

De-emphasising Plagiarism in Academic Writing A Framework for Success

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Abstract

This workshop covers recent advancements in plagiarism assistive technologies and facilitates discussion about managing, learning from, and dealing with the reported rise of plagiarism and re-writing/ghost-writing services. A learner-centred, pedagogical solution for preventing plagiarism in student and academic writing is presented, then discussed. The aim of the workshop is to show how working with plagiarism can benefit learning and change behavior, more than merely providing explicit rules and plagiarism awareness. The integration of plagiarism awareness, online rewriting and plagiarism detection, and explicit instruction and implicit learning into the writing process are discussed. Two years of action research will be presented together with a selection of significant recent advancements in available technology, which either degrade or bolster academic integrity. This research indicates that punitive rules and explicit instruction are inferior to implicit understanding gained through effective/adequate training through production practice. In fact, working with third party information was found to benefit writing skill development and advance knowledge.

Introduction

The primary goal of most educators is to prevent plagiarism by teaching students how to avoid it. Avoidance includes paraphrasing, quoting, summarising, and correct referencing. This approach is reflected in most textbooks, reports, and syllabi, which ‘teach’ the many issues surrounding plagiarism, such as the types of plagiarism, how to avoid it, the consequences of being caught, and how plagiarism degrades the value and validity of educational research. Very little research is dedicated to the issues of instruction and the integration of ‘good’ writing practices into the writing process, practices that both enhance learning while avoiding plagiarism. It seems that punitive rules and threats have remained the only measures that are universally adopted. Most of the research literature, textbooks, and syllabi fail to provide any indication on how students or teachers should be taught, or better still, learn how to avoid plagiarism by changing the way we process and produce written material.

The approach presented in this workshop addresses the plagiarism problem through the integration of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge (TPACK). While these three skill areas are often used in education, only a few know how these skills interact to enhance learning. In fact, the problem with the rise of online rewriting, and academic fraud is an

indication of how technology and knowledge can become a corruptive combination. By implementing covert formative assessment, together with making adjustments to assessment pedagogy, the negative influence that technology has brought into academic writing can be solved. The focus, therefore, needs to be shifted from measuring the final written product to measuring the work and efforts of the individual, that is, their ability to build new knowledge. The attention to pedagogy is crucial to learning for it helps us gain a better understanding of how teaching impacts on students' learning (Loughran & Russell, 1997).

Methodology

Participants in this workshop will first be introduced to a holistic definition of plagiarism. This definition considers plagiarism as using another person's work and passing it off as your own, with the particular intent to achieve a false academic evaluation, financial gain, and/or reputation. Referencing and quoting sources are no longer enough to establish integrity. However, referencing serves to respect the originator, and provide where the information was sourced (uOttawa, 2019).

Workshop participants will be asked to reconsider their past practices and become open to the solutions offered in this workshop:

1. Where do you work and/or where have you worked?
2. What were students required to do to check plagiarism?
3. What do teachers do to verify originality and detect plagiarism?
4. What training is provided for students about ethical writing during the writing process?
5. What is your self-assessment of what you knew about preventing plagiarism at that time?
6. What do you know now?

After this workshop, participants will be asked to reflect again on these questions. The last question is of particular interest, because it will have changed significantly by the end of the workshop.

The second phase of the workshop will introduce recent ethical and less than ethical internet service providers (ISPs), apps, and websites that help not only with rewriting, but are they are effective in streamlining language learning, analysis, metalinguistic understanding, and writing fluency. These text manipulation ISPs have proven useful in providing grammar manipulation tasks, and alternative texts for creating test. However, they are also used to effectively conceal plagiarism. Therefore, a review of originality checking, and referencing ISPs will be discussed briefly to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Reasons behind the differences in originality reports will also be addressed.

Due to this variability, some effective pedagogical approaches will be presented. The first includes a forensic approach to detecting plagiarism through studying referencing inconsistencies. Then, an asynchronous covert approach using Google Docs will be presented. This approach is capable of collecting a wealth of information about learning,

and language manipulation skills. The final approach utilises the collective power inherent in most devices, to covertly collect data about students writing practices, and concealment methods of plagiarism (Vasilopoulos, 2018), and from this study, a framework for the future of academic integrity is offered.

Finally, the ethical considerations of adopting these methods are discussed. These considerations include the implications and ethical responsibilities of educators, publishers, government departments and ministries. This informed discussion will conclude the workshop.

Take away

Participants should leave this workshop with an informed knowledge of plagiarism; why and when it presents, the greatest threat, how it should be viewed within the learning context, the responsibility of technology in the whole scheme of academic integrity, and a firm understanding of where and how our pedagogical choices have helped create the problems. Therefore, the solution, which is offered through changing writing and assessment pedagogy, should be easier to present to our supervisors, schools, and governments. Therefore, in the future, there will be a return to focussing less on the writing and the paraphrasing of previous research, and more on the writer, what they have learned, the quality of what they have to offer (Wiwanitkit, 2011) to the body of knowledge, and the innovation they have developed.

References

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