

Teaching about referencing and plagiarism

The following activities provide opportunities for students to bring their reasoning and understandings to the task of learning about the problem of plagiarism and how to reference.

Referencing

Student Quiz

Do you know:

1. How to make a direct quotation and an indirect quotation?
2. How to put references in sentences?
3. Why your lecturers want you to use references?
4. How you can use other people's words and ideas and still show your opinion?
5. Where to get a list of useful referencing terms?
6. What referencing system to use?

Matters of referencing convention can be separated from acts of cheating, and inappropriate copying can be distinguished from dishonesty. This reduces opportunities for student cynicism, and is an opportunity to discuss the ethics and conventions of copying.

Demonstrating examples of citation in academic writing can alert students to the form and language they can use when constructing their own texts.

Cheating

Students know about cheating. Plagiarism, at its most basic, can be understood as a form of cheating, if it is defined as copying without acknowledgement and with intent to deceive. Students can build their

understanding of plagiarism and acknowledgment by discussing universal principles of honesty and giving due credit.

Student discussion points

1. Explain what cheating means.
2. Write down a definition.
3. What ways do you know that people have cheated?

The importance of academic integrity.

Academic integrity is more than avoiding plagiarism. Academic integrity involves being honest and rigorous in the pursuit and expression of knowledge, which is research-based. Academic knowledge and learning is informed by the work and research of others, hence the need for acknowledgment and referencing.

Student tasks

1. Explain the following adjectives used to describe research and learning endeavours:
honest, rigorous, verifiable, reliable, effective, efficacious
2. Define academic integrity.
3. Find the statement in your university/school policy which is about how the institution values integrity. If you can't find a clear statement about how ethical standards are valued for staff and students, write one which makes this clear.

Research based evidence

Academic opinion is not based on personal likes and dislikes, it is supported by research based evidence.

Student tasks

- Define **research based evidence**.
- In a sample text, find examples of evidence and sources.

Plagiarism in the context of academic culture

Students can become aware of the reasons for and conventions of acknowledgment and referencing in academic texts.

Discussion points

1. Academic writing is an important way that people in the academic world demonstrate their work, and there are special ways and rules for presenting this work.
2. The rules about copying are important in academic writing.
3. Using references is a way of acknowledging some one else's work.
4. Referencing exists because there are different perspectives of knowledge.
5. Academic knowledge is a communal project which is not stable and is never completed.
6. The rules about copying, acknowledgment and authorship can change depending on the context. Can you think of learning situations in which copying is rewarded? Can you think of instances when the writer of a text does not need to be acknowledged?

Discipline approaches

- Citation conventions can vary from discipline, subject and genre. Real examples of writing provide models for students to learn from and emulate.
- These models could be used to demonstrate how sources are acknowledged, the use of referencing phrases and what the reader learns from a given citation.
- Students could be directed to find features they could use in their own writing and to ask questions about what they don't understand.

Analysis and critique

The following discussion points allow students in a culturally diverse class to analyse and critique what they already know about copying.

Student tasks

- List some of the rules about copying that you have used in your previous writing
- Compare and contrast these with what you have learnt about the rules for copying in university / Australia
- Discuss, the following student comments
 1. In China, students do not need to use references, because their teacher knows the sources they are using.
 2. In Vietnam if you use too many references it looks like you don't have any ideas of your own.
 3. Copying someone else's findings and pretending that you did the work is bad, but copying their words is not so bad.
 4. It's OK to copy less than seven words, more than that and you need to use quotation marks.
 5. It's dishonest to copy someone else's work without giving acknowledgment.

Textual integration

Integration of texts in writing is a skill which requires practice.

Advice and warnings about plagiarism during orientation may alert students to a potential danger; however, without being mapped to a specific assessment activity, such warnings may not seem relevant.

- Peer reviewing before submission enables students to learn from each other.
- Resubmission of corrected work allows students to apply feedback.
- Early diagnostic activities can reveal whether students know how to use research based evidence and references.
- Text matching software (to enable plagiarism detection) can be used as a teaching tool to demonstrate to students the presence of plagiarised text in their work.