



Your Words or Mine: The Plagiarism Dilemma for Students

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As a child grows and advances into adulthood, they learn the acts of right and wrong through trial and error and through the guidance of their parents and teachers (spiritually and scholarly). As faculty at BYU-Idaho, teaching about right and wrong continues through integrity in academia. The principles of the gospel are not isolated to just thoughts and deeds on Sunday, but to be seen in all types of actions, words (written or spoken), and thoughts 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

Academic Integrity (AI) is being honest in higher education learning. AI has foundational support through the CES Honor Code policy at BYU-Idaho. The CES Honor Code policy leads in: “We believe in being honest true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men... If there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (13th Article of Faith). At the core of academic honesty at BYU-Idaho is

the “principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” We are taught in Primary to ask ourselves, “What would Jesus do?” before acting. As faculty at a disciple training institution, we can educate students who come to BYU-Idaho to learn and understand how to put words to paper and respect the intellectual property of others by appropriate citation.

“Some may regard the quality of character known as honesty to be a most ordinary subject. But I believe it to be the very essence of the gospel. Without honesty, our lives and the fabric of our society will disintegrate into ugliness and chaos... Those who are living the principle of honesty know that the Lord does bless them. Theirs is the precious right to hold their heads in the sunlight of truth, unashamed before any man” (1990, Gordon B. Hinckley).

Plagiarism

Perry (2010) recommends that the policy, guidelines, and definition of academic integrity and misconduct be left up to universities. BYU-Idaho’s academic integrity policy outlines definitions for five different types of misconduct with plagiarism being at the top of the list. Murry Hunt, an English faculty with BYU-Idaho, provided the Latin basis for the word *plagiarius* “kidnapper, seducer, plunderer, one who kidnaps the child or slave of another” (Online Etymology Dictionary webpage). Stealing another’s words without citation is often associated with the word plagiarism. Gullifer & Tyson (2014) explain that in literature, there is not a consensus for definitions of academic dishonesty, misconduct, and plagiarism but needs to be left up to the individual institutions of higher learning.

TURNITIN (2015) surveyed 879 higher and secondary education instructors, with the majority of respondents from four-year colleges, and identified ten types of plagiarism. Both TURNITIN and Perry (2010) found intentional plagiarism at the top of the list. Perry suggests if there are high levels of unintentional plagiarism then there is a systemic failure.

“Let me now be just as direct and clear as I know how to be. If you leave this university with knowledge and skills and a degree but lacking integrity and honesty, then you have failed. And the sacred tithing

funds from all over the earth that make it possible for you and all students to study here will have been wasted. Conversely, if during your time at BYU-Idaho you make meaningful progress toward becoming a person of integrity and honesty, and having done your very best academically you are considered only



an average student, then you will have nonetheless succeeded magnificently. And you will be well protected against the effects of the latter-day disease of dishonesty and the epidemic of ethical failures” (Elder David A. Bednar, 2002).

Academic Integrity Resources on Campus

In the Department of Nursing, both campus and online students use APA citation guidelines (citation style of the profession) with written papers in all courses as well as with the mandatory nursing research course. In the Winter of 2017, I conducted an informal search of the required citation style in the first two Foundation English courses on campus for all degree-seeking students. Two syllabi randomly selected from both ENG 101 & 301 revealed that the MLA citation style was the requirement used in writing. Also in Winter of 2017, an APA task force comprised of campus and online nursing faculty and JP Sloop of the Writing Center worked to determine what resources could be put together to increase electronic resources for both campus and online nursing students to support a common

place to access APA citation sources. The writing center is an option for campus and online students.

The department’s liaison, Chris Olsen with the library, is a great resource for faculty and students. RefWorks can help a student organize their paper for citations. Students may not know all resources available to learn citations

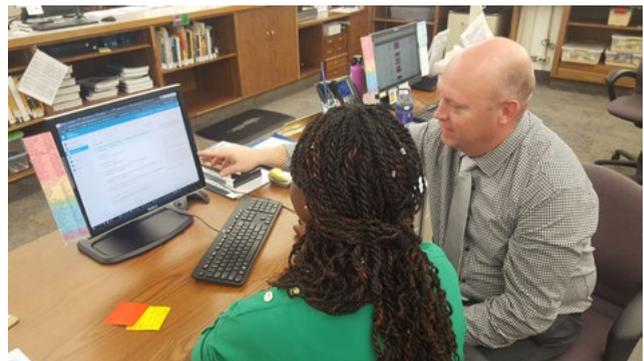
styles. At the end of Spring 2017, APA resource videos were made available for students at <http://www.byui.edu/academic-support-centers/writing/video-lessons-and-handouts>.

The Writing Center videos—plus the free APA style guide to electronic references through the library A-Z database resource and Purdue Owl APA resources—provide faculty a common resource to refer students to for success in learning the APA citation style in writing.

Crawford (2010) provides five points to consider in course material:

- 1 use citations in PowerPoint slides;
- 2 respect intellectual property

and “provide credit where credit is due” (p. 2); 3 include reference citations on copied material distributed in class; 4 Provide web links and/or reference citations on articles, videos, etc., used in class [or in I-Learn]; and 5 ensure pictures used in class materials are copyright-free or permission to use has been obtained. Slattery & Carlson (2013) posit that since the course syllabus is a faculty and course contract with the student, appropriate citations need to be used.



TURNITIN is an integrated program that can be turned on for assignment requirements in I-Learn coursework. This program provides feedback for original work submitted by students by a similarity score of phrases and/or sentences submitted in a database of work submissions. This program does not catch all similarity phrases or sentences that may come from someone else's work, but only compares papers of students against other papers that have been submitted to the system that uses this program.

If attempts to educate a student on infractions of academic misconduct fail, there is now a form faculty can electronically submit to the Honor Code office on campus. It can be found as of Fall 2017 on I-Learn > Course > Help tab dropdown menu to start the documentation process for academic misconduct reporting. It is best to learn the lessons and rewards of writing while going to school. Plagiarism—whether with pictures, words, thoughts, or phrases used without permission, or the use of copyright works or appropriate citation for published writings of others when employed—could have the consequences of losing one's job, financial loss for an employer, or even imprisonment for the guilty party.

Student Success with Citations

Students overall do not usually provide testimony of rewards of learning citation skills with APA, but Spring semester a student provided a story towards professional development. The following is in used with permission:

I have struggled with the discussion board posts in some ways, and have learned a lot from instructor feedback as I

tried to do what was being asked. It was frustrating at times, but I have come to understand that as professionals we need to be able to back up what we say. Everything we say. This is the biggest takeaway for me—how to have a discussion as a professional. At first, I approached the discussion boards as I would have a casual conversation in the break room, but now I see the difference between that type of discussion and a truly professional conversation. My thinking has been changed. I feel that in this way I have grown the most as a professional RN from the group discussions (Personal Communication, Anonymous per request, 7/13/2017).

Conclusion

Obedience to the commandments and covenants of God provide protection from the “fiery darts” of the evil one (Ephesians 6:16). Quotation marks and source citations protect against stealing or kidnapping someone else's “intellectual property” (Wangaard, 2017). Most importantly, the Apostle Paul spoke of the “whole armour of God”...and “the shield of faith” (Ephesians 6:11 & 16). Showing academic integrity and expecting academic integrity behaviors in course work will help our students keep the armor undamaged related to individual agency in writing skills. ❖

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