



Do university professors really promote academic integrity?

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Youth are growing up in a technological world where they can use and share, through many social media, information, opinions, images, and videos which do not always belong to them. On the internet, lines are still blurred about what can and what cannot be shared. More than just making information sharing easier, the abundance of information via electronic sources is now “central to our students’ cultural and social experiences” (Park, 2004). This phenomenon can be transferred to classrooms where the temptation to plagiarize for university students is much greater. The easy access to an abundance of information on the web has persuaded more than one student to use someone else’s text, words, ideas as their own. Indeed, many students feel that copying and pasting from the web is not a major infraction or even not an infraction at all, leading to surface learning rather than deep learning. “Academics are in a key position to influence the competencies and attitudes of students and future scholars toward ethics and integrity in research” (Hyytinen & Löfström, 2017), but teaching students to write papers with integrity, showing them how to correctly paraphrase or quote authors and convincing them of the value of doing the work is not an easy task at the university level. Eaton and Edino (2018) explain that there are different methods to teach academic integrity in the disciplines. To whom does this transdisciplinary duty belong? It seems like everyone throws the ball at each other. Many professors do not report plagiarism cases because it is too complicated, sanctions are too severe or they do not know themselves what plagiarism is exactly and how to detect it (Wheeler, 2010). Faculty report that they do not want to play detectives. So, what roles do professors play in teaching academic integrity through skills to their students?

Methodology

This presentation comes from a larger study which aim is to identify which digital scrapbooking strategies are taught in university by faculty members in several disciplines. More specifically, the aim is to determine how professors and instructors teach digital scrapbooking strategies and how they use them to show students how to prevent plagiarism in their writing. A semi-directive qualitative interview protocol was developed by the research team and subsequently approved by the ethic committee. Interview grid was divided in four main sections: information skills, writing skills, document referencing skills and knowledge of plagiarism. For example, we asked faculty members when and where they think students should learn the necessary knowledge to know how to avoid plagiarism. We also questioned them about their role in the promotion of academic integrity. Data collection was conducted between November 2017 and March 2018 with faculty and instructors from various disciplines and from six Quebec universities. Thereby, semi-directed interviews of

approximately 45 minutes were conducted with 49 participants. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Qualitative analyzes were done with the Nvivo software.

Results

Preliminary results show various perceptions of the role professors and instructors play in promoting academic integrity on a continuum from not being involved to playing a very active and collaborative role with the university librarians. Seven roles were observed: 1) The disengaged professor who takes no responsibility for the teaching and training of academic integrity; 2) The delegating professor who takes for granted that the teaching of academic integrity is carried out as part of another course, by other colleagues or learned by students prior to entering university; 3) The referent professor who refers his students to other people or resources; 4) The occasional professor who occasionally teaches about academic integrity, depending on the situation - teaching is not systematic; 5) The passive host professor who invites in his class specialists in the field - but does not take part in this teaching or training ; 6) The collaborative host professor who invites in his class specialists and also takes part in this training by collaborating with the specialist ; and 7) The responsible professor who takes autonomously the responsibility for the teaching of academic integrity. Participants' various perceptions on their role towards teaching academic integrity, and more precisely on how to prevent plagiarism are a first step to specify how professors play out their roles.

Discussion

We can say professors and instructors in this study mostly agree that academic integrity is important, but lines are still blurred on whose role it is to teach academic integrity and especially how and when it should be taught. Our findings corroborating Löffström and colleagues' (2015) research.

Firstly, "research integrity and ethics must be acknowledged in university curricula and course outlines to prevent these topics from becoming incidental in a random selection of courses. In order to assure sufficient coverage and alignment of integrity and research ethics-related content, study programs must be viewed as a whole (Hyytinen & Löffström, 2017, p.38). Indeed, we need to determine which sets of skills can be transferred from one class to another and across the curriculum in a program approach (Löffström, Trotman, Furnari, & Shephard, 2015), skills such as information literacy skills, writing skills and referencing skills.

Second, professors, librarians and other professionals working with students must be trained so they will be able to teach academic integrity with confidence through various skills. When they understand how important those skills are, they will become more than mere transmitters of knowledge, they will become engaged agents of transformation in a web-based cultural world. "Rather than just focusing on the contents of ethical codes of conduct, it is important to discuss the contents in connection with appropriate teaching and assessment methods to help teachers transfer these ideas to their teaching in practice" (Hyytinen & Löffström, 2017, p.38). Finally, the entire educational community also needs to think about what are the best moments for students to begin learning those skills: primary school, high school, college, or university?



Keywords: academic integrity, university professors, teaching, role.

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