

## FRAGILE TRUST

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### Presentation Description

After a viewing of Samantha Grant's video: *A Fragile Trust: Plagiarism, Power, and Jayson Blair at the New York Times*, the presenters will discuss how plagiarism and ambition can lead to ethical violations. Attendees will participate in a game that simulates a real-life scenario in order to explore the impact of external pressures on ethical decision making in the school and workplace.

### Presentation Summary

Presenters Dr. Ralph Ferguson, Lora L. Lopez, and Dr. Mary Muriumi, from Texas Tech University discussed how plagiarism and ambition can lead to ethical violations. Attendees viewed several short clips from Samantha Grant's video: *A Fragile Trust: Plagiarism, Power, and Jayson Blair at the New York Times*. Each clip of the film provided a brief insight into the story of Jayson Blair who plagiarized his stories as a reporter for the New York Times. In the film clips, Jayson Blair describes the external pressures that led him down the path of plagiarism, drug use, and self-destruction. Mr. Blair provided insight on how he was able to steal a portion of the same story from different sources which made it seem like his reporting was an original piece. He also describes how he was able to conduct interviews over the phone and asked for specific details about photos, furniture and the outside esthetics of the home. Mr. Blair was able to use this information to write his stories while never leaving his home. Throughout the video, he was able to describe all the practices that he used to manipulate the editors, fellow journalists, and more importantly, the New York Times.

### Decisions on Deadline Description

DECISIONS ON DEADLINE is a fun and fast-paced journalism game where players are journalists running down stories in the fictional town of Southside, USA. Players work against the clock and under a strict budget to report on the daily dramas of this community, and figure out the Who, What, When, When, Where and Why for each edgy and entertaining story. All this while navigating a string of ethical dilemmas similar to the ones all journalists working in the digital age. (<http://www.decisionsondeadline.com/>)

## **Decisions on Deadline**

Attendees were asked to break into groups and come to a group consensus in each scenario. They were given a time limit to work through the stories to earn promotions from Cub Reporter to International Correspondent. Each level allows the participants to make decisions based on their available budget, time limit, actions they could consider, news facts, and contact list. Each of the reporter levels requires input from the group participants. The Decisions on Deadline game provides an opportunity of the groups to make decisions based on their own personal ethical dilemmas.

## **Conclusion**

This is a mock view of what may occur when individuals step-away from best practices. The story about Mr. Blair reminds students, staff, faculty, and other professionals that the consequence of plagiarism or misconduct may be unalterable.