

a Turnitin success story

“Turnitin saves time and ensures integrity. It’s an essential teaching tool.”

Kenneth Johnson, PhD
Florida International University, Miami
Vice Provost of Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of English



WHY IMPLEMENT TURNITIN?

“We needed to do something to minimize academic misconduct, specifically plagiarism,” Johnson explains. After training staff and putting Turnitin in place, the vice provost and many of the faculty have found a useful teaching and learning tool and effective paperless classroom management. “Nine years later it’s at the point where the faculty really depend on it,” he says. Today, over 1,000 instructors use the service and more than 74,000 students have submitted papers.

Benefits

Helps teach students to do original work & use sources properly

As Vice Provost, Johnson must make sure that students adhere to the university’s code of academic integrity. With Turnitin in place, students recognize the importance of doing original work and have learned the skills for properly citing quotations.

“I’ve found it very useful as an instructional tool — the originality reports are just one part of it,” he explains. Dedicated to teaching his students the importance of proper citation, Johnson puts limits on the amount of verbatim text allowed in their papers. “I don’t want them relying too much on somebody else’s words,” he says. “Pedagogically, it’s helpful to understand how to put the material in their own words instead of quoting a long passage.” Having Turnitin available to show verbatim matches and poor paraphrases gives Johnson, and other professors at FIU, an essential teaching tool.



Convenient & efficient instructional tools for faculty & students

“My students never had an issue submitting papers through Turnitin. They really don’t see it as detection because we use the instructional support aspects so much,” Johnson says. Using the calendar and discussion area, posting assignments, and grading papers through Grademark and GradeBook allows for smooth and efficient online classroom management. “Turnitin provides all the classroom management tools that I need. I now keep my grading records online; it’s a convenient thing.”

Integrated with Blackboard for comprehensive online course management

“The technology is easy to use and manage on our own,” Johnson says and faculty use has grown each year. Many instructors now use Peer Review to organize student response to written assignments and open up student papers to more readership. And faculty who teach fully online courses are successfully integrating Turnitin with Blackboard for comprehensive online course management.

Plus — an unexpected benefit — keeps course on track even when university shuts down!

“One of Florida’s hurricanes shut down the university for two weeks,” he explains. Unable to hold class on campus, the professor and his students were able to connect through the discussion area of Turnitin, which allowed Johnson to not only communicate with his students but to post assignments and keep the course on track.

Impact

Johnson is relieved, especially in this time of budget cuts, that he’s had no difficulty convincing the University to continue using the service. “The administration likes it,” he says, and the number of faculty members who use Turnitin increases every year. “We’re using it to manage our classes and minimize misconduct, and it’s a highly visible university-wide service that shows we take academic integrity seriously.”