

Plagiarism

The word “plagiarize” means to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one’s own. In short, plagiarize means to use someone else’s work without crediting them. Plagiarism is the act of stealing one’s production, ideas, words, thoughts, etc. and claiming to be their own original work. Plagiarism is considered a serious offense in the Western culture.

The terms “intellectual property” and “academic integrity” are related to plagiarism. Intellectual property is referred to as an original idea or information (usually stated in words and/or numbers) that is treated as the property of its creator. This idea cannot be used by other another writer without citing the source of information. Academic integrity is defined as the moral policies that include avoiding plagiarism and academic honesty. Academic integrity is practiced in all educational institutions in the western culture in the form of honor codes. Academic integrity helps students learn, understand and succeed in their fields of study.

Academic Integrity in Western cultures

The act of academic integrity is accepted with utmost respect in the western culture. In U.S., the expression of ideas is considered an intellectual property and is protected by copyright laws. Hence, one cannot simply use someone else's work and claim it to be their original work. Unlike in non-western countries where they believe that knowledge is achieved by sharing. These countries follow academic integrity but they do not teach the students how to cite one's work. Hence international students face issues in the western culture since they are not familiar with the procedures and policies. They also face problems with academic writing since the way of academic writing is different in western countries.

Why Plagiarism occurs?

According to Esra Eret and Tuba Gokmenoglu (2010) in the article “Plagiarism in higher education: A case study with prospective academicians”, plagiarism is defined as “literary theft” and “academic dishonesty” in the literature. According to Esra Eret and Tuba Gokmenoglu, some of the main reasons for plagiarism among students are lack of knowledge, unaware of plagiarism policies, poor time management and plan of study, etc.

In the article by Robert Harris (2014), “Plagiarism and anti-plagiarism strategies”, he highlights some of the main reasons why plagiarism occurs among students. This could be possible because of reasons like students are unaware of the plagiarism procedures and policies in the western culture, fear of writing abilities, poor time management skills, etc. However, the author states that these issues can be resolved by educating the students about plagiarism and the various procedures and policies of plagiarism followed in the western culture.

Strategies for avoiding Plagiarism in Graduate School

Some of the strategies mentioned by Robert Harris (2014) are:

1. Make assignment clear

The expectations of the assignment must be clear. For example, if the assignment must be an individual effort or group assignment, evidence of paper by giving citations, etc.

2. Require specific components in the paper

The specific components of the paper must be clear like the topics to be portrayed in the paper, etc.

3. Require explanations for the assignments

When the assignments are completed, explanations of the contents of the assignment can be asked to the students.

4. Plagiarism detection software

Several algorithms have been developed in order to detect “plagiarized” data. Hence, we can differentiate between the original data and the plagiarized data.

5. Familiarize students with plagiarism policies

Familiarize the students with all the policies concerning plagiarism of data such that the students would not try to copy or steal someone’s data and present it as their original work.

Resources:

1. Robert Harris (2014). “Plagiarism and anti-plagiarism strategies”
2. Esra Eret & Tuba Gokmenoglu (2010). “Plagiarism in higher education: A case study with prospective academicians”
3. Shih-Chieh Chien (2014). “Cultural Constructions of Plagiarism in Student Writing: Teachers’ Perceptions and Responses”