

# Success Story: Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

“Everything here is so centered on grade-point average. Students felt peer pressure to cheat even when they didn’t want to. With Turnitin, the pressure is off.”

Ina Artzt, Gifted Chair  
Miami Palmetto Senior High School  
Miami, Florida



## WHY IMPLEMENT TURNITIN?

“We challenge our students to achieve and demonstrate excellence, integrity, and responsibility,” says the mission statement for Miami Palmetto Senior High School. Ranked in the top five percent in the nation, the school is culturally and socio-economically diverse. It’s a pressure-packed, ultra-competitive environment where college-bound students are driven to succeed.

“Along with that comes plagiarism,” says AP language arts teacher Ron Talas, “because you have people trying to get any edge they possibly can.”

Ina Artzt, AP literature instructor and Turnitin administrator at Palmetto High, reflects on the introduction of the Originality Checking service: “The Student Honor Council wanted to bring some integrity into the building to prevent plagiarism and cheating. Adopting Turnitin gave us a consistent way to check against cheating.”

The focus at Palmetto High is on preparing students to succeed at college and in their careers. That’s the reason they have become loyal users of Turnitin.



## Benefits

### Helps Teachers Prepare Students for AP Essay Tests

Peggy Falagan, AP art history teacher, faces a challenge shared by many faculty in light of the exploding number of advanced placement offerings in high schools. “I started using Turnitin about three years ago when I found out that the school was offering it through our county-wide subscription,” she says. “It is perfect for me because I prepare my students throughout the year to write essays for advanced placement tests. They have lots of writing assignments that require them to do research online, so it’s very easy to cut and paste. I have to be sure students can think on their feet without copying someone else’s work from a website. It’s easy for students to do that, and this prevents it. Using Turnitin relieves me from constantly wondering if my students’ sophisticated work is really original.”

### Facilitates Writing as a Process and Gives Students Solid College-Prep Skills

Ron Talas is a former journalist who has been using Turnitin for over six years. He now teaches 12th-grade British literature, which involves a lot of research assignments. “I use Turnitin the way it should be used, as part of a writing process,” says Talas. “You have to have a very clear process. I require my students to submit to Turnitin as the first step in that process. What the process allows me to do is to really understand the originality of the work before going further in the revision process. For example, if I have them create a poem, I don’t have the knowledge of every poem ever written. It’s my job to make sure my students have the tools and the skills that they’re going to take with them to college.”

Does Turnitin help students to see the value in original work? “Seventeen- and 18-year-old students look at it differently than adults,” says Talas. “The value as a deterrent comes first, then the appreciation of original work.”

## Impact

“Turnitin has made an enormous impact on our population,” says Artzt. “The great majority of our teachers are using Turnitin – English, psychology, history – any subject area where there is something submitted in writing. We’ve gone from a very computer-savvy group of kids who were getting away with plagiarism for years, to having it cut out of the picture completely. Now students have an out, and it’s Turnitin. It has taken the pressure off of them to comply with peer pressure requests for sharing work and cheating.”