

TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS: A NARRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW OF UNIFYING ACADEMIC VALUES THROUGH ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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Abstract

Processes of development and application of academic writing skills necessitate the existence of critical and analytical thinking during academic reading and academic writing processes. According to Bloom's taxonomy (1956) the process of shaping our thinking behavior is separated in two main categories: a) lower and b) higher-order thinking skills. These categories are conceptualized in a hierarchical style and the purposes they are utilized for differ. A similar model of classification was developed by Newcomb and Trefz (1987) who classified the four levels of learning as the ones involved in remembering, processing, creating, and evaluating. As Klimova (2013) mentioned, the levels of evaluating and creating are an indispensable part in the development and application of critical and analytical thinking in academic writing classes. Critical thinking skills has been researched extensively for the last three decades with authors like Paul and Binker (1990), Pithers and Soden (2000), and McPeck (2016) analyzing the uses of critical thinking in social or academic settings. This study is a literature review that aimed at understanding ways of unifying values of academic writing through academic integrity.

The empirical data on cheating (Scanlon and Neumann, 2002; Blankenship and Whitley, 2000) has recently become even more alarming, with studies by Khalmetski and Sliwka (2019), Fendler, Yates and Godbey, (2018) and Roberts (2018) that highlight the need of understanding the effects of technological usage in higher education especially in the production of written work. As students are partners in teaching and

learning, there is a growing need to adopt a holistic approach to also address the issue of the use of technology and its correlation with development of academic writing and implication on instances of academic dishonesty among students in universities (Gallant, 2008; Eaton et. al, 2020). Furthermore, it is essential that educators explore ways of helping students master their academic writing skills without compromising on quality, integrity or institutional culture. The role of educators in the process of teaching and learning should have a pro-active nature and be driven by notions of academic integrity and academic values.

Lack of understanding of the utilization of technology in the online platform and the tendency to consider technology more suitable as a cheating tool that offers quick fixes to matters of research, referencing and most importantly academic writing tasks, is damaging for students, educators and the higher education as a whole (Cavaliere, 2020; Abbasi et. al, 2021). Understanding the uses of technology in the online platform to aid plagiarism should be considered as immediate for educators worldwide aiming curbing of the rampant spread of plagiarism in higher education (Akbari, 2021). For instance, technology may be utilized by undergraduate students to copy and paste material from online sources without acknowledging the sources, and in most cases hijacking the thought and taking unjustifiable complete ownership of it (Al-Thwaib, Hammo and Yagi, 2020). Other unlawful use of technology includes the cut and paste phenomenon of literal paraphrasing (Irigaray,

2020), when students change a few words of the original, combine it with other pieces of writing tending to confuse the reader (Ramalho and Silva, 2020). Another very common use of technology by undergraduate students is fake external sources, when students use different sources, mainly newspapers, google sources and Wikipedia and attribute this work to reliable academic sources found in Google scholar or university libraries (Cagé, Hervé and Viaud, 2019). This practice not only damages the image of reliability and validity but it also demolishes students' purpose and desire to learn to write academic papers and improve academic writing skills (Phippen, Bond and Buck, 2021).

There is an array of ways that we could use to exploit the factors that impact the tendency of students to plagiarize while in the online platform (Nwosu and Chukwuere, 2020). According to David and Grosu-Rădulescu (2018), Çolak and Glendinning (2021) and Tauginienė et. al (2019) these ways could include but are not limited to understanding concerns and barriers of undergraduate students with regard to the completion and online submission of academic writing tasks. Another approach of looking into the problem is through the exploration of individual, cultural and gender-based challenges of undergraduate students (Catalena, 2020). Undergraduate students as people and as students are a blend of experiences, beliefs and thoughts. For instance, if prior to joining university students have been accustomed to utilizing technology to copy and paste material giving or not giving credit to the authors but without utilizing paraphrasing and summarizing techniques then their thought needs to evolve

and they should include paraphrasing and summarizing in their academic writing craft (Lancaster, Robins and Fincher, 2019). The acceptance of adaptation has to be internally justified so the thought of applying it in academic writing tasks, aiming the creation of an appropriate sense of fair ownership, is developed progressively amongst undergraduate students (Olivia-Dumitrina, Casanovas and Capdevila, 2019; Çelik and Lancaster, 2021; Perkins, Gezgin and Roe, 2020). Furthermore, although the development of such tendencies is naturally connected with schooling systems and a certain appropriate behavior in a given society (Bašić et. al, 2019), yet it becomes an integral part of students' behavior (Sun and Hu, 2020) and it requires adequate consideration to be amended for the better, in higher education. Another challenge that the higher education faces in the online platform is the adaptation of societal or gender based preconceived ideas with regards to the purpose and value of improving academic writing skills. For instance, while many students are of the opinion that academic writing as a cumulative and complex form of writing, takes time to develop, they at the same time consider it unnecessarily for male students or for students who study natural or exact sciences such as engineering, computer sciences or even nursing (Patak et. al, 2021). While there is nothing further than the truth in such statements, yet they may be a reason for confusion amongst undergraduate students that add into the lack of desire to improve academic writing skills in undergraduate or post-graduate classes in the online platform (Zhao and Sbaffi, 2022; Tran, Marshall and Hogg, 2022).

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