Chapter 9

Are we making our students plagiarize?

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Communities and individuals often differ not so much in their values as in the priorities they set among values. Everyone thinks it is important to do one's job responsibly, everyone thinks it is important to fulfil oneself and everyone thinks it is important to be loyal to one's family members, but some communities and individuals set work above family while others do the opposite, and so on. This applies quite strikingly to the question of how academics, and the academic community, treat what they call plagiarism.

In most writing which is neither creative nor academic, plagiarism is scarcely an issue at all. Broadly, this is because any unfairness in the advantage to be gained by text reuse is agreed by the community to be outweighed by improved speed, precision and efficiency of communication. This is why prohibitions of plagiarism are very often copied from other documents (Pecorari, this volume). They are written in a genre and domain in which plagiarism is not as important as precision. As Sutherland-Smith (2011) puts it, they are "framed in the language of the Law" and naturally adopt its evaluation of copying. In a legal document, alteration of wording may be assumed to imply difference of meaning, so legal or quasi-legal documents naturally repeat others' wording (cf. Devitt, 1991).

Similarly, within a business, text which serves its purpose is naturally reused over and over again (Shaw, 2014; Shaw & Pecorari, 2013), even though actors outside academia sometimes use the term "plagiarism" for the practices which they do not seriously condemn. Murphy (2016, p. 62) compares plagiarism in academic writing with practices in professional life and cites a design lecturer as saying that applying sanctions to plagiarism in the academy is "confusing" because "the real world honours quality content more than it questions plagiarism." The value of "quality content" has priority over that of avoiding plagiarism. When Nonis and Swift (2001) wanted to compare honesty in academia with honesty outside it, they compared plagiarism as a specific academic misdemeanour with pilfering as a business equivalent. They did not see it as meaningful to ask business writers about plagiarism, because it is not a problem that is prioritized in that arena. Of course, patent infringements matter in business arenas, but apparently not verbal plagiarism. Examining the work of tax accountants, Devitt (1991, pp. 348–349) says that "unmarked quotation, what teachers might call 'plagiarism'" is "by far

the most common method” of reproducing content from official publications because “[q]uotation is always more accurate than paraphrase.”

In creative writing the boundary between allusion and plagiarism has been an issue in most literary cultures since their classical periods (for example, Arabic: Ibn Rašiq in von Grunebaum, 1944; Chinese: Lu Ji in Williams, 2010, and Li & Flowerdew, this volume; Latin: McGill, 2012; Sanskrit: Rājaśekhara in Barai, 2014). Today, within-genre appropriation without recognition of the source is treated quite severely (Storr, 2017). But the importance of allusion in this domain means that the conventions are not exactly those that predominate in the modern academy. Allusions may be so extensive and include so much verbatim reproduction that they are called plagiarism. Nevertheless, they may be treated as trivial, particularly if they occur across genres. T.S. Eliot appropriated a whole dialogue from a detective story by Conan Doyle in his verse-play *Murder in the Cathedral*. Smith (1971, p. 52) describes this as plagiarism: “Elsewhere Eliot got his measure by simple plagiarism: the stichomythic exchange between Becket and the Second Tempter came in part from Sir A. Conan Doyle’s tale of Sherlock Holmes ‘The Musgrave Ritual.’” The unreferenced and arguably occluded appropriation can be described as plagiarism, but no serious misconduct is suggested and I propose that this is because even though its title also alludes to the detective story, Eliot’s work is clearly in a different genre. Had another verse-dramatist used a long section of Eliot’s text or another detective-story writer used Conan Doyle’s, the plagiarism would presumably have been treated differently, because the plagiarizing writer would have been using the copied text for the same purpose as the plagiarized, and thus unfairly using others’ work to save themselves time and trouble.

In the field of advertising copy, a similar rather casual accusation of plagiarism occurs when Huron (1989, p. 570) says, “Musical authority can be established most readily through quotation, allusion, or plagiarism. The history of advertising is replete with examples of plagiarism.” Here quotation, allusion and plagiarism seem to be three more or less equivalent ways of achieving the aim, though presumably they are not really presented as morally equivalent. Huron’s example of plagiarism is the repurposing of an old song as an advertising jingle, again a case where the copied text is in a different genre from its source. There is no suggestion that this is anything worse than rather lazily cutting corners, perhaps because the tune is out of copyright.

However, there are fields outside academia in which plagiarism seems to have the meaning and importance it does in our environment. In the various genres of political or occasional speeches and sermons, for example, plagiarism is often discussed and often condemned, as this volume elaborates. Rather strict criteria of originality seem to have been applied for quite a long time. Alongside recent cases involving Joe Biden and Melania Trump one could place Potts’ (2015) citation of a maverick professor who identified in the Wesleyan University’s President’s 1902 inaugural sermon “at least twenty-one phrases, sentences and passages” (p. 6) copied from six sermons in a published volume.

In the field in focus here, undergraduate education, learning has come to be viewed as a process of developing one's own understanding rather than acquiring mental discipline or mastering a fixed body of knowledge. This means that a typical learning task requires students to demonstrate the product of their learning process in the form of an essay or report, rather than in that of memorized content. This in turn means that an essay or report which contains material derived from other sources than the author's learning process is undesirable and plagiarism is therefore much discussed and much condemned. Plagiarism is important in undergraduate education because of the tasks we set and the ideology that makes us value those tasks. In other education systems with other tasks and concepts of learning it might be as irrelevant as in business writing.

In this chapter I would like to investigate the factors that make plagiarism an important issue or otherwise in different circumstances and to provide evidence that we are currently concerned about ~~with~~ student plagiarism because of the forms of assessment and associated educational ideologies we currently use. Different educational ideologies or simply different forms of assessment would make plagiarism unimportant

When did managing plagiarism start to attract attention in student writing?

Plagiarism can be a picturesque detail, as in the cross-genre examples given from T.S. Eliot and Huron (1989), or simply a non-issue, as in the professional worlds examined by Nonis and Swift (2001) or Murphy (2016). So what makes it a serious problem or even a crime? To show how plagiarism as an issue is amplified or diminished by local factors, I would like to examine the somewhat different developments of university writing, and specifically assessment procedures, in UK and US universities in the last 150 years.

First of all, the domain within "academic" writing plays a role. Within the university one can distinguish at least three domains: administration, research, and teaching (including teaching materials and student writing). Consideration of these three shows that the status of plagiarism is different in each, even though there may be agreement that it is not "allowed" in some sense. In administration it is, as in the other professional worlds, simply not an issue: there are no seminars for administrators on plagiarism, no procedures for disciplining plagiarism committed by administrators, and no particular attitude among administrators to the practice in the texts they produce. There are no articles on the management of administrative plagiarism in the *Journal of Academic Ethics*, and no records of unscrupulous administrators disciplined for copying each other's texts.

Among qualified researchers, plagiarism is something to be avoided, well recognized as not only illegitimate but also unacceptable. Where plagiarism occurs in this environment it is unanimously rejected. There are very few members of the researcher community that do not understand plagiarism, do not bother about it, or feel compelled to plagiarize in order to achieve other goals.

In the area of teaching there is a striking difference between teaching materials and student writing (Borg, this volume). What might be plagiarism if it occurred in research writing is just collaboration or sharing when it arises in teaching materials, and it is valued positively. Verbatim reuse of others' teaching material is regarded as requiring permission, but is not dishonest in any other way, and often not referenced. Very interestingly, there are disagreements about who owns teaching material—the institution or the teacher—and these are conflicts about whether the university is like a company which owns its texts and makes them available to all employees, or like a collection of researchers who all own their own texts.

In the current student writing “community,” however, there are research-like rules but there is evidently a substantial proportion of writers who make use of intertextuality practices which are illegitimate. This feature of this “community,” I want to argue, arises from assessment practices. In modern universities in many environments, and certainly in the UK and the US, students have to write theses and term papers and they are assessed on the quality of their output. This assessment is summative (Harlen & James, 1997) in the sense that grades for term papers and theses will affect course and degree grades. Consequently, opportunities for and accusations of illegitimate copying, buying papers from paper mills, etc. arise several times a term over three or four years of study.

It has not always been so. In the first half of the nineteenth century US universities were characterized by predominantly oral means of (summative) assessment as part of a general curriculum. But in the course of its second half there was a shift towards exams and “course theses” within specific disciplines (Russell, 2002; Simmons, 1999). The general curriculum remained but was increasingly biased towards the particular major the student had selected. Term papers became a predominant form of assessment and undergraduate composition courses were introduced to support them. Because at the same time research was being upgraded as a university activity, the papers that counted for grades were those which “mirrored the forms used in research” (Russell, 2002, p. 99). “By the 1920s . . . research papers had become staples of composition courses and specialized handbooks were available that included sections on documentation conventions” (Simmons, 1999, p. 50). This restriction of credit-bearing writing in the disciplines to the “transparent” (Russell, 2002, p. 99) forms familiar to teaching staff from their own research writing meant that there was no analysis or discussion of their rhetoric, only of formal features like referencing conventions, and hence no sense of what students needed to learn, leaving composition courses to appear irrelevant and low-status.

According to Simmons (1999), this was when plagiarism became an issue for teachers of undergraduates. Because the papers were in fact reports of established knowledge, it was possible to achieve a good score by copying. It now became necessary to teach students not to commit this “crime,” by introducing honour codes that reduced plagiarism, and punishing those found to have cheated the system by copying or buying term papers (Bloch, 2012). However, Jamieson

(2015) shows that demands for students to use their “own words” were considerably laxer earlier in the twentieth century than they have now become.

In research writing itself, changes were under way which would lead to the connection of referencing and citation with plagiarism which, as Pecorari notes in this volume, characterizes modern definitions. The rise of the term paper happened to coincide with a shift in the approach to referencing in professional research writing (see Borg, this volume).

To see the way that referencing has changed, we can glance at the 1891 volumes of the US *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (founded 1886) or the British *Economic Journal* (founded 1891) of the period. These were the leading English-language academic economic journals of their time and they were evolving towards disciplinary specialization. As Gunnarsson (1997) shows, the focus at this time was on the real world rather than the disciplinary world. Consequently, most of the articles in the 1891 economics journals had content which would not be classified as academic by modern editors. Comparable material would nowadays appear in serious news periodicals such as the *New York Review of Books* (where the articles report others’ findings) or the *Economist* (where they survey recent events).

Nevertheless, the approach to referencing is the same throughout, even in theoretical articles. Writers usually give credit where it is due but also often presuppose knowledge in their readers, giving detailed references only to highlight the use of less generally known or available sources. One could say that writers referenced on a “need-to-know” basis rather than applying a standard procedure to all intertextuality. No article in either journal in 1891 had a list of references at the end, so the intertextual markers shown in the following examples are what was available to the reader. Backgrounded and taken-for-granted interpretations could be prefaced with “It is well known that . . .” Ricardo, Jevons, Marx, etc. were paraphrased or cited but not referenced, as in “Most modern economists reject the abstract conception of ‘common labour’ suggested, though not consistently adhered to, by Ricardo, and adopted by Marx and other socialist writers, as the starting-point of economic analysis.” (Hobson, 1891, p. 2). Government documents or statistical reports and less well-known writers are referenced in footnotes in unambiguous, if to our eyes incomplete, ways. An extract gives a flavour (Keane, 1891, Figure 9.1). The reader was assumed to be familiar enough with Montesquieu and J.-B. Say to know which works of theirs contain the quoted passages, or to trust the author to have cited correctly. Perry (cited several times in the article) was presumably somewhat more obscure, as a footnote gives the title of his book. Since the author and book title allow the source to be identified in a card catalogue, they represent an adequate reference, and no one thought it necessary to give the elaborate details required by modern conventions.

Actually, reliance on the reader’s expertise can go further than this. In an article introducing a new (German) theory of interest, Smart (1891) contrasts it with three other theories which he summarizes without references or any

Facts all the world over are abundantly proving this to-day. On this point Perry wrote : "The points of contact [between economics and government] we concede: The asserted jurisdiction and control we deny. Self-interest, which is the motive power in exchange, while at a few points it accepts the help., will not at other points tolerate the interference., of government."* This one-sided arrangement in behalf self-interest the nations" of the world are now repudiating. Economic justice has two sides to her balance, and governments have to see that fair play is given to both. Ages ago Aristotle showed that ethics, economics, and politics are cognate branches of social science, distinct, but inseparable, and intimately, acting each upon the others. When J.-B. Say wrote, "The wealth of a nation is absolutely independent of its political organization," he was evidently blinded to reason and facts by the influences of a school. Far more truly did Montesquieu write, "A country is prosperous not by reason of its fertility, but by reason of its liberty." The history of our own country supplies numerous striking illustrations of the intimate connection between ethics, economics, and politics. We need glance at but a few.

-*Political Economy, chap.ii.4

Figure 9.1 *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Oct. 1891), part of p. 35.

citation, possibly because he thinks that readers will know who put them forth, and because he does not wish to name and shame colleagues whose work he sees as superseded. It is tempting to reapply von Grunebaum's characterization (1944) of classical Arabic approaches to literary plagiarism to these less distant writers: "the . . . rules were kept as the unpedantic and somewhat casual manners of the day would permit" (1944, p. 235).

Thus modern referencing conventions for research writing were only developing when plagiarism among writers of student genres was already a problem. Because research within each discipline was the only model used for student writing (despite its different function), as these conventions developed they spread downwards (Russell, 2002). Consequently the intricate systems that emerged for research writing became part of the US term paper culture, and, later, that of undergraduate dissertations, leading, as Borg points out in this volume, to considerable anxiety. The lighter referencing seen in the economics journals of 1891 survives in serious journalism and could have been adopted in student writing. But what Russell calls the transparency (the taken-for-granted quality) of the research conventions obscured the possibility of such a choice.

It was not so everywhere. Term papers as assessment devices had spread from Germany to the US, but "the North Sea is wider than the Atlantic" (Franz-Josef

Söndgerath, personal communication) and one aspect of the British universities' resistance to modernization on Central European models was very late adoption of term papers and undergraduate dissertations as assessment devices. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the old general curriculum covering classics and philosophy became one of many possible courses. By the 1960s students generally studied only one or two subjects. Summative assessment for most undergraduate courses consisted solely of year-end or term-end exams in conditions which precluded copying (Boud, 2014). There were no composition or other support courses, and no element of general education. Students attended lectures in fairly large groups, worked through reading lists, and usually had weekly or fortnightly tutorials in smaller groups, which they prepared for by writing essays or doing exercises such as calculations, translations, etc. "Essays" were therefore written frequently, up to weekly, but they represented writing-for-learning rather than writing for assessment. Even if they were graded rather than merely commented on, they played no role in summative assessment (Boud, 2014).

Most of what was practised in the essays and assessed in the exams was overtly knowledge display or, in most cases, knowledge-transformation. The skill that was learned was adjusting memorized material to the specific question posed. That someone else had thought this first was not a major issue, though originality in the sense that this was one's own unaided work certainly was.

The learning genres at this time were summatively assessed exams administered during a particular week at the end of the term or year and formatively assessed essays expected regularly throughout the course. In both these genres, referencing was more or less ignored. Essays might mention their authorities in the text but no norms were issued or required. I carried out an informal survey of 14 people who took undergraduate courses in the UK at that time and the results suggest neither concern about plagiarism nor instruction in referencing. Only in the natural and social sciences had a "wave of innovation in the 1960s" (Boud, 2014, p. 15) resulted in final-year research projects of some kind, in connection with which students learned some sort of referencing system.

Although "copying" was an issue among British students before the 1970s, this meant copying from one another and was self-policed in an individualistic atmosphere of "fair competition" which reduced all forms of cooperation, licit or illicit (see also Hayes & Introna, 2005). This is in striking contrast to the cooperative and reciprocal approach to copying often adopted in exam cultures in other countries (Hayes & Introna, 2005) and documented in Simmons (1999) for the early twentieth century in the US. Plagiarism was not discussed or warned against because in high-stakes contexts it was impossible, and in the low-stakes context of "essays" it would have been pointless, evidence of incompetence rather than criminal intent. Thus, for British student writing of the 1960s, because there was no benefit, plagiarism was not a central issue. The point is not that it did not happen—cutting corners for lack of time presumably did occur—but that there and then it was not a focus of disciplinary or other attention.

Three issues are of interest here. One is the association of referencing only with research-like writing, rather than with all academic writing as in the more overtly research-oriented US system. Undergraduate essays were unencumbered with footnotes, yet the register aimed at was that of academic writing, so that for undergraduates in this system referencing was not synonymous with academic writing.

The second is that the specific sort of incompetence that would have been revealed by plagiarizing continuous text in a writing-to-learn essay was an inability to summarize in one's own words (*précis*), of which paraphrase seems to me a subskill (for a contrasting view see Jamieson, 2015). But this ability had been specifically taught earlier on in the system. At school there was no explicit concern about plagiarism, and in fact copying material out of textbooks was occasionally used as a learning task. However, both comprehension and composition skills were often assessed by asking pupils to express predetermined content in their own words. Tasks of *précis* involving rewording were assigned throughout secondary school and *précis* formed part of the school-leaving exams at ages 16 and 18. Thus a compulsory question in an English Language O-level paper (for 16 year olds), following a reading passage, was as follows (bold print as in the original):

Make a summary of the whole passage, which contains 351 words, in **not more than 130 words**. Take care to give a continuous connexion of ideas and use your own words as far as possible. **Failure to keep within the limit of 130 words will be penalized.**

(University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1957)

Thus, somewhat paradoxically, although plagiarism was a very minor concern at university level and referencing systems were not widely used, the relatively elite group who struggled through the system at that level were well prepared to avoid verbal plagiarism. At the same time it should be noted that the length requirement in the question above is boosted by bold print while the “own words” requirement is hedged by “as far as possible.” This suggests that, as Jamieson (2015) notes, practices that might now be characterized as patchwriting may have been acceptable earlier.¹

The third issue of interest is that success in exams required skills which are subskills of professional academic writing. Exams are often seen as testing memorization and even rote learning of textbook material and doubtless they often do (Hayes & Introna, 2005). However, the tasks involved in British university-entrance (A-level) and university exams of the 1960s tested not only the skills of memorization and reproduction, but also those of marshalling this knowledge to be relevant to the particular twist the year's question had chosen. There is perhaps an analogy with the Anglo-American debater's ability to argue for whichever side of a question is assigned. The need in the humanities and social sciences to adjust knowledge to the angle required by the question may have given insight

into the constructed nature of knowledge and certainly gave practice in mustering evidence to support an argument.

Thus, even though the ability to manage and write from sources plays a small part in achieving good results in an exam-dominated system, several of the component skills needed in such writing, such as *précis* (including paraphrase) and structuring evidence to make one's point, were practised quite intensively, either at university or earlier.

Nevertheless, the system was doomed. It placed intense pressure on students to do well during the particular week in the year or term when final exams were timetabled and rewarded quick thinking and fluent writing rather than thoughtful development. The idyllic-then-stressful state of things continued until the mid-1970s, when the authorities buckled under pressure from students and introduced increasing amounts of continuous assessment (Boud, 2014). Soon most British institutions had arrived at the global modern state of university studies, where every piece of work counts towards a final grade. This created an environment in which plagiarism, if undetected, would enable students to get better grades. It therefore became necessary to require students to declare their intertextual influences and the whole paraphernalia of referencing and mimicking of research conventions was introduced.

The British university system of the 1960s made plagiarism unimportant, showing that the structure of a domain can determine whether plagiarism is an issue. Educational systems in which plagiarism is irrelevant, and mimicry of research conventions in educational genres is unnecessary, can thus exist, although they are probably less than optimal.

What factors increase or decrease attention to plagiarism in a particular domain of writing ?

Reverting to a wider view of the many domains of writing, one can ask what characteristics of writing contexts make plagiarism an issue. The answers given below are speculative and preliminary. The factors listed should be regarded as each contributing something to the evaluation of originality and plagiarism in the contexts. A sharp distinction is sometimes made here between research and student writing, which is not to deny that graduate theses and dissertations have features of both sorts of writing.

Functionality, and hence standardization, of text. The comments from Murphy (2016) and the evidence of regulations on plagiarism in Pecorari (2001; this volume) suggest that where texts are designed to achieve a specific real-world outcome, effectiveness is important and originality less so. In such cases, the form of words that is perceived as achieving that outcome is valued wherever it comes from. The extreme case is legal or regulatory language, where a change in wording will be assumed to intend some change in outcome (cf. Devitt, 1991). But in general, in business and administrative environments the norm is not to recreate each document afresh in each situation, but to adopt

standardized forms (e.g. Gunnarsson, 2000 on Barclays Bank). The small software firm studied by Shaw (2014) produced documents such as proposals largely by reusing text. Nur Ehsan and Saadiyah (2011) show that although proposals in a Malaysian bank seem to be written from scratch, formal letters make use of centrally produced models.

The more attention there is to reuse of effective text and hence standardization of wording, the less plagiarism can appear to be an issue. Two prominent domains in which texts are not intended to produce specific real-world results are creative writing, and academic writing, and these are among the domains in which accusations of plagiarism are common.

Unit of “ownership.” In academic contexts texts are seen as owned by individuals or named groups, and so it is usual for one individual or named group to be seen as having plagiarized a text that belongs to another. In other contexts the unit of ownership is much larger. All the texts developed by a company or organization are its “property” and can be reused by any member of the company. The chairman’s statements studied by Shaw and Pecorari (2013) frequently used the same text year after year within a company. However, there was little shared text across companies. The unit of “ownership” here was the company. In general it seems as if text standardization and reuse occur within rather than across organizations. Even if companies do not usually accuse one another of plagiarism, they seem to avoid appropriating each other’s language, at least in such public texts.

One can imagine an academic world in which the ownership of text was vested in a class of students or in a university department, just as it can be in a company, but it is not: named individuals are seen as owning academic text, just as creative writers own theirs. In fact, all academic, creative, and public-speaking texts have in common named responsible writers or owners. Even though public speakers may be backed by teams of speech writers (point 4 below), it is the giver of the speech who owns it and may be held responsible for plagiarism.

Size of text bank available for legitimate reuse. Companies, especially large ones, and government agencies, have a large bank of texts whose ownership is collectively vested in the company, not in the individuals who wrote them. These texts or text parts can be reused regularly. A public speech is the property of the giver and can be reused by its owner, and the same seems true of oral academic texts such as conference presentations, in that presenters may give similar papers at different conferences without massive critique. However, reuse of parts of one’s own written research texts may be frowned on and that of whole written research texts is definitely bad practice (Bretag & Mahmud, 2009; Collberg & Kobourov, 2005). Student reuse of a text in two separate assignments to get two separate grades is a definite crime. Therefore, professional writers can draw freely on the bank of texts which belong to their institution and those they have written themselves, while academic writers cannot even draw on their own texts. It is not surprising that plagiarism looms larger in the academic domain.

Collectiveness of writing environment. Above I argued that a company or organization owns a large bank of texts available to all writers within the unit. Here I would like to look at the way in which those texts are produced. It could theoretically be the case that each text in the bank was produced by an individual working alone and that other individuals then made use of them, working alone. But in fact, workplace writing is commonly collective, drawing on the expertise of teams as well as the archive of pre-existing texts. Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré, (1999, p. 34) observe that “the presence of developed networks of distributed cognition may be one of the important criteria differentiating educational from workplace writing.” Chairman’s statements may be signed by the chairman, but no one believes that he (sic) wrote the text by himself. Software proposals are written (on the basis of previous proposals) by one or more technical experts, and then polished and reviewed by sales staff. This distribution of authorship, and the anonymity of the resulting documents, makes plagiarism a less prominent issue. However, in creative writing, in student writing, and in much research writing in the humanities there is relatively little distributed cognition. These fields differ from natural-science research writing and public speaking, where teamwork is the norm.

Representativeness or visibility of text. A text whose major purpose is to enhance the evaluation of its owner has a strong connection with that owner and therefore plagiarism is an issue. One exception to the absence of discussion of plagiarism in business contexts concerns advertising. It appears that both cross-genre illegitimate use of others’ material and within-genre plagiarism of advertisements (Sweney, 2014) are long-standing problems. Shaver (2014) says, for example, that it was just to deal with cases of plagiarism that the self-regulatory bodies for advertising in Sweden were established in the 1930s. Advertising is creative and is a highly visible investment in the company’s image. Such a text is evidently more sensitive to accusations of plagiarism than less creative image investments such as chairman’s statements. But these themselves, as we have seen, avoid appropriation of text across companies. Everyday texts in business are even less visible or expensive and there is little evidence of plagiarism being a consideration in the production of such texts. Thus, texts by which companies may be judged are expected to avoid plagiarism. Students, creative writers, and researchers are judged by their texts, so it is not surprising that they too are expected to avoid it.

It seems that hostility to plagiarism in public speaking is also due to the function of the texts as representative of the speaker. Politicians speak, among other things, in order to get elected, first ladies speak, among other things, to show who they are, and university presidents speak, among other things, to show how learned they are.

Conditions of writing. Nearly all writing takes place in environments where there is some time to think, develop one’s own ideas, and consult other texts. In most of these, time is in short supply and reuse of previous texts offers a practical solution. Student writing is no exception in terms of shortage of time, but it is

an exception in that reuse is not acceptable (cf. Spack, 1997). Exam writing of the type discussed above is a rare case where text reuse is neither acceptable nor practicable.

Referencing conventions. It is notable that elaborate and exhaustive referencing is only expected in research writing and in educational genres that mimic it. Plagiarism is an issue in many domains but this type of referencing is limited to academic discourse. This means that failure to reference one's intertextuality is much more likely to be an issue in the academic domain than in others.

Must student writing have plagiarism-sensitive features?

The seven factors in the section above are interlinked and affect one another, so they do not constitute necessary or sufficient conditions for plagiarism to be discussed in a domain. They serve merely to identify some of the features of writing situations in which plagiarism is or is not an issue. Here I discuss how far student writing must inevitably have the features that promote attention to plagiarism.

Academic writing is not usually characterized by **functionality**. Texts do not have intended direct and concrete results (other than learning and positive or negative evaluation). Engineering students sometimes write their undergraduate dissertations as solutions to a real-world problem within a company. These dissertations could theoretically be evaluated by the success of the solution rather than the quality of the dissertation, meaning that plagiarized text could be ignored, but this would put evaluation of such theses at odds with that of all other student writing. It seems as if lack of real-world consequences is an inherent feature of student writing that cannot be adjusted. It is worth speculating whether standardized text could have a function in academia, but it is not likely to be a large one. (Of course, the declaration that the thesis is one's own unaided work is a standardized text, but its function is legal, not academic.)

The **units of "ownership"** in student writing are rather small. There is a specific policing problem with reuse even of texts one does own, if the document is intended for evaluation rather than to achieve a real-world result. While it is a good idea to reuse a functional text that has successfully achieved a result, it is not acceptable to reuse one that has been graded (however successful) to achieve another grade. Only a change in attitudes to grading and our focus on evaluation of individuals could change this factor.

Students as individuals are not supposed to own a **bank of texts** for reuse, and the creation of larger units of ownership which do have such banks (such as a fraternity or sorority or cheat site) is frowned on. The reason is that student texts have no purpose other than the learning to be gained from constructing them originally and their availability for evaluation. The existence of banks of ready-made effective texts, which is normal in situations with other writing purposes, would subvert these particular purposes.

For the same reasons, student writing is only allowed to be **collective** within the groups assigned for writing the task, usually consisting of one or two individuals though occasionally (in Sweden) up to ten. As Borg (this volume) notes, the world of electronic communication challenges our accepted notions of ownership and cooperation, and research writing has in fact become much more cooperative with the development of research blogs and forums (Mauranen, 2013). Again, as long as our attitudes to grading and evaluation are unchanged, there is little that can be done.

The **representativeness** or visibility of texts is an area in which current models make extreme demands on students. Texts represent students if their quality has a substantial effect on the student, and this is normally mediated by grades. Every text represents the writer in an important forum. At every point plagiarism would be advantageous. If the requirement is just that some text be produced (“reflections” for example) but no grade is assigned, the advantage of plagiarism is just that time is saved and the disadvantage is that a learning opportunity is missed. But if the text is to be graded, successful plagiarism can transform the student’s chances. Thus, whenever grades that count for final scores are used to ensure that students have done writing-to-learn work, plagiarism control is bound to be a problem, because the incentive to get a good grade by copying competes with the incentive to learn by writing. A way to reduce focus on plagiarism would be to reduce the representativeness of texts, by focusing as much as possible on their learning function and reducing the evaluative element.

The **conditions of writing** can be adjusted of course, and that is the purpose of exams under controlled conditions. Outside the exam hall, conditions may not be so susceptible to adjustment. The internet cannot be uninvented and we only wish students would use the library more. A common reason or excuse for plagiarism is time pressure. This can probably not be alleviated much, as doing everything at the last moment is more of a character trait than a product of an environment. Nevertheless, Spack (1997) shows that a conscientious student can be led to plagiarize by extreme time pressure, so that loosening the rigid deadlines found in some systems, or better co-ordination of course requirements, might be advisable.

Finally, relaxing **referencing demands** would not change the incidence of plagiarism and it would make cases harder to fight in university quasi-legal systems. But it might have other benefits, in that it would make educational writing forms less exotic for students and decrease their alienation.

Can writing situations be structured so that we do not make students plagiarize?

It will be clear from the above commentary that the three main reasons why plagiarism is an issue in student writing are: it is possible in graded work because of the type of tasks we set; it is advantageous for students because we set individual summative grades for written work; and it is undesirable because it

short-circuits the learning process. There are a number of domains in which no such conditions apply, and in many of them plagiarism is not an issue. It is an issue, we know, in creative writing, public speaking, and advertising, but in each of these areas a somewhat different constellation of factors is involved. In particular the difference is that in student writing blatant plagiarism often means missing an opportunity to learn by writing; there is no parallel disadvantage in other arenas.

So, yes, we are making our students plagiarize, even though our motivation for doing so may be valid. The 1960s British model outlined above was structured so that the three reasons outlined did not apply. Plagiarism in the exams used for summative evaluation was impossible. Plagiarism in the essays which were only formatively evaluated (if they were evaluated at all) brought little benefit beyond time-saving. Even if students' and teachers' minds were focused on the ultimate grade, formative text-by-text evaluation made the texts opportunities to try things out and make mistakes without repercussions. Students who cut corners by copying knew that they were denying themselves an opportunity to learn and derived no particular benefit, unless they were doing something more useful with their time.

I have tried to argue that plagiaristic practices are of very different significance in different domains because texts have different functions and conditions in those domains. This is obviously one reason why it is difficult for new entrants to the university to appreciate the significance attached to such practices in a new domain, and it also suggests that adjustment of the conditions obtaining in a domain can alter the significance of plagiarism. The concern with plagiarism which characterizes student academic writing environments is a consequence of an educational ideology and a set of practices. How can our understanding of the conditions which make plagiarism an issue affect the ideology or the practices?

The ideology values learner independence and individual responsibility and aims at deep learning rather than memorizing, and these seem values worth the price paid in having to police plagiarism. A return to final exams for all assessment (which has been implemented in the British school-leaving exams called "A-levels") might well impoverish university education.

However, some practices associated with this ideology can actually work against depth of learning and consequently there are ways of reducing the pressure on students to plagiarize. These include formalistic mimicry of research conventions lower down the system and continuous assessment which is nominally formative, but actually summative because it contributes to the overall grade. As for research conventions, teachers or the authorities that impose systems on them might be well advised to consider adopting serious journalism or even popularization as the models for student writing rather than professional research. The purpose is after all in most cases to educate undergraduates, not to prepare them for writing academic articles, and it might be good if they were not encouraged to focus on

difficult and artificial forms, but to use conventions they are likely to meet outside the academy. In terms of assessment, instead of treating everything written as gradable and therefore requiring policing against illegitimate ways of getting advantage, teachers could select a few indexical tasks for summative evaluation and allow students to behave as stupidly as they liked on the rest, merely giving formative feedback such as suggesting that one learns more by not copying. Less intensive grading within continuous assessment would allow plagiaristic practices where students found them useful or necessary, and hand responsibility for learning from writing back to students.

Note

- 1 I still remember the surprise with which, as a twelve year old in 1960, I received a good mark for a précis in which I had, consciously counter to instructions, merely chosen the most important sentences and strung them together. In retrospect, I think the memory also illustrates the halo effect (Jamieson, this volume); my text was coherent and I was known as a good boy who worked hard, so the teacher did not consider the possibility that my coherent text was actually patchwritten.

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