A big problem facing universities is how to discipline students who commit plagiarism. An obvious answer is to expel the students but one strong argument against is that university league tables will show that one particular institution has a large drop out rate. If the student is kept in the institution their grades might be cut and again the league tables will show poor results for the university. High ranking in the league tables (top 14 of the 2008 UK University League Table illustrated below), can have a dramatic effect on applicants from local and overseas students and of course can then impact on the university’s income.

A major difficulty in policing plagiarism within a university is that the student may have plagiarised by accident (as does sometime happen) and then a mark deduction effecting the rest of their university career would seem to be unfair.

Many academics have come up with solutions to the plagiarism problem but it appears that the simple strategies are the best. Jude Carroll, an Educational Development Consultant and plagiarism specialist at Oxford Brookes University suggests four ways to combat it.

Firstly, teach the students. Instead of simply telling them about plagiarism and its perils, show them how to paraphrase, quote well and set a few examples for practice. An added bonus would be for the lecturer and the