It was cool all right: he was busted. Some kids start out thinking they can game the Turnitin system, but this misconception all but disappears as the deterrent effect takes hold.

“Now, we take advantage of all the services offered by iParadigms to complement Turnitin: PeerMark, GradeMark and GradeBook. My colleagues have enthusiastically embraced this 100%-paperless classroom solution (recently dubbed WriteCycle® by iParadigms).

“How does it work? Papers are exchanged electronically and reading groups are conducted outside of precious class time. After building rubrics and clipboards of our most frequently used comments, my colleagues and I started grading papers in half the time! Gone are my chicken-scratch comments (although AP papers still must be hand-marked). Even better, students now arrive from junior high with established Turnitin accounts, habits and expectations. They prefer going paperless and make a smooth transition to high school with their electronic writing portfolios intact.

“As a recent trainee said, ‘This is a fun service that’s easy to use. Why can’t our other tools be more like Turnitin?’”

