

Stopping plagiarism through enculturation: A practice-based approach

Arrêter le plagiat par l'enculturation : une approche fondée sur la pratique

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Du plagiat à l'intégrité académique : quelles compétences, quelles stratégies?

From plagiarism to academic integrity: Which skills, which strategies?

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Article abstract

For the past decade or more, instructors in all disciplines and at all levels of education have worried about increased student misconduct and plagiarism. The rise in plagiarism is due, partly, to an evolving ethos among communities of users and providers who share open source media and, partly, to misleading models, such as Internet sources that offer information without crediting authors ((Buchanan & McKay, 2018). There has also been a rise in inadvertent plagiarism as international students arrive at Western universities and face the challenges of developing skills in a new language and of learning how to reference source materials (Howard, 2005; Lei & Hu, 2015; Li & Casanave, 2012; Pecorari, 2003). This paper explores the efficacy of the Academic Literacies Training in English (ALTE) method which the authors designed to help students develop skills in quoting and citing sources while fostering *enculturation*, an anthropological term, meaning welcoming students to become members of the community and embrace academic values (Wang 2008, p. 751). The value the authors seek to promote is that of intellectual property. Familiarizing students with the academic conventions of quoting and citing sources is essential to make them cognizant of the ethical and logical reasons for crediting scholars for their work (Jamieson, 2008; Maddox, 2008). The ALTE method integrates referencing, vocabulary, and grammar into writing instruction, using low-stakes exercises and formal assignments that serve as learning tools (Gibbs, 2010). In this paper, we discuss how the ALTE method, a systematic, practice-based approach in writing and referencing instruction, is an effective means of minimizing inadvertent plagiarism among lower-level university students.

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Abstract

For the past decade or more, instructors in all disciplines and at all levels of education have worried about increased student misconduct and plagiarism. The rise in plagiarism is due, partly, to an evolving ethos among communities of users and providers who share open source media and, partly, to misleading models, such as Internet sources that offer information without crediting authors ((Buchanan & McKay, 2018). There has also been a rise in inadvertent plagiarism as international students arrive at Western universities and face the challenges of developing skills in a new language and of learning how to reference source materials (Howard, 2005; Lei & Hu, 2015; Li & Casanave, 2012; Pecorari, 2003). This paper explores the efficacy of the Academic Literacies Training in English (ALTE) method which the authors designed to help students develop skills in quoting and citing sources while fostering *enculturation*, an anthropological term, meaning welcoming students to become members of the community and embrace academic values (Wang 2008, p. 751). The value the authors seek to promote is that of intellectual property. Familiarizing students with the academic conventions of quoting and citing sources is essential to make them cognizant of the ethical and logical reasons for crediting scholars for their work (Jamieson, 2008; Maddox, 2008). The ALTE method integrates referencing, vocabulary, and grammar into writing instruction, using low-stakes exercises and formal assignments that serve as learning tools (Gibbs, 2010). In this paper, we discuss how the ALTE method, a systematic, practice-based approach in writing and referencing instruction, is an effective means of minimizing inadvertent plagiarism among lower-level university students.

Keywords

Inadvertent plagiarism, academic integrity, academic literacy, enculturation, best practices, acculturation, patchwriting, referencing sources, active learning, student-centered learning.



Résumé

Depuis une dizaine d'années ou plus, les enseignants de toutes les disciplines et de tous les niveaux d'enseignement s'inquiètent de l'augmentation des cas d'inconduite et de plagiat chez les étudiants. La montée du plagiat est due, d'une part, à l'évolution de l'éthique au sein des communautés d'utilisateurs et de fournisseurs qui partagent des médias open source et, d'autre part, à des modèles trompeurs, tels que les sources Internet qui offrent des informations sans citer les auteurs (Buchanan & McKay, 2018). Il y a également eu une recrudescence du plagiat involontaire lorsque des étudiants étrangers arrivent dans des universités occidentales et doivent relever le défi de développer des compétences dans une nouvelle langue en plus d'apprendre à référencer les documents sources (Howard, 2005; Lei & Hu, 2015; Li & Casanave, 2012; Pecorari, 2003). Cet article explore l'efficacité de la méthode ALTE (Academic Literacies Training in English) que les auteurs ont conçue pour aider les étudiants à développer des compétences pour citer et référer leurs sources tout en favorisant l'enculturation, un terme anthropologique qui signifie accueillir les étudiants à devenir membres de la communauté et à adopter des valeurs académiques (Wang 2008, p. 751). Les auteurs cherchent à promouvoir la valeur qu'est la propriété intellectuelle. Il est essentiel de familiariser les étudiants aux conventions académiques de référencement documentaire et de citation des sources afin de leur faire prendre conscience des raisons éthiques et logiques qui justifient que l'on crédite les chercheurs pour leur travail (Jamieson, 2008; Maddox, 2008). La méthode ALTE intègre le référencement documentaire, le vocabulaire et la grammaire dans l'enseignement de l'écriture à l'aide d'exercices à faible enjeu et de travaux sommatifs qui servent d'outils d'apprentissage (Gibbs, 2010). Dans cet article, nous examinons comment la méthode ALTE, une approche systématique et pratique de l'enseignement de l'écrit et du référencement documentaire, est un moyen efficace de réduire le plagiat involontaire chez les étudiants débutants à l'université.

Mots-clés

Plagiat involontaire, intégrité académique, littératie académique, enculturation, meilleures pratiques, acculturation, patchwriting, référencement des sources, apprentissage actif, apprentissage centré sur l'étudiant.

Introduction

Our research explores the efficacy of a systematic, practice-based approach to instruction in writing and referencing source materials as a means of minimizing inadvertent plagiarism among lower-level university students. Our approach, the Academic Literacies Training in English (ALTE) method, promotes *enculturation*, which means welcoming students to the academic community and fostering their adoption of academic values¹ (Jian, Marion, and Wang, 2018; Wang, 2008). Buchanan and McKay (2018) contend that “the best prevention strategy [...] is enculturation of academic standards by mentorship”, quipping: “prevention of plagiarism is better than cure” (p. 46). As this paper seeks to demonstrate, the ALTE method fosters values pertaining to intellectual property. By familiarizing first-year students with the conventions of documentation, that is, the forms of and rationale behind quoting and citing source materials, the method shifts the focus in plagiarism management from detection and punishment to prevention.

1. Academic values, according to the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICIA), are honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage (Fishman, 2013).

As Gallant (2017) argues, a “teaching and learning approach is a positive way forward” to reduce plagiarism “because it employs strategies that are known to enhance learning, while at the same time reduce cheating” (p. 92). The ALTE method is an effective technique to instruct domestic students in ways to quote and cite source materials so they can avoid committing plagiarism, and to enculturate international students who come to Western universities from countries where copyright and intellectual property do not exist.²

The ALTE method integrates the delivery of instruction in writing and referencing source materials in a contextualized way, meaning that the models of quotations and citations are based on course texts. These are provided in a customized course pack and the models based on them in a workbook that offers explanations of their usage and integrates grammar and referencing exercises to reinforce that instruction. Myhill and Watson (2014) observe “an emerging trend to reintroduce grammar in the teaching of English” (p. 42). This trend, they state, values the integration of writing and grammar and presents the idea “that the grammar should be contextualized” (p. 44), rather than be presented as a set of rules, making the rules “more important than [...] a relationship between grammar and meaning” (p. 43). Myhill, Jones, Lines, and Watson (2012) distinguish between writing instructors who “conceptualize grammar as prescriptive, rule-bound and focused on correctness,” and those who offer “a rhetorical view focused on exploration, choice and effects when asked about how it might be useful in supporting students’ writing development” (pp. 49-50). The value of contextualized grammar exercises is supported by research conducted by experts like Myhill et al. (2012) who found “strong evidence for the beneficial effect of contextualised grammar teaching” (p. 48). They reveal that, in comparison to students in the control group who learned grammar out of context and had improved by 12% over the school year, “students who had experienced the embedded grammar teaching improved by about 20%” (p. 49). In 2015, McDonald began to integrate contextualized grammar instruction in the customized workbook (McDonald, 2019) and saw good results in her classes. The ALTE method fostered the development of the writing skills of students studying English as an Additional Language (EAL students) because it encouraged them to take risks and explore new methods of composition. The English-speaking international and domestic students benefitted by learning and employing new grammatical terms to discuss their writing, and the advanced students began to employ “rhetorical grammar” to shape “language and written text, in ways that connect grammar to ‘rhetorical and stylistic effects’” (Paraskevas, 2004, as cited in Myhill & Watson, 2014). Thus, embedded or contextualized grammar assists all students in developing communication and writing skills.

The ALTE method helps students increase their familiarity with course materials and deepen their understanding of important concepts. An additional benefit is that students learn how to use secondary sources to employ special terms and cite them. Novice writers often tend to write in clichés. A typical phrase found in the first paragraphs that students write on White’s “Death of a Pig” is: The farmer began to love his pig like a pet or a child. To help them increase their vocabulary and use accurate word choices, McDonald (2019) provides prescribed sources in the custom course materials booklet and vocabulary lists in a customized workbook. An important term that students learn is *sentience*, from Singer’s “All Animals Are Equal” (p. 42). Students learn to employ the term in their analysis of “Death of a Pig” while quoting and citing Singer (Figure 1).

2. We are cognizant of the cultural bias in our assumption that students, regardless of their home countries, should embrace Western values. As Jian, Marion, and Wang (2018) ask: “Is our ethical culture so superior that others should see it our way?” (p. 67). Thus, the ALTE method teaches conventions rather than prescribing values.

Example 1: A specialized term from a prescribed source:

Peter Singer defines “sentience” as having “the capacity to suffer and/or experience enjoyment” (p. 42).

Example 2: Incorporating that specialized term into the analysis of a primary source:

When the pig becomes ill, White comes to recognize the animal’s capacity for “sentience,” which Peter Singer defines as having “_____” (p. 42).

Figure 1

Sample exercise that asks students to create a direct quote by filling in the blank (from McDonald, 2019).

As the above example suggests, the first exercises on quoting and citing sources are simple and merely require students to locate the correct phrases provided in prescribed sources and fill in the blanks. Requiring EAL students to use prescribed sources at the same time as they develop skills in quoting and citing sources fosters their learning of new vocabulary and engagement in critical thinking. Research into the efficacy of grammar instruction suggests that students benefit little from memorizing vocabulary when they have no time or opportunity to practice using the new words (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). The ALTE method introduces students to vocabulary in its context in the course materials and provides them with numerous opportunities to practice using the vocabulary in their analysis, which increases their comprehension of the words and develops long term memory. For example, when students revise a sentence from passive to active voice (underlined words), they also practice quoting and citing the text.

Singer asserts that animals have “sentience,” which is defined by him as having “the capacity to suffer and/or experience enjoyment” (p. 42).

Singer asserts that animals have “sentience,” which he defines as having “the capacity to suffer and/or experience enjoyment” (p. 42).

Figure 2

Sample exercise that asks students to revise passive voice into active voice (from McDonald, 2019).

Likewise, they practice citing the source in grammar exercises such as one that asks them to create parallel structure in a paraphrase of a phrase taken from E. B. White’s “Death of a Pig”: “quick and skillful” (p. 228).

White assures readers that he butchers his pigs quickly, skillfully, and without pain (p. 228).

White assures readers that he butchers his pigs quickly, skillfully, and painlessly. (p. 228).

Figure 3

Sample exercise that asks students to revise the sentence for parallelism (from McDonald, 2019).

The complementary course pack and workbook comprise the first innovative tool in the ALTE method. The second innovative tool is an inkshed, a ten-minute directed free writing exercise (Sargent & Paraskevas, 2005). Inksheds are initiated with a prompt or question based on a course text so, as students practice writing, they increase their knowledge of that text. Inksheds are closed-book writing exercises; thus, they encourage EAL students to relinquish their dependency on *patchwriting*, which Rebecca Moore Howard (1993) defines as the practice of “copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym substitutes” (p. 233). Evidence of patchwriting is sometimes found in the writing of students in the early stages of English language development. Inksheds encourage EAL students to use their current vocabulary. Moreover, they foster the broadening of

vocabulary for all students by inviting them to practice using terms introduced in course texts. Inkshedding is also an effective means to teach essay components. For example, by rewording inkshed prompts, instructors can model leading statements. They can also use inksheds as drafts upon which students can build to practice quoting and citing sources. Peter Elbow (2000) provides a way of responding quickly to inksheds and other low-stakes writing exercises using nonverbal pointers, that is, straight lines to praise students for good ideas and well written phrases, and wiggly lines to alert students to errors in their analysis and/or articulation.

The third learning tool of the ALTE method is a series of formal assignments. Following the work of John C. Bean (2011) and Graham Gibbs (2010), these assignments serve more as formative exercises than assessment tools. To facilitate their development of skills in writing, critical thinking, and employment of sources, students are required to revise these assignments. The revision process provides instructors opportunities to praise them for good insights and well written phrases and sentences and to offer comments and suggestions for improvement. Wang (2008) suggests that instructors “need to design learning that discourages plagiarism,” such as requiring “students to turn in multiple drafts” (p. 754). Requiring students to submit multiple drafts of their formal assignments gives them “opportunities to correct the wrongdoings in their early work before the final product is due” (Wang, 2008, p. 754). By teaching the conventions of quoting and citing sources in a scaffolded way and offering students chances for practice, they gradually build the skills needed in referencing sources so they can avoid plagiarism and come to value documentation as an intrinsic component of writing.

The revision process need not involve full essays or even lengthy pieces of writing, requiring time and energy to correct. The submission of a series of several short pieces, such as one-page analyses of single texts, allows instructors to scaffold instruction. Each assignment in this series would be worth only a small part of the total grade (5%); thus, they are low-stakes and low-risk. They offer students the benefit of practicing and building their skills before writing the final formal assignment, which is an assessment tool worth 15 or 20% of the total course grade. The latter calls upon students to demonstrate the skills acquired throughout the course. It asks them to engage in research, to choose their secondary sources, and to logically incorporate them into their essays. Ideally, the final essay will not entail revision. However, when a student is intently focused on content, inadvertent plagiarism may arise, which makes their revision of quotes and citations a necessary and valuable part of the learning experience.

An important component in course design is research skills development, essential for students to achieve academic excellence. The ALTE method entails the use of prescribed secondary sources, provided in the customized course pack. Prescribing these sources precludes students’ searching for and using unrelated materials, which some EAL students will mimic to give an impression of fluency. The authors have found that in some cases, students did not comprehend the information they had found, memorized, and employed in their examinations. Although their phrases may have seemed logical and coherent, in merely reiterating the information they had learned by rote, the students had failed to answer the exam essay question. Wondering why they had failed, students reported that they had been trained to use this strategy in their home countries.

The ALTE method with its customized workbook, inksheds, and mandatory revision process provides students with learning experiences that foster their writing and critical thinking skills and prepare them to write something meaningful in their examination essays. Prescribed secondary sources are carefully selected so they complement the primary sources and provide critical lenses to help deepen students’ analysis. They are also chosen to model forms in a discipline specific manner as a way of introducing students to the basic principles of referencing

source materials. As East (2016) asserts, “academic integrity and academic literacy go hand in hand” and while a teaching approach to preventing plagiarism is a best practice, “there is limited value in teaching academic literacy through generic principles, because even texts abiding by these principles can be read differently, depending on the discipline and subject” (p. 490). By using prescribed secondary sources in the ALTE, instructors can monitor their students’ progress as these novice researchers practice creating direct and indirect quotes, works cited lists, and so on. Thus, instructors can quickly determine if a student has taken a quote out of context, has misquoted information, has chosen an unsuitable quote, or has inadequately or improperly cited or even failed to cite a source. Such occasions are not evidence of a student’s intention to deceive us or a reason for reprimand; they are teaching moments that motivate us to help students develop their skills.

The ALTE method is built on the premise that students need time and practice to develop skills (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2010). East (2016) asserts that acculturation “leading to skills development can only happen over time when students can explore pertinent conventions, can access models of responses to assessment tasks, and have enough opportunities for practice” (p.490). The ALTE method is based on the belief that students learn best how to choose, quote, paraphrase, and cite sources by experiential learning, that is, by working with quotation and citation forms in context-based exercises that lead up to their writing of formal assignments. The three learning tools promoted in the ALTE method work in combination to provide students with authentic learning experiences that foster their writing and critical thinking skills and increase their awareness of academic conventions.

The Problem: The Rise of Academic Misconduct

For the past decade or more, instructors working in all disciplines have worried about increased student misconduct and plagiarism. Khadilkar (2018) addresses plagiarism in the School of Medicine; Caldwell (2010) discusses academic misconduct in Business Schools; and Singh and Remenyi (2016), affiliated with the School of Computing at the University of South Africa, reveal “instances of academic fraud at universities” in general (p. 1). Moreover, instructors at all educational levels have concerns. Gilmore (2008) focuses on plagiarism in high schools; Thompson, Bagby, Sulak, Sheets, and Trepinkski (2017) discuss plagiarism committed by international students at both undergraduate and graduate levels and emphasize the importance for instructors of differentiating between inadvertent plagiarism and deliberate and conscious student misconduct.

David Callahan (2005) asserts that “problems of academic dishonesty are symptoms of larger problems in American society” (p. xv), a society in which “people judge their self-worth by their net-worth, and where our cultural icons are people like Donald Trump” (xvi). Current social attitudes “coupled with a ‘winning is everything’ attitude” can lead people to “justify anything that will be a competitive advantage” (Hamlin, Barczyk, Powell, & Frost, 2013, p. 37).

In response to students’ changing attitudes towards academic ethics, Hamlin et al. (2013) conducted a study of student misconduct management at ten American universities and reveal a lack of consensus on ways of dealing with cheating and on how to “effectively communicat[e] expected behaviours” (p. 44). Stanford has a “code of conduct ...[that] has been in effect since 1896” and recruits its students to uphold that code (p. 41). So, too, does the Southern Utah University (SUU), where the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence encourages students to be “pro-active in dealing with cases of academic dishonesty” (p. 42). SUU also has a General Catalogue with examples of cheating, including: “Purchasing a paper or other project for which

one then seeks to receive credit;” “Failing to properly document source material;” and “‘Cutting and pasting’ source material from various Internet sites and submitting it as your own work without proper citation” (p. 42). At the ten universities Hamlin and his colleagues surveyed, they found “no uniform method for dealing with the problem within the same departments much less different universities” (p. 36). Moreover, they learned that some instructors are reluctant to charge students with misconduct for fear of retaliation in course evaluations (p. 36). In other studies, researchers found that instructors often resent the additional workload of policing students (Anson, 2008; Davis, 2011).

The rise in plagiarism is due, partly, to an evolving ethos among communities of users and providers who share open source media and, partly, to misleading models, such as Internet sources that offer information without crediting authors (Buchanan & McKay, 2018; Cvetkovic & Anderson, 2010; Roberts, 2008). Yu-Mei Wang (2008), citing a 2005 study, states that “77% of the students surveyed did not think that copying sentences from various sources on the Internet was a serious issue” (p. 744). The Internet has made plagiarism easy for students who, for various reasons, do not wish to write and learn in the process, but it has also facilitated detection (Gilmore 2008, p. 24). Velliariis and Breen (2016) list twelve sites where students can buy papers or hire ghost writers (p. 574). They also list thirty electronic plagiarism detectors (EPDs) available for purchase (p. 571). These software programs seem invaluable tools to expedite searches of plagiarized sources for gone are the days when educators could recognize an author’s work from having “read all the books and journal articles written in their particular discipline” (Goddard & Rudzki, 2005, as cited in Velliariis & Breen, p. 571). The most common EPD seems to be Turnitin (Cvetkovic & Anderson, 2010; Davis, Drinan, & Gallant, 2009; Ocholla & Ocholla, 2016). Lathrop and Foss (2005) assert, however, that “papers written ‘to order’ and purchased from online paper mills or other sources will not show up” in EPD searches (p. 187). Moreover, Velliariis and Breen argue that EPDs cannot discern “between *inept* citation and *intentional* plagiarism” (p. 571). Thus, they state, instructors must decide for themselves whether a student has intentionally or unintentionally plagiarized, especially when working with English Language Learners, for whom “patchwriting” and “mosaic writing” are part of the developmental process (p. 569). To Howard (1999), “patchwriting” is a “means of learning the language and ideas of the source” and is a “mark of writers who do not understand what they are reading” (p. 110). She asserts that “in this interpretation,” patchwriting “constitutes a positive learning experience” (p. 111). Without the insight afforded by prolonged experience of working with EAL students, some instructors see it as a form of plagiarism and a lack of integrity on the part of the student. The authors of this paper see patchwriting as an indication of a student’s formative processes. We recognize and emphasize the importance of distinguishing between conscious and inadvertent plagiarism as EAL students take reasonable steps towards fluency in English.

Current Attitudes Towards Plagiarism

Some members of the academic community attribute the rise in plagiarism to a change in the student demographic in Western universities as many international students arrive from countries where intellectual property and copyright do not exist (Howard, 2005; Lei & Hu, 2015; Li & Casanave, 2012; Pecorari, 2003). Instructors must consider their students’ cultural differences when delivering writing instruction and when responding to student writing. For example, Maria Leedham (2015) argues that there are differences between Chinese academic attitudes and practices and those in the West, such as “different attitude[s] towards plagiarism” (p. 29). Moreover, there are differences in approaches to writing. Chinese students tend to incorporate

“‘beautiful words’ into academic writing” as well as “popular Chinese proverbs [...] or a ‘moral’ tale” (McPherron, 2011 as cited in Leedham, 2015, p. 29). Leedham (2015, p. 19) quotes Lijing Shi³ (2008) who emphasizes the value of considering “the variety of [students’] national, regional, economic, class and cultural backgrounds as well as age, religion and gender”. While Shi (2006) does not elaborate on the differences in age and gender, he does offer insights into the cultural backgrounds of Chinese students and discredits the assumptions of some Western instructors about the intellectual implications of Confucianist influences. He writes that some researchers and instructors think that Chinese students “rely heavily on memorising or rote learning” while others “even assert that Chinese students do not think critically, as certain values underlying the notion of critical thinking are incompatible with their cultural beliefs” (p. 123). Shi identifies the values as Confucianism (p. 123). He argues that “many perceptions about Confucianism come from partial understanding” of foundational texts such as *The Analects* (p. 124). Shi argues that the “Confucian idea reflected in *The Analects* [...] portray[s] Chinese learners as actually valuing active and reflexive thinking, open-mindedness and a spirit of inquiry” (p.125). Shi asserts that it is “crucial for all professionals to understand Chinese learners properly in this developing market” (p. 123), one marked by “an increasing number of Chinese learners pursuing higher education in Western universities (p. 122). In a similar discussion, Leedham identifies a tendency among instructors in the West to conflate the cultural backgrounds of Chinese speaking students, whether they come from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) “Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore or Malaysia” (p. 19). “Making judgments [about students’ integrity] without proper orientation to cultural differences,” Thompson et al. (2017) assert, “discourages students and faculty alike and can lead to adversarial positions” (p. 150). Consideration of a student’s background must come into play when judging whether a student has plagiarized inadvertently or intentionally.

In a study of Japanese students, Greg Wheeler (2009) reflects on the different cultural values among students who recognize that cheating is unethical, but do not discern the subtle differences between copying an author’s words or paraphrasing (p. 19). In a study of Chinese students, Li and Casanave (2012) discuss the struggles EAL students have when attempting to incorporate sources, which, combined with a tendency to rely “on patchwriting,” lead to inadvertent plagiarism (p. 171). They offer an example of a student who lacked proficiency in quoting and citing source materials and used a direct quote when she should have used an indirect quote but did not know how to create the latter form. Moreover, the student referred to the author by first name, which led her instructor to perceive an omission of names in the bibliography (p. 171). The problems, Li and Casanave point out, stemmed from the student’s “lack of full proficiency in English writing and her deficient knowledge of citation, including the distinction between primary and secondary citations and between the first and last names of authors” (pp. 171-72). The student was accused of plagiarism. A knowledgeable reader might see the example as inadvertent plagiarism, but, more likely, as a reflection of skills in writing and referencing source materials that need further development.

Gilmore (2008) observes that students begin plagiarizing in high school because teachers have not taught them the proper way to use and acknowledge source material (p. 48). Thompson et al. (2017) encourage instructors to provide adequate “training on academic literacy” for international students at both undergraduate and graduate levels to ensure that they have the skills “necessary to succeed in their environment” (Song & Cadman, 2013, as cited in Thompson

3. Leedham misspells Lijing Shi’s name as Shu.

et al., 2017, p. 149). “There may be an assumption among higher education leadership,” Thompson and her colleagues state, “that all students who enter graduate programs already understand an institution’s expectations when it comes to academic honesty and plagiarism” (p. 150). This assumption is false according to the authors.

Wang and Wen (2002, as cited in Leedham, 2015, p. 25) reveal that students in the PRC “receive ‘no systematic training in writing’”. Leedham describes the “ways in which English is currently studied in the PRC at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels” (p. 24), which, typically, align with elementary school, secondary school, and university levels of education. The syllabus of the secondary level, she explains, focuses on what is “known as the Intensive Reading lesson and the nature of written tasks within the English language component of the university entrance exam or ‘gaokao’” (p. 24). Cheng (2000, as cited in Leedham, 2015) observes that “in the PRC, ‘ToEFL⁴ takers spend hundreds of hours doing simulated tests to develop test-taking strategies rather than improving their real language skills’” (p. 28). Class sizes are additional obstacles to student learning. Leedham reveals that class sizes for all subjects in the PRC have “an average of 50 students,” which means that it is “difficult” for instructors “to engage in discussions around writing, thus promoting a transmission method of teaching” (p. 25). For many EAL students, learning styles pose a significant obstacle to their success at Western universities. Velliariis and Breen (2016) maintain that preparing such students “for the demands of academic study in an English environment requires a dual focus of helping them develop the language competency *and* study skills that will enable them to succeed” (p. 568, original emphasis). They offer a three-stage framework “to develop students’ writing skills and over time promote a consistency of practice so that as they progress from first-year they become more ... aware of literacy requirements and appropriate referencing conventions in their discipline” (pp. 570-71). Initiatives such as theirs reflect a recognition of student needs, especially as increasing numbers of international students arrive from countries where learning strategies include copying from models provided by experts and where academic values differ.

Lori G. Power (2009) suggests that scholarly values are not inherent in students when they first arrive at university; they are “imposed on them by authorities;” thus, students *externalize* plagiarism and see it as someone else’s problem (p. 654). Wendy Sutherland Smith (2011) observes that students are devastated by accusations of plagiarism, especially when they believe they should not be “punished because the plagiarism was inadvertent as they did not know or understand the academic writing conventions of the institution” (p. 133). Rather than offering comprehensive teaching of documentation, she asserts, universities employ “quasi-legal” language to warn students that plagiarism is “misconduct” for which “punitive action is the result” (p. 133). Fear tactics, implementing software to detect plagiarism, and prescribing penalties when it is detected are shown to be less effectual than most university administrators seem to expect (Anson, 2008; Marsden, 2001, as cited in Sutherland Smith, 2011; Power, 2009; Wood, 2004). Many instructors feel that providing first year students with adequate information about intellectual property and plagiarism is an effective preventative technique (Jian et al., 2018 p. 54). Thoroughly familiarizing students with forms of quotes and citations and explaining their usage is essential to making them cognizant of the logical and ethical reasons for recognizing and citing other scholars’ work (Jamieson, 2008).

Rather than attempting to combat plagiarism by invoking punitive measures, the authors of this paper seek to prevent it by fostering students’ internalization of the values shared by academic

4. ToEFL is the acronym for the Test of English as a Foreign Language.

communities. We do so by promoting *enculturation*, which means welcoming students to become members of the community and embrace academic values (Wang, 2008 p. 751).⁵ The ALTE method promotes enculturation by introducing students to the forms of quotes and citations, explaining their logical applications, and providing these novice learners with opportunities to practice referencing sources in low-stakes writing exercises. Evidence of enculturation is found in students' writing and speech when they demonstrate their understanding of the notion of intellectual property and their internalization of the belief that plagiarism is an infringement of the rights of ownership. Yet, the ALTE method aids students in developing an appreciation of documentation, not just as a tool for crediting scholars for their work, but as an aid in creating records of their own research and in facilitating the research of future readers when they begin to publish that research.

Proactivity and New Methodologies

The ALTE method is built on the hypothesis that students learn best how to choose, use, and document sources through experiential learning, that is, by working with quotes, citations, and bibliographical forms in authentic context-based exercises. Through practice, students extend their familiarity with the forms and uses of documentation while increasing their knowledge of course material and their skills in applying it. The goal is to help students build tacit knowledge (Perl, 2004; Polanyi, 1967), rather than forcing them to face steep learning curves during the writing of their essays since working under time constraints, they attempt, often erroneously, to decipher and mimic generic documentation examples provided on library websites and student writers' handbooks.

McDonald conceived the ALTE method in 2013 and continued to develop it with Ramine Adl between 2014 to 2015, when they undertook a small research project to test the tools and determine whether their *systematic*, contextualized and practice-based approach in writing and documentation instruction was an effective means of minimizing inadvertent plagiarism among post-secondary students. "Nonsystematic approaches," according to Wang, "tend to result in uncoordinated efforts, which have limited effects in combating plagiarism" (p. 750). In that study, Adl and McDonald explored the efficacy of three learning tools designed to foster enculturation: low-stakes exercises, PowerPoint demonstrations of referencing forms, and customized booklets (Adl, 2014; McDonald, 2014) that offer models of forms of quotes and citations and explains their usage. Preliminary results on the first iteration of the ALTE method (collected by the authors from a small data set) revealed a 68.8% decrease in the number of cases of inadvertent plagiarism. McDonald built upon that research to develop the three current learning tools - the customized course pack; a complementary workbook with exercises in grammar, quoting, and citing (McDonald, 2019); inksheds for writing practice; and a mandatory revision process. In this paper, the authors have described the latest iteration of the ALTE method as a means to foster enculturation in first year composition classes.

Conclusions

The ALTE method delivers instruction in writing, grammar, vocabulary, and documentation in an integrated, contextualized, and practice-based approach. Its development, which took several years, was *organic*. That is, McDonald created the learning tools and each of the exercises

5. Jian, Marion, and Wang (2018) discuss *acculturation* which "refers to the process of human adaptation in cross-cultural contexts" (p. 54).

associated with them in response to student needs, and gradually built the compendium that comprises the ALTE method materials. The most prolific period was when McDonald was assigned to teach a course designed to help EAL students and native English speakers achieve success in first-year composition classes. The course was designed to facilitate increases in language proficiency for EAL students and foster the development of writing skills for domestic students whose previous education failed to prepare them to meet the challenges of first year university. Students' inadequate referencing skills and lack of awareness of academic conventions often put them at risk of committing plagiarism. Thus, motivated by a desire to advocate for these ill-prepared students, McDonald created learning tools and exercises to help them. Despite positive results in the initial testing of the first three tools, and scholars' praise and interest, only a couple of instructors have adopted the method. Admittedly, the creation of the customized booklet is time consuming and labour intensive, but neither the booklet nor the low-stakes exercises need to be done all at once.

Potentially, the best candidate for adopting the method and learning tools would be the English graduate student about to assume responsibilities for delivering instruction in writing and documentation. Novice instructors need to acquire a few "tools of the trade" to preclude hours of reinventing the wheel. These are the future scholars who, no doubt, will teach the international students as universities in North America and the United Kingdom continue to recruit and welcome them in this increasingly globalized education system. One must hope, too, that the next generation of teachers in secondary and post-secondary education will increase the amount of instruction in referencing sources for English-speaking students, as well, so they will be aware of some academic conventions before entering university.

Current plagiarism management strategies set up adversarial positions between administrators and students (Thompson et al., p. 150). Disseminating the results of testing the ALTE method may well motivate university administrators to shift their focus in plagiarism management from detection to prevention. As scholars like Velliari and Breen (2016) and Li and Casanave (2012) argue, when marking students' essays, we must differentiate between intentional and inadvertent plagiarism. Indeed, we have a moral obligation to help students build the skills needed to avoid committing plagiarism. The ALTE method affords students time to practice quoting and citing as they learn to write; it provides them the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills, so they grasp the importance of crediting the authors when writing their essays; and, ultimately, helps them increase their knowledge of the academic conventions they must employ when referencing source materials.

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