Quality assurance in detecting and preventing plagiarism: A mainstream educative strategy

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Abstract
University plagiarism policies aimed at the assurance of academic integrity provide for increased vigilance and disciplinary procedures to deal with transgressions. Many also issue directives to teaching staff to ensure that students are adequately informed about the meaning of plagiarism and its consequences, and methods of citing within the particular referencing system in use. However, the experience of academic advising has indicated that receiving such information is insufficient for numbers of students who, for a variety of reasons, inadvertently lapse into plagiarism. A simple and not excessively time-consuming strategy is proposed for academics to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn not only what they are required to do, but also how to do it. The strategy involves the induction of students, within the core curriculum, into the language of their discipline. It is suggested that the investment of a small amount of time on this task at the outset has the potential of becoming a powerful quality assurance mechanism, by reducing the incidence of inadvertent plagiarism as well as raising the overall standard of written work for an increasing range of students.

Plagiarism as cheating
• Copying a whole paper from a fellow student
• Presenting a paper - taken from an obscure source - as one's own
• Buying a paper on-line
• Cutting an pasting large sections from internet or hard-copy sources

Detection and prevention
• Increased vigilance & discipline
  ✓ Assessor's knowledge of sources
  ✓ Electronic services (e.g. turnitin.com)

WHAT TO DO
• Give students information
• Provide clear referencing guidelines
• Assessment & formative feedback

EDUCATIVE STRATEGY
takes into account that students with no experience of university
✓ need MORE THAN clarification of rules and practice in referencing
✓ need to be INDUCED into the culture of research and the LANGUAGE for doing it

A student's 'own words'?
• A student's 'own' language is limited to prior experience
• Limited stock of words
• Limited experience of what is appropriate within the genre

All language learning is to some extent borrowing others' words
(Pennycook 1996: 227)

EDUCATIVE STRATEGY
The integration of an academic language focus into the mainstream lectures and tutorials is a powerful quality assurance mechanism to
✓ reduce incidence of inadvertent plagiarism
✓ raise overall standard of academic writing

GENRE ANALYSIS
Using their reading to improve their writing
Learning the language of the genre: For native speakers this is an unconscious process that is time consuming
Educative strategy: fostering a conscious approach to accelerate the process

HOW TO DO IT
1. Analysing the structure
   • Access to authentic examples of the genre: to use as 'models'
   • Examine and label stages in the text
   • Examine and note the language features typically occurring at each stage

2. Identifying 're-usable' language
   Using completely different content, the simply or non-content part of the general statement could be reused.
   During the past ______ years the United States has experienced the integration of ______ into ______ society
   (Weinberg & Baker [1993] Writing Up Research (p.21))

Reference List

During the past ______ years the United States has experienced the integration of ______ into ______ society


During the past ______ years the ______ (e.g. turnitin.com) has experienced the integration of ______ into ______ society


During the past ______ years the ______ has experienced the integration of ______ into ______ society

Reference List