

# Does culture influence understanding and perceived seriousness of plagiarism?

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## Abstract

This paper discusses the perceived seriousness and understanding of plagiarism by local and Asian international students in Australia, presenting new data from a study conducted at two Australian universities. In our study no differences were found between local and Asian students in ratings of perceived seriousness or understanding of plagiarism. However, significant negative relationships were found between both seriousness and understanding, and self-reported plagiarism rates. This suggested that as perceived seriousness and understanding decreased, rates of plagiarism increased. The importance of such findings in re-examining some commonly-held assumptions about cultural differences is discussed. It is suggested that most students demonstrate some difficulty understanding what constitutes plagiarism, highlighting the need for interventions that address knowledge of plagiarism and referencing skills.

## Plagiarism among Asian international students in Australia

Western tertiary institutions are becoming increasingly multicultural, with students from a range of countries choosing to study abroad. This diversity of the student body has arisen from a growing trend for education to be a marketable commodity, resulting in merging trade partnerships. Such partnerships are advantageous for the students and universities alike. This trend, however, has given rise to the need for universities to revisit some of their policies in light of the diversity of the student population (Cordeiro, 1995; Croxford, 2001). Incorporating cultural diversity into policies has proven to be a challenge for many universities (Burns, 1991). Universities' policies on plagiarism are an issue that has attracted particular criticism in their ability to cater for cultural diversity (Pennycook, 1994).

Over the last few decades there has been a changing perception of plagiarism in education, particularly in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom (Hafernik, Messerschmitt, & Vandrick, 2002). Many educators now recognise the complexity of the concept and its cultural dependency (e.g., Cordeiro, 1995;

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McCormick, 1988; Pennycook, 1994, 1996). As a result, there has been a retreat from a moralised view of plagiarism, to a more inquiring stance with a desire to understand what factors affect such behaviour, including differing cultural backgrounds (Hafernig et al., 2002).

International students are one particular group that has been at the centre of the discussions due to their reported difficulties in understanding the concept of plagiarism (Deckert, 1992; Evans & Youmans, 2000; Marshall & Garry, 2006). Some argue that these students are at increased risk of committing acts of plagiarism (Deckert, 1992; Park, 2003). East Asian international students, specifically, have attracted attention in the literature on plagiarism (Deckert, 1993; Lahir, 2005) and are a particularly relevant group for Australian research, as they comprise a large proportion of the international student population in Australia. Although East Asian international students form a heterogenous group, there are a number of factors that they share in common: their Confucian heritage, ESL status, and the experience of living abroad (Chalmers & Volet, 1997). These three factors may contribute to East Asian students experiencing difficulties in complying with plagiarism rules in Western universities. Indeed, one study, without examining Asian students specifically, found lower understanding of plagiarism among ESL students as compared with native English-speaking students (Marshall & Garry, 2006).

Cultural beliefs unique to Asian cultures, most notably the Confucian heritage, provide some perspective on the differing understandings students have about textual ownership and plagiarism. Central to Confucian philosophy is the concept of the relational self, whereby the individual only exists in relation to others (Gao, 1998). Within this tradition there are five hierarchical principal relationships, with the more senior individual having more power and authority (Bond & Hwang, 1995; Cho, 2000). All relationships within this tradition are governed by *li* which represents the rules and obligations individuals follow as they strive towards personal cultivation. These rules ensure that people act according to their rank (*zhenming*) and are believed to foster social harmony (Cho, 2000).

Communication, written or verbal, is seen as a way of maintaining these relationships and confirming the rank of individuals, thereby preserving social harmony (Bond, 1996). As a result, there are also a number of rules that govern verbal interaction. The right to speak and express one's opinion is governed by one's social position or rank, and is typically dependent upon power and expertise (Gao, 1998). This reverence for one's superiors extends to the written word, with many scholars from the past being revered in Asian societies. Asian students may see it as presumptuous to rephrase the work of a scholar (Leki, 1992). Qualitative accounts from Asian students have suggested that even if part of a written assignment has no reference cited, it could reasonably be assumed that it has come from a past scholar or equally-credible source (Alexander, 1988). Thus, there tends to be less emphasis on referencing of others as there is not an underlying assumption of ownership when a student submits work, such as exists within Western societies.

Education practices also provide some insight into the difficulties Asian students may experience with the concept of plagiarism. For example, repetition and memorisation of information have played an important role in Chinese history, with the civil service exams requiring the memorisation of large quantities of classic Confucian texts (Bloch & Chi, 1995). Recitation was seen as a crucial step in the process of learning new information, and was viewed as a necessary process for understanding that information (On, 1996).

In modern Asian classrooms, memorisation continues to play an important role (Biggs, 1996; Bond, 1991; Leung, 1995; Marton, Dall'Alba, & Kun, 1996), and students are often given lecture notes and handouts to memorise (Chan, 1999). This method of teaching and learning may have resulted in 'learned plagiarism' as students

are encouraged to memorise and copy the work of others during the learning process (Deckert, 1992). The importance of memorisation in the learning process for Asian students provides some insight into the difficulties they experience understanding the Western ideas of textual ownership.

Plagiarism has only recently emerged in academic institutions in Asia as an issue of concern (Xueqin, 2002). As a result, unfamiliarity with the concept has been one of the most consistent explanations given for plagiarism amongst Asian students (Biggs & Watkins, 1996; Briggs, 2003; Lahur, 2005; Zobel & Hamilton, 2002). If Asian students are unfamiliar with the concept they may find it difficult to recognise various forms of plagiarism. The literature suggests that Asian students generally have a poor understanding and awareness of Western standards of academic referencing, whether studying within Asia (Biggs & Watkins, 1996; Deckert, 1993) or abroad (Hafernik et al., 2002; Wilhoit, 1994; Zobel & Hamilton, 2002).

Nonetheless, there is a paucity of studies examining plagiarism that compare Asian international students with local Western students in the same university context. In one relevant study, Asian students were found to have submitted more copied assignments than the local students (Zobel & Hamilton, 2002). However, this study did not examine students' understanding or perceived seriousness of plagiarism, which is the focus of the current paper.

We conducted a study that compared Asian international students and local students in two Australian tertiary institutions (Maxwell, Curtis, & Vardanega, 2006). Our previous paper reported a significantly higher self-reported plagiarism rate in the local Australian group than in the Asian international group, contrary to expectations (Maxwell et al., 2006). In this research, the two cultural groups were also compared on understanding of plagiarism and perceived seriousness of plagiarism, but these results were not reported in our previous paper. This paper reports and discusses the results of that study pertaining to understanding of plagiarism and perceived seriousness of plagiarism. In addition, past research has found an inverse relationship between perceived seriousness and rates of plagiarism and academic dishonesty (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2002; Lim & See, 2001; Storch & Storch, 2003). As such, this paper also examines the connection between perceived seriousness and rates of plagiarism in our study.

### **Methodology**

Two-hundred and sixty-seven undergraduate students from two Australian universities participated in the study. The students came from a range of courses including Accounting, Economics, Marketing, and Psychology. These courses contained both Asian international and local students, and included some written assignments. From this sample, two smaller samples were taken: those whose nationality was Australian or Asian, and those whose country of secondary education was Australian or Asian. 'Asian' was defined as those countries with a Confucian<sup>1</sup> tradition such as China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia. The results for this research were consistent whether students were grouped based on country of birth (i.e., nationality) or country of secondary education. As such, for convenience, we have reported the results where Asian and Australian groupings were derived from nationality.

The total sample included in the nationality analysis was 242, with 152 Australian (55% male) and 90 Asian (44% male). For the Australian nationality group the mean age was 23 years, mode was 19 years and the range was 18 to 52 years. In the Asian nationality group the mean age was 23 years, mode was 20 years and age range was 17 to 34 years.

The information was collected using self-report questionnaires (see Appendix A). Each student was presented with seven scenarios covering the seven different types of plagiarism outlined by Walker (1998) (see Table 1). To assess students' understanding of plagiarism, each scenario was followed by the question "do you consider this to be plagiarism?". Participants were required to tick one of three options, "yes", "no" and "don't know". Perceived seriousness was measured with the following question after each scenario "how serious do you think this is?". This question was based on the questions used by Lim and See (2001) with some variations. The '0' response in Lim and See's study was "not cheating" and the '5' response was "most serious". It is probable these two response options are addressing separate constructs within the same scale; understanding of whether something *is* cheating *and* whether it is perceived as serious. It is possible that people may believe that an action is plagiarism but not perceive it as serious. In addition, reliability and validity have been found to be unrelated to the number of points in the scale (Matell & Jacoby, 1971). Therefore, to simplify the questionnaire, a three-point scale was used to assess perceived seriousness, from '1' "not serious at all" to '3' "very serious".

**Table 1.**  
*Types of Plagiarism*

| Type                 | Definition  |
|----------------------|---|
| Sham Paraphrasing    | Material copied verbatim from text and source acknowledged in-line but represented as paraphrased.            |
| Illicit Paraphrasing | Material paraphrased from text without in-line acknowledgement of source.                                     |
| Other Plagiarism     | Material copied from another student's assignment with the knowledge of the other student.                    |
| Verbatim Copying     | Material copied verbatim from text without in-line acknowledgement of the source.                             |
| Recycling            | Same assignment submitted more than once for different courses.   |
| Ghost Writing        | Assignment written by third party and represented as own work.  |
| Purloining           | Assignment copied from another student's assignment or other person's papers without that person's knowledge. |

*Note.* From "Student plagiarism in universities: what are we doing about it?" by J. Walker, 1998, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 17, p. 103.

To measure the prevalence of plagiarism, participants were asked "have you ever done a similar thing?". This was based on the question used by Jensen et al. (2002) in their study on academic dishonesty and was responded to on a 5-point scale from "never" to "more than seven times".

To reduce order effects, the presentation of scenarios was counterbalanced between participants. To this end, half the sample received a questionnaire with the scenarios in one order and the other half were presented with the scenarios in the reverse order.

It was assumed all students undertaking a university degree in Australia, whether local or international, would be competent in English. However, to ensure international students from ESL backgrounds were not disadvantaged by the complexity of the questionnaire, the reading level was checked using Microsoft Word® and found to be at a Year 6 level.

The questionnaire was administered in both hardcopy and internet formats. Of this sample, 185 completed the hardcopy questionnaire and 57 completed the questionnaire online. Participants completed the hardcopy questionnaire at the

beginning of lectures or tutorials. To ensure anonymity, students did not put any form of identification on the questionnaire and when the questionnaires were completed, students placed the questionnaires in a box at the front of the room.

For the internet version, students were sent an email inviting them to participate in the study. A weblink was included in the email which connected to a web-based version of the questionnaire. Once on the internet site, a password was required to open the questionnaire. This password was contained in the email and had to be entered manually. The password was used primarily to restrict access to the targeted population. Additionally, it has been found to increase the quality of responses, as people who go to the effort of entering a password may be more motivated to complete the questionnaire (Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2002). To reassure participants of anonymity they were informed that the online questionnaire could not be traced to their name or email.

## Results

Students in the Asian sample were, on average, in a higher year of study ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ) than students in the local Australian sample ( $M = 2.12$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ),  $t(241) = 2.81$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The results of this study concerning incidence of plagiarism are reported in Maxwell et al. (2006). To briefly recap those results: 83% of Australian and 82% of Asian students reported engaging in some form of plagiarism at least once, but the frequency of plagiarism was higher in the Australian sample than in the Asian sample (for more details of these results see Maxwell et al., 2006).

### *Understanding of Plagiarism*

All seven scenarios in the questionnaire were examples of plagiarism; as such, "no" or "not sure" responses were coded as indicating that the student did not understand that a scenario was a form of plagiarism. All seven scenarios were identified as forms of plagiarism by 66% of Asian students and 64% of local students. The groups did not significantly differ in their overall ability to identify cases of plagiarism ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 1647) = 0.669$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

Looking at the results by scenario type, purloining and verbatim copying were readily recognised as forms of plagiarism by students from both nationality groups. Ninety-nine percent of the Australian group and 90% of the Asian group believed purloining was a form of plagiarism, and 95% of the Australian group and 93% of the Asian group believed verbatim copying was a form of plagiarism. Only 8% of participants in the Australian group and 22% of the participants in the Asian group identified recycling as a form of plagiarism, making it the least recognised of all seven scenarios (see Table 2).

Table 2.

*Percentage of students, by culture, who understood that each type of plagiarism was a form of plagiarism.*

| Type of Plagiarism   | Students' Culture |       |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------|
|                      | Australian        | Asian |
| Sham Paraphrasing    | 28%               | 31%   |
| Illicit Paraphrasing | 67%               | 64%   |
| Other Plagiarism     | 89%               | 81%   |
| Verbatim Copying     | 95%               | 93%   |
| Recycling            | 8%                | 22%   |
| Ghost Writing        | 76%               | 60%   |
| Purloining           | 99%               | 90%   |

Examining the connection of understanding to incidence of plagiarism, mean understanding across the seven scenarios was significantly related to frequency of plagiarism ( $r = -0.29, p < 0.001$ ) – higher understanding was related to fewer instances of plagiarism.

#### *Perceived seriousness of plagiarism*

No significant difference was found between the mean ratings of perceived seriousness across the seven scenarios for the Australian ( $M = 2.20, SD = 0.33$ ) and Asian ( $M = 2.19, SD = 0.38$ ) groups,  $t(240) = 0.228, p = 0.82$ .

Looking at the seven scenarios separately, purloining was the scenario perceived to be the most serious by both the Australian ( $M = 2.92, SD = 0.27$ ) and the Asian ( $M = 2.81, SD = 0.42$ ) groups. Recycling was seen by both the Australian ( $M = 1.31, SD = 0.55$ ) and the Asian ( $M = 1.52, SD = 0.66$ ) groups to be the least serious. The mean seriousness of each scenario for the two groups is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

*Average seriousness ratings, by culture, for each type of plagiarism from 1 “not at all serious” to 3 “very serious”.*

| Type of Plagiarism   | Students' Culture |       |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------|
|                      | Australian        | Asian |
| Sham Paraphrasing    | 1.5               | 1.6   |
| Illicit Paraphrasing | 1.8               | 2.0   |
| Other Plagiarism     | 2.6               | 2.5   |
| Verbatim Copying     | 2.6               | 2.5   |
| Recycling            | 1.3               | 1.5   |
| Ghost Writing        | 2.6               | 2.4   |
| Purloining           | 2.9               | 2.8   |

Examining the connection between perceived seriousness and incidence of plagiarism, mean seriousness ratings across the seven scenarios was significantly related to frequency of plagiarism ( $r = -0.39, p < 0.001$ ) – higher perceived seriousness was related to reduced plagiarism.

#### **Discussion**

In our study less than one third of students in both groups recognised that a direct quote referenced as if it was paraphrased was a form of plagiarism. In addition, less than a quarter of students recognised that resubmitting an assignment was a form of plagiarism, and only two thirds of students recognised that not referencing paraphrased text was plagiarising. Notably, however, these deficits in understanding of plagiarism were not different between the Asian international students and local Australian students.

The confusion over what constitutes plagiarism appears not to be unique to Asian international students, and may be a factor affecting rates of plagiarism for all students at university irrespective of culture. Our study found a relationship between level of understanding and rates of plagiarism, with rates of plagiarism increasing as understanding decreased. Other studies, although not comparing Asian with Western students, have also found that undergraduate students in Western universities have little understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it (Ashworth & Bannister, 1997; Froese, Boswell, Garcia, Koehn, & Nelson, 1995; Marshall & Garry, 2006; Roig, 1997). For all students entering tertiary institutions, understanding

plagiarism has been found to be a gradual “process of acculturation” (Ashworth, Freewood, & Ranald, 2003, p. 257). It is probable that this acculturation process is hampered by a poor understanding and inconsistent definitions of plagiarism (Lipson & Reindl, 2003; Pennycook, 1994).

Awareness of what constitutes plagiarism, as measured in our study, is only one aspect of students’ more general level of understanding of plagiarism. It is also important for students to understand how to apply this knowledge in their academic writing. Unfortunately, students are not always taught correct writing skills at university. As a result, they continue to use incorrect or ineffective techniques that they used in high school (Wilhoit, 1994). What often results is a general lack of awareness as to how to write and reference in a scholarly manner expected in Western tertiary institutions (Ashworth & Bannister, 1997; Froese et al., 1995; Roig, 1997). Correct writing and referencing techniques may be particularly challenging for Asian students who do not have a firm grasp of English.

The technical difficulties of writing are further exacerbated by the continued emphasis on putting arguments in “one’s own words” which requires students to put a voice to their paper (Bowden, 1996; Scollon, 1994). This is quite a complex task as the intricacies of the meaning are often lost when one tries to put someone else’s ideas into their own words (Bowden, 1996). Second-language writers often have considerable difficulty understanding the meaning behind some texts. To then rephrase texts without losing the main point becomes an extremely difficult task. Specifically, for example, a native English speaker may be better placed to choose an appropriate synonym when paraphrasing a quote as compared with an ESL student. Hence, the concept of putting ideas into one’s own words may be particularly overwhelming for students who already feel tentative about using the language (Pennycook, 1994).

In sum, it appears that being able to recognise different forms of plagiarism is a challenging task for both local Western and Asian international students alike. However, it is possible the technical aspects of putting this knowledge into practice may be more difficult for second language speakers as it requires a certain control of the language which they may not yet have achieved.

In addition to Asian and local students being similar in their ability to recognise plagiarism in our study, they also showed remarkable similarity in the extent to which they considered various forms of plagiarism to be serious. Overall, both groups rated plagiarism as “moderately serious” to “very serious” on average. Perceived seriousness is an important issue to explore, as the literature suggests perceived seriousness is inversely related to cheating behaviours, including plagiarism (Brown & Howell, 2001; Jensen et al., 2002; Lim & See, 2001; Storch & Storch, 2003). This pattern was confirmed in the present study, as we also found a significant relationship between ratings of seriousness and rates of plagiarism; with rates of plagiarism increasing as perceived seriousness decreased. This has been explained by two separate theories in the literature (Jensen et al., 2002). According to the cognitive-dissonance theory, people adjust their belief system to fit with their behaviours (Festinger, 1957). Consequently, those who plagiarise may alter their perceptions of seriousness to ensure it corresponds with their behaviour. Alternatively, rational-choice theories suggest that people are more likely to act in line with their moral evaluations of a situation (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Both are valid explanations for the apparent trend in the literature and warrant further research to provide greater insight into the role beliefs play in rates of plagiarism.

Adaptation to the cultural context is a possible explanation for the similarity in perceptions of seriousness among local and Asian students in our study. One study, which investigated Singaporean students studying at an Australian university, found that after one semester in Australia the students had altered their perception about

learning and literacy considerably to fit more with the local beliefs (Volet & Renshaw, 1995, 1996). It has also been noted that Asian students appear to be quite adept at responding to situational demands and are able to adapt accordingly (Biggs & Watkins, 1996; McKay & Kember, 1997). It is possible, therefore, that Asian students' perceptions of literature and learning are not overly influenced by stable cultural characteristics (Volet & Renshaw, 1996) and they are able to adjust perceptions and behaviours to fit with the situational requirements. As a result, Asian students may alter their belief systems considerably during their time studying abroad, resulting in similar attitudes to those of local students after some time in the country. In our study, Asian students had, on average, spent more years at university than the local Australian students, and as such, they may have been better acculturated to the referencing requirements of a Western university than were the local students. Thus, there is a need in future studies to compare culturally diverse students with similar levels of experience of university study.

### Theoretical and Practical Implications for Educators

The unique educational and cultural experiences of Asian students studying abroad, coupled with linguistic difficulties, has been the basis for the belief that Asian international students tend to be more prone to plagiarism (Currie, 1998; Deckert, 1992; Hafernik et al., 2002; Lahur, 2005; Park, 2003; Zobel & Hamilton, 2002). It remains likely that these factors do affect Asian students' perceptions and understanding of plagiarism, particularly when studying within their own country. However, our findings suggest that Asian students' perceptions of plagiarism are similar to local students', when studying in Australia.

It is probable that Australian students may also have their own unique set of educational and cultural factors contributing to high rates of plagiarism in tertiary institutions. For example, pressures such as time limitations may attenuate these cultural differences, with Australian students often engaging in more outside work than Asian international students, who are restricted by their visa conditions (DIMIA, 2004). Increased hours of paid work may cause problems with time management and increase time pressure for completing assignments. In addition, local Australian students may not value education as highly as those from Asian societies. As a result, local students may put less effort into learning the writing styles and referencing expected at tertiary institutions. They may also be more willing to take risks by submitting plagiarised material. This is clearly an area that requires more investigation, as the previously believed mediators, understanding and perceived seriousness, did not account for the cultural difference found in prevalence of plagiarism in our study.

The results of our study have implications for institutional policy and educational practices. First, looking at institutional policy, given that local and Asian international students differ little in their (mis)understanding of plagiarism, our results imply that culture-specific plagiarism policies may be unnecessary within Western universities. As Larkham and Manns (2002) state:

Even if motivated by different culture ... someone employing plagiarism in an assessment is seeking to gain advantage over others ... individual academics and institutions cannot condone this form of cheating if the elusive concept of 'standards' is to be maintained, within the Western academic tradition within which we and our students operate (p. 348).

At the same time, policies need to be designed that recognise the pervasive lack of understanding of plagiarism among students; striking a balance between the competing objectives of educating students to correct referencing practices and enforcing educational standards.

So what are the practical implications of these findings for education? Our study provides additional support for the recommendations put forward by many authors: that both Western and Asian students have little understanding of many forms of plagiarism, and need specific instruction on what it is and how to avoid it (Briggs, 2003; Currie, 1998; Duff, Rogers, & Harris, 2006; Deckert, 1993; McCormick, 1988; Walker, 1998). Policy statements and discussions of university expectations may be useful in addressing the problems in understanding what constitutes plagiarism and also how seriously is it viewed (Brown & Howell, 2001; Wilhoit, 1994).

To ensure this knowledge is operationalised, additional practical instruction is needed. Students should be given lessons on how to reference correctly, including the use of hypothetical situations and written material in which they identify incidents of plagiarism (Bloch & Chi, 1995). They should also be given the opportunity to practice these skills (Wilhoit, 1994). Such interventions have been found to be effective in helping students learn correct referencing techniques and avoid plagiarism (Froese et al., 1995).

It is possible that differences may exist between cultures in the application of these skills. Students from both Asian and Western cultures may need instruction on how to take a position within the paper; however second-language speakers may need additional assistance with the sentence level and grammatical components of referencing. Irrespective of cultural and educational background, all students need greater support in understanding the complexities of the concept of plagiarism.

In addition to the need for direct instruction, our results also point to the need for educators to structure assessments that take into account students' lack of awareness about plagiarism. Higher education is a co-produced product, it is not simply the responsibility of students to learn how to avoid plagiarism; educators can devise assessments that help students to learn good referencing practice. It has been recommended that using scaffolded assessments in the early stages of students' enrolment can foster good scholarly practice and may reduce plagiarism (Bath, 2008; Star & McDonald, 2007).

#### **Endnote**

<sup>1</sup>There is some disagreement in the literature about whether the Philippines and Malaysia should be classified as Confusion cultures (cf. Church et al., 2008; del Prado et al., 2007). Filipino and Malay students were very small sub-groups within our Asian sample and their inclusion or exclusion did not substantively change our results.

#### **Author biographies**

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Guy Curtis is a Lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of Western Sydney, who completed a PhD at the University of Western Australia. His main research interest is the effect of moods and emotions, particularly anxiety, on social cognition. In addition, Guy has published other research in social, cross-cultural, educational, and organisational psychology.

Lucia Vardanega is a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Western Sydney. She recently completed her doctorate in the area of cross cultural higher education at the University of Technology Sydney. Her research interests have been primarily in cultural relevance and ethics of higher education offered internationally.

## Appendix A: Questionnaire

### Please complete the following information

#### **All information is completely confidential**

A student copies a sentence directly from a journal article into his assignment. The student writes the name of the author and date of publication in brackets after the sentence, but does not include quotation marks or a page number.

Do you consider this to be plagiarism? (please tick)

Yes  No  Not Sure

**How serious do you think this is? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3  
Not Serious at all    Moderately Serious    Very Serious

**Have you ever done a similar thing? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never    Once only    2-3 times    4-7 times    More than 7 times

Student A has to write an essay for a management subject. He knows that Student B did the exact same essay last year. Student A asks Student B if he can use her essay. She agrees, so student A copies Student B's assignment and hands it in as his own.

**Do you consider this to be plagiarism? (please tick)**

Yes  No  Not Sure

**How serious do you think this is? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3  
Not Serious at all    Moderately Serious    Very Serious

**Have you ever done a similar thing? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never    Once only    2-3 times    4-7 times    More than 7 times

A student copies word for word information from a book. She does not put the information in quotation marks. She also does not write the author, date of publication or page number at the end of the copied material.

**Do you consider this to be plagiarism? (please tick)**

Yes  No  Not Sure

**How serious do you think this is? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3  
Not Serious at all    Moderately Serious    Very Serious

**Have you ever done a similar thing? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never      Once only      2-3 times      4-7 times      More than 7 times

A student has been asked to write a report for his second year marketing subject. Last year in his introductory course he wrote a report on the same topic. He decides to hand in last year's report for his marketing assignment.

**Do you consider this to be plagiarism? (please tick)**

Yes       No       Not Sure

**How serious do you think this is? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3  
Not Serious at all    Moderately Serious    Very Serious

**Have you ever done a similar thing? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never      Once only      2-3 times      4-7 times      More than 7 times

A student has to write an essay for her economics class. She finds a website on the internet where she can pay someone to write it for her. She pays the money and is emailed the essay. She hands the essay in as her own.

**Do you consider this to be plagiarism? (please tick)**

Yes       No       Not Sure

**How serious do you think this is? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3  
Not Serious at all    Moderately Serious    Very Serious

**Have you ever done a similar thing? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never      Once only      2-3 times      4-7 times      More than 7 times

A student reads some information from a book. She then paraphrases the information and puts it into her assignment without acknowledging where the information came from.

**Do you consider this to be plagiarism? (please tick)**

Yes       No       Not Sure

**How serious do you think this is? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3  
Not Serious at all    Moderately Serious    Very Serious

**Have you ever done a similar thing? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never      Once only      2-3 times      4-7 times      More than 7 times

Student A has to write up a marketing strategy for a case study everyone has been given. He knows that Student B has already written up her marketing strategy. When she is away buying lunch he photocopies her assignment without her knowing. He then puts her assignment back in her bag, goes home, and types it up on his computer. He then hands in the assignment with his name on the front.

**Do you consider this to be plagiarism? (please tick)**

Yes       No       Not Sure

**How serious do you think this is? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3  
Not Serious at all      Moderately Serious      Very Serious

**Have you ever done a similar thing? (circle a number on the scale)**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never      Once only      2-3 times      4-7 times      More than 7 times

**Please complete the following information**

**1. What is your age? (please write) \_\_\_\_\_ years**

**2. What gender are you? (please tick one box)**

Male       Female

**3. Are you currently: (please tick one box)**

First year undergraduate       Second year undergraduate   
Third year undergraduate       Fourth year undergraduate   
Postgraduate

**4. What is your university major? (please write)**

**5. What nationality do you consider yourself to be; (please tick one box)**

|                      |                          |                               |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Australian           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese (including Taiwanese) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| New Zealand          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lebanese                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Italian              | <input type="checkbox"/> | English/Irish/Welsh/Scottish  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Filipino             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indian                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vietnamese           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hong Kong                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please write) | _____                    |                               |                          |

**6. What ethnic group do you consider yourself to be a member of? For example someone may be Australian-Italian (please write)**

**7. In what country did you complete the majority of your secondary school/high school education? (please tick one box)**

- |                            |                          |                          |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Australia                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | China (including Taiwan) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| New Zealand                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Philippines              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Italy                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vietnam                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lebanon                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | India                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| United Kingdom             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hong Kong                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please write) _____ |                          |                          |                          |

**8. What is your first language? (please tick one box)**

- |                             |                          |            |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| English                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Greek      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chinese                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Italian    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Arabic (including Lebanese) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spanish    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Korean                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Filipino                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hindi      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please write) _____  |                          |            |                          |

**9. What is the main language spoken at your home in Australia? (please tick one box)**

- |                             |                          |            |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| English                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Greek      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chinese                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Italian    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Arabic (including Lebanese) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spanish    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Korean                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Filipino                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hindi      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please write) _____  |                          |            |                          |

**10. Do you work: (please tick one box)**

- Full-time  Part-time  Don't Work   
Casual (less than 10 hours per week)   
Casual (10 or more hours per week)

**11. How much pressure do you put on yourself to achieve high grades? (please circle a number)**

- 1-----2-----3-----4  
None      Little      Moderate      Much

**12. How much pressure do others put on you to achieve high grades? (please circle a number)**

- 1-----2-----3-----4  
None      Little      Moderate      Much

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