Police, design, plan and manage: developing a framework for integrating staff roles and institutional policies into a plagiarism prevention strategy

Article *in* Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management · November 2014

DOI: 10.1080/1360080X.2014.957895

CITATIONS
14

READS
84

2 authors, including:

Christopher Walker
UNSW Sydney
12 PUBLICATIONS **57** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjhe20

Police, design, plan and manage: developing a framework for integrating staff roles and institutional policies into a plagiarism prevention strategy

Christopher Walker[a] & Melanie White[a]

[a] School of Social Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Published online: 01 Oct 2014.

To cite this article: Christopher Walker & Melanie White (2014): Police, design, plan and manage: developing a framework for integrating staff roles and institutional policies into a plagiarism prevention strategy, Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, DOI: 10.1080/1360080X.2014.957895

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2014.957895

Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 2014
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2014.957895

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Police, design, plan and manage: developing a framework for integrating staff roles and institutional policies into a plagiarism prevention strategy

Christopher Walker* and Melanie White

School of Social Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, Australia

When student plagiarism occurs, academic interest and institutional policy generally assume the fault rests with the student. This paper questions this assumption. We claim that plagiarism is a shared responsibility and a complex phenomenon that requires an ongoing calibration of the relative skills and experiences of students and staff in response to their respective personal and institutional pressures. This paper examines how teaching staff understand their responsibility in addressing plagiarism. Our findings suggest that a staff member's general understanding of their role in preventing plagiarism is related to their awareness of different contexts and sites across the institution (e.g., assessment task, course design, programme structure and institutional policies) and their ability to integrate them. Accordingly, this paper proposes a framework that integrates the differing roles of staff in plagiarism prevention and offers a stronger basis for the analysis and development of strategic action by schools and departments.

Keywords: plagiarism; policy; prevention; staff responsibility; strategic framework; student responsibility

Introduction

Student plagiarism is an issue of growing interest and concern for post-secondary institutions (Park, 2003; Sutherland-Smith, 2014). Whether deliberate or unintentional, when plagiarism is detected, academic interest and institutional policy generally assume that the fault rests with the student (MacDonald & Carroll, 2006; Sutherland-Smith, 2008). It seems an incontrovertible fact that the final responsibility to submit their own work lies with the student. This assumption informs two dominant plagiarism prevention models in educational practice. The 'ethical' model emphasises student integrity through specific course units or by means of a code of conduct to which students must adhere (East, 2010; Park, 2003; Sutherland-Smith & Saltmarch, 2009). This model depends on a prior socialisation process whereby students are already inculcated within an educational framework that entwines academic and personal integrity (Kiehl, 2006). The 'pedagogical' model attempts to circumvent plagiarism by teaching appropriate academic skills such as referencing, note-taking, summarising and researching (Devlin, 2006; Howard & Davies, 2009). Both ethical and pedagogical models explain plagiarism by upholding a norm against which students with poor judgment or character, inadequate academic training, emotional issues and inexperience are measured and when deemed necessary, are punished (Park, 2004; Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari, 2010).

*Corresponding author. Email: c.walker@unsw.edu.au

We argue that neither approach does enough to acknowledge that the responsibility for plagiarism is not borne by the student alone. We question the basic assumption of these two ethical and pedagogical models, and in so doing, we examine the extent to which academic teaching staff may inadvertently facilitate plagiarism. In our pursuit of this question, we have sought to analyse how the prevention and detection strategies of staff relate to the manner in which their work in learning and teaching is integrated with course, programme and institutional integrity polices and strategies.

Our research in this area has been undertaken with two aims. First, to develop an integrated framework that identifies the actions, sites and roles of academic staff in limiting opportunities for students to plagiarise; and second, to provide specific strategies for academic staff in preventing plagiarism at course, programme and broader institutional levels. We claim that plagiarism is a shared responsibility. In so doing, we argue that plagiarism is a complex phenomenon that requires an ongoing calibration of the relative skills and experiences of both students and staff in response to their respective personal and institutional pressures.

This paper reports on our first aim and develops a framework that helps to explain the roles of academic staff and their response to plagiarism detection and prevention in a broader institutional context. This framework has been central in shaping our response to the second aim that concerns identifying strategies for staff in preventing plagiarism. These strategies were included in a toolkit that was developed and circulated to staff to assist them in understanding their role and improve plagiarism detection and prevention. While not included in this paper the toolkit is available from the authors.

In progressing this work one of our guiding principles has been to strengthen the understanding that students, teachers and the broader institution share a responsibility for preventing plagiarism (Park, 2003; Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari, 2010). Our research finds that the general understanding of a staff member's responsibility for preventing plagiarism tends to relate to their awareness of the broader institutional context in which they are located. In other words, a general appreciation of the responsibility of a staff member in preventing plagiarism is related to their awareness of different contexts and sites across the institution (e.g., assessment task, course design, programme structure, faculty-wide practices and institutional policy) and their ability to integrate them. Accordingly, this paper proposes a framework that integrates the differing roles of staff in plagiarism prevention and offers a stronger basis for the analysis and development of strategic action by schools and departments.

Background

Plagiarism is generally defined as an act that involves using the work, ideas or designs of others and passing this off as one's own by failing to provide appropriate acknowledgement, either deliberately or through omission (Kenny, 2007; McGowan, 2005; Park, 2003). In this sense, plagiarism can be seen to reflect dishonest and unfair practice and represents a form of cheating (Park, 2003). However, plagiarism also occurs in cases where students lack the academic skills and experience in order to acknowledge their sources properly. Plagiarism refers at once to the deliberate intention to cheat and to the unintentional failure to acknowledge one's sources (usually due to a lack of understanding about academic culture and the importance of scholarly attribution). Both forms of plagiarism may appear to differ in degree insofar as they both constitute a failure to acknowledge work that is not one's own. However, insofar as the first constitutes a deliberate intention to mislead, it undermines one of the most basic codes of ethical

conduct in academic writing – the necessity of acknowledging another's work. Ethical models of plagiarism prevention prioritise this dimension of academic culture by viewing plagiarism from the perspective of academic (mis)conduct. Typically, the concern with academic conduct comes to shape institutional regimes of self-monitoring, detection and punishment. The second form of plagiarism typically stems from a lack of understanding about proper academic practice. Pedagogical models of plagiarism prevention typically adopt prevention strategies that are grounded in an educative approach that seeks to correct and train students in proper acknowledgement practice. In this paper, we will reserve the term 'plagiarism' for cases of deliberate cheating and adopt the language of 'plagiarism prevention' to designate the various efforts associated with developing academic skills and proper acknowledgement practices.

Factors that might influence and contribute to student plagiarism are well documented in the academic literature (Devlin & Gray, 2007; Insley, 2011; Kenny, 2007; Koh, Scully, & Woodliff, 2011; Park, 2003; Wilkinson, 2009). In fact, the growing amount of research and published reports on the subject suggests that the occurrence of plagiarism is increasing if not just at the level of institutional concern. Part of this concern relates to the growing availability of online sources of information from which individuals can effectively 'cut and paste' to simplify the process of forming their own work (East, 2010; Howard, 2007; Sutherland-Smith, 2008). To help minimise this, universities provide extensive information to staff and students on what they understand as influential determinants of student plagiarism. It is common for universities and broader consortiums (see the UK service www.plagiarismadvice.org for example) to provide resources and promote strategies that aim to assist staff and students in preventing and reducing the incidences of plagiarism (James, McInnis, & Devlin, 2002). This includes the provision of study skills information and services for students, guidance and advice on appropriate referencing techniques, the requirement for first year students to complete an online academic misconduct/plagiarism awareness quiz (see, for example, the ELISE quiz at University of New South Wales, Australia), tips and guides for staff on how to set 'plagiarism-resistant' questions and tasks (Hansen, Stith, & Tesdell, 2011), publication of the use of online similarity detection tools such as Turnitin (Chester, 2001; McGowan, 2005) and documentation of the investigative and review processes as well as the penalty regimes that are enacted in response to incidences of detected plagiarism (Devlin, 2006; Shababuddin, 2009).

Our research identifies two important understandings that emerge from the vast body of academic study into why students cheat and plagiarise. First, plagiarism is not necessarily always intentional (Fischer & Zigmond, 2011). The level and seriousness of plagiarism ranges along a continuum from accidental and unintentional (either through ignorance or lack of academic training and skill) through to deliberate (Devlin & Gray, 2007; McGowan, 2005; Morris, 2010; Park, 2003). This insight partly explains why many university guidelines and policies on academic misconduct and plagiarism allocate significant content to processes and measures around determining the seriousness of the breach (Sutherland-Smith, 2008; Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari, 2010). These aspects of institutional policy reflect a genuine concern that the penalty imposed is proportionate to the intent to cheat as well as the level of severity of cheating (Sutherland-Smith, 2010).

Second, both the practice of plagiarism and the recommended responses tend to represent an individualised approach that targets action by students or the teacher. The problem is either that the individual student fails to comply with required standards and/or individual teachers structure courses and assess in a manner that is less resistant to acts of plagiarism (Howard & Davies, 2009; McGowan, 2005). Institutional policies and

guidelines focus on the practice and provision of support for teachers who, if prepared and motivated, can take action in the course and on assessment tasks that fall within their boundaries of responsibility (James et al., 2002; Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari, 2010). *Preventative action* is the domain of individual teachers and focuses on what they can do in their respective courses (Morris, 2010) and *educative and punitive action* targets students and their personal study skills, attitudes and academic practices (Heckler, Rice, & Bryan, 2013; Howard & Davies, 2009; Sutherland-Smith, 2010). It is interesting to note however, that research acknowledges that the varying individualised responses from staff to plagiarism is one of the main factors that undermines institutional responses and strategies targeting plagiarism and academic misconduct (MacDonald & Carroll, 2006; Park, 2004). The mixed messages students receive from staff about plagiarism and cheating and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour is seen to contribute towards their general failure to understand and implement appropriate avoidance strategies (James et al., 2002; Wilkinson, 2009).

Research methodology and research questions

As noted earlier, this paper is the scholarly output from a larger body of work that involved the authors in the development of a plagiarism toolkit for academic staff. During the research period, we held institutional roles that were responsible for reviewing cases of suspected plagiarism and determining appropriate penalties. Our experience suggested that a holistic strategy that involved staff members more actively in plagiarism prevention would help to reduce the incidents of plagiarism.

A central concern of our inquiry was how academic teaching staff understood the extent of their responsibility in addressing and preventing plagiarism. We posed three questions that helped guide our analysis.

1. What approaches are adopted by academic staff to address student plagiarism? And what do these approaches reveal about their perception of who is responsible for plagiarism?
2. How do academic staff perceive their role in plagiarism prevention?
3. How might the efforts of individual academic staff members be integrated into a broader programme of teaching and university policy that addresses student plagiarism more effectively?

We adopted a qualitative approach to our research and conducted a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews with staff members who had different levels of teaching experience. All of our interviewees had teaching experience at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. All had reported and dealt with cases of plagiarism at some time during their careers. Our interviewees were recruited from the same academic unit within the one institution and the sample size represents approximately 10 per cent of all teaching staff in the unit. Staff were purposely selected to participate on the basis that they had reported instances of student plagiarism within the past 18 months. Staff received an invitation to voluntarily participate in the study. To our surprise, every invited staff member was enthusiastic to participate.

Our interview questions focused on staff understandings of plagiarism, factors that influence student plagiarism, how staff saw their responsibility for addressing and preventing plagiarism and their understanding of resources and mechanisms that would assist in the detection and prevention of plagiarism. The interview schedule can be found in the

Table 1. Interview data: experience, teacher training and academic level.

Teacher	Years of full-time teaching	Formal training in university Learning and Teaching	Academic level
1	5	Yes	Lecturer
2	2	Yes	Lecturer
3	8	Yes	Lecturer
4	24	No	Senior Lecturer
5	7	Yes	Senior Lecturer
6	8	Yes	Associate Professor
7	30	Yes	Associate Professor

Appendix to this paper. The use of semi-structured interviews made it possible for respondents to answer on their own but still created an opportunity for comparability across individuals (May, 2001). The inclusion of open-ended questions also allowed us to explore issues and experiences of particular interest to our interviewees in discussion.

Table 1 lists key characteristics for each interviewee. This includes years of full-time teaching experience, academic level and whether the staff member had any formal training in university learning and teaching. Although our sample size is small, it has the benefit of allowing for more detailed analysis which in turn helps to build a better understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon of plagiarism prevention (Holliday, 2002; Stake, 2004).

The average interview time was one hour during which notes were taken. Short summary documents were produced by the authors immediately following the interviews that identified the key points from each discussion. We subsequently reflected on the themes and developed insights from each interview. Some themes were built up from the interview data and others were drawn from academic literature and linked to relevant sections of the interview material. This approach is supported by the literature on qualitative investigation since it allows for the development of conceptual understandings as research progresses (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Creswell, 1994). Our collection, sorting and analysis of the interview results allowed us to reflect on our general approach, review our concepts and to validate our findings as the research process progressed.

Results and immediate findings

Generally, we found that regardless of levels of experience, the staff we interviewed had a good understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and academic misconduct. Each staff member understood plagiarism to be the reproduction of another's work without appropriate attribution, and distinguished between intentional and unintentional plagiarism. Most seemed to feel that the majority of cases they dealt with were likely to have been 'unintentional'. Here, unintentional plagiarism was understood to reflect either a lack of academic preparedness or an inadequate understanding of academic knowledge and conventions. Intentional plagiarism was considered very serious, but generally felt to occur on a less frequent basis. Here, some mention was given to the recycling of a student's own work for another purpose, and/or submitting the same essay for different courses. Typically, our interviewees held the view that most students did not intend to plagiarise, but attributed the impulse to 'cheat' to time pressures, emotional challenges

and insufficient preparation. As one respondent put it, 'Some students cheat because they feel desperate' and this observation of the mix of desperation and poor academic practice has been found in other work (Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari, 2010).

Responsibility for plagiarism

For the majority of our interview subjects, the responsibility for plagiarism rested firmly with the student, and that the temptation to plagiarise could be attributed to different factors such as: low levels of confidence, time pressures resulting from juggling paid employment, poor language skills, cultural and family pressures in addition to an excessive proliferation of online sources of information that encourages students to replicate the work of others without proper attribution. These observations are consistent with influential factors documented in the research literature (Devlin & Gray, 2007; Koh et al., 2011; Park, 2003; Wilkinson, 2009). Most participants maintained that educative strategies aimed at first year students were an effective preventative strategy. They repeatedly referenced the value of early intervention in order to ensure that students become aware of university requirements and standards because entry-level students are considered less likely to deliberately engage in cheating activities. Even so, all agreed that it was important for students to understand the seriousness and consequences of plagiarism, and that one important consequence was that they should develop their academic skills through an educative policy.

Interestingly, only half of our interview subjects acknowledged their own responsibility in plagiarism prevention beyond reviewing institutional policy, guidelines and undertaking some form of detection. Some observed that course and assessment design can influence opportunities for plagiarism especially where essay or exam questions are recycled from one year to the next. In general, those more experienced staff members acknowledged the role of assessment and course design as a significant feature of effective plagiarism prevention. Here, they cited the need to move beyond individual efforts in favour of a more systematic institutional response. One means of achieving this was to link the learning objectives of a particular course with the learning objectives of the different levels of the programme in order to produce the kind of academic integrity that aligns with a student's capacity to develop their own interpretive and analytical skills. As one interviewee stated: 'I describe plagiarism in a manner and language that is constituted within the discourse of the course, so that the ideas and practice is [sic] integrated with the course content'.

Plagiarism prevention – barriers to detection

Staff consistently cited institutional pressures to balance teaching and research as a primary challenge in addressing plagiarism even in the course of acknowledging their responsibility to address it. Frankly, plagiarism detection is time-intensive even with internet search engines such as Google or with plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin (Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari, 2010). Our interview subjects acknowledged that the means by which staff manage their teaching responsibilities can influence the rate of plagiarism reporting. Being creative and regularly introducing changes to assessment task design helps to discourage plagiarism as much as avoiding the recycling of essay questions and assessment tasks from year-to-year. In short, if staff laziness and lack of creativity can encourage a student to cheat, this same laziness and lack of creativity can serve as a barrier to detection.

Having said this, all staff acknowledged that the effective analysis and review of student assessment tasks takes a not insignificant amount of time. Many of our respondents noted that being active in the prevention, detection and reporting of plagiarism adds significantly to their workload. Without institutional support this level of effort is difficult to sustain. Concerns about workload pressures have been documented in the literature with 'lack of time' also noted as an excuse for inaction (Coren, 2011). Interestingly, in this study these pressures have shaped strategic action rather than inaction. Some staff members acknowledged that they were selective about where they put their 'plagiarism detection efforts', and would decide whether they would put effort into upper year or entry-level courses, or mid-semester assessments or concentrate only on final assessment tasks. This kind of strategic thinking with respect to plagiarism detection accompanies an awareness that such effort competes with other time pressures, such as and most significantly, 'the need to publish or perish'. In such an environment, plagiarism detection is not a priority, particularly where institutional reward systems favour research outputs.

Some respondents observed that structural factors such as large class sizes and the impersonal nature of modern university teaching makes 'getting away with plagiarism much easier'. Course sizes have increased significantly, and accordingly, it is not uncommon for students to be one of 600 or more students participating in a course. In this environment, the opportunity to engage with the lecturer is limited and remains a distant experience (online or in the lecture theatre). Students engage with tutors who, in the majority of cases at this institution, are casual staff with minimal direct engagement with the culture of the school. Infrequent and casual staff were viewed to have less vested interest in detecting plagiarism because they are not sufficiently connected to the professional practice of the organisation, tend to lack an awareness of institutional policies and are less embedded in the knowledge culture of what constitutes good academic practice (Sutherland-Smith, 2010). For casual staff, the absence of remuneration for additional time spent investigating and following up on instances of plagiarism is a further barrier to detective action. All this has implications for the student experience – a student's relative anonymity simultaneously emboldens consideration of and deliberate intention to plagiarise and hinders effective detection (Heckler et al., 2013).

Plagiarism prevention – barriers to reporting

Some staff argued that the absence of standardised reporting practices and/or a lack of compliance with these practices undermined transparency and equity in addressing incidents of plagiarism. Interestingly, one staff member viewed standardised 'one shoe fits all' models of plagiarism prevention as an encroachment on their professional discretion and capacity to build trust with students. This respondent maintained that it is the strength of the interpersonal relationship that a teacher builds with his or her students that is most effective in addressing plagiarism. Techniques such as gentle shaming and personal pressure were considered to be more effective in changing student conduct than impersonal institutional committees charged with investigating plagiarism. The development of independent strategies and approaches by staff may also come about where they suspect cheating but feel they lack sufficient proof. This is consistent with findings in the literature that note independent teacher interaction with students suspected of cheating is considered to have a positive impact on individual students and then, through subsequent word-of-mouth, on the wider cohort (Coren, 2011). In this work, we also observe that the desire to work as an autonomous actor as opposed to a mere cog in the

institutional wheel of the university bureaucracy was a significant factor influencing staff who refuse to participate in more formal reporting processes. We see this as indicative of a general preference amongst some staff for discretion in decision-making, as well as a means of avoiding time-intensive bureaucratic procedures.

Others who participated in institutional reporting structures tended to agree that the formalisation of approaches to plagiarism prevention has resulted in a slow bureaucratic process that discourages staff from engaging more fully in reporting efforts. One respondent maintained that 'Bureaucratic procedures undermine speed, efficiency and expediency'. Here, the detailed and lengthy reporting processes were generally seen as a barrier for those who actively engaged in plagiarism prevention activities. Similarly, the tendency for decisions to be overturned on student appeal at executive levels of the university undermines staff confidence in plagiarism prevention procedures, and serves as a disincentive to reporting. Several respondents cited instances where they felt that cheating students 'got away with it' through appeal, and felt as a consequence, that their efforts were neither recognised nor valued.

Some staff admitted that they refrained from reporting plagiarism when they perceived that an investigation might negatively influence student progression, especially for upper-year students. In such instances, respondents were concerned that the impact of a penalty for plagiarism may be significantly greater than that warranted by the offence. For example, failing an essay may seem appropriate for the offence in question. But if awarding a failure also means that the student would fail the course, and worse, that such a failure would mean an inability to graduate at the end of the semester, then staff members admitted that they might prefer to deal with the situation locally rather than to report the offence.

Analysis of results and development of a conceptual framework

Let us return to consider the questions posed at the beginning of this paper. In the first instance the results show that academic staff adopt different approaches to address student plagiarism. These range from reviewing school and university plagiarism policies with students in order to encourage rule compliance at one end of the spectrum, to a concerted attention to assessment design and the revision of essay questions from year to year at the other. Staff are strategic in the use of their time and where they direct their effort. They also give careful consideration to the consequences of reporting plagiarism. Some staff understand and follow formalised prevention and reporting processes, are active in integrating strategies into the teaching, assessment and planning of courses, while others are more individualistic with their approach, often with a focus on systematic detection and punishment. Our analysis suggests that a pedagogical emphasis on rule compliance tends to correlate with the general perception that staff responsibility for preventing plagiarism is oriented toward cultivating student *awareness* of the rules whereas the concern for assessment design and question revision reveals a sensitivity toward developing a student *understanding* of the rules. In other words, those staff members who felt that their obligation to plagiarism prevention was satisfied by reviewing the school's plagiarism policy guidelines in class with students generally held the view that plagiarism was primarily a student responsibility. But those staff members who avoided recycling essay questions and designed low-risk assessment tasks maintained that academic staff had a more extensive role in minimising plagiarism. These staff members understood that plagiarism prevention involves both a responsibility for preventing cheating and for teaching proper academic practice about acknowledging the work of others. This seems

relatively straightforward. However, we think the more difficult question is how to integrate the efforts of individual academic staff into a broader analytical framework that addresses student plagiarism more effectively, connecting both individual staff effort with course and programme strategies as well as with faculty and university policies. Such an approach demonstrates an understanding that plagiarism prevention is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders (staff, students and university), and that it involves systematic efforts to frustrate the impulse to cheat as well as education in academic skills-building.

We would like to suggest that an important first step in addressing this question is to develop an adequate conceptualisation of staff perceptions of their responsibility in minimising plagiarism and the strategies available to them. One approach for appreciating the relationship between the different strategies used to detect and prevent plagiarism is to adopt the heuristic device of a well-known professional role such as police officer or architect. This helps to identify the specific responsibilities and/or approaches nominally associated with different plagiarism prevention strategies – both at the level of preventing deliberate plagiarism and educating students about appropriate acknowledgement practices. Here, our research shows that a staff member's appreciation of available methods and strategies varies according to the nature of their experience at course, programme and school levels.

In the first instance, the role of *police officer* correlates to those staff members who discharge their responsibility for plagiarism prevention by presenting the plagiarism policy guidelines to their students. Characteristically, such teachers are concerned with enforcement mechanisms that are conditioned by a primary concern with rule-compliance. They depend on students to adequately (and accurately) self-police, and this demand tends to be satisfied by ensuring that students *know* the rules (in contrast with *understanding* the rules) (Howard & Davies, 2009; Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari, 2010). Those staff members who adopt the perspective of police officer tend to rely on software such as Turnitin as well as their own expertise and other techniques to detect plagiarism. Here, activity is focused on detection, reporting and then appropriate punishment and/or education. Such plagiarism prevention strategies depend on the successful internalisation of expectations of 'ethical' conduct at the expense of educative efforts to ensure that students *understand* proper acknowledgement practice. In other words, they tend to assume that students are primarily responsible for plagiarism prevention, and tend to lump cases of deliberate academic misconduct with those that exhibit a lack of knowledge about academic acknowledgement practice.

Those staff members who have a greater appreciation of the way each individual assessment task is situated in relation to objectives and learning outcomes of the course can be seen to adopt the perspective of *architect.* The architect is aware of the importance of assessment design in minimising opportunities for plagiarism by means of a progressive staging of assessment tasks from the identification of an essay topic or research question to the development of an essay proposal to the writing of an essay. Such summative tasks can be complemented by non-traditional assessments that discourage students from turning to the Internet for shortcuts. These may include reflection journals, peer-review tasks and video or poster projects. Having said this, the most important aspect of the architect's preventative strategy is to consider question design in writing tasks such as essays. Not only is it important to consider the appropriate level of difficulty in assigning set-questions, but also it is equally important to assign open-ended questions that do not have a pre-determined answer. Ultimately, those staff members who demonstrated the sensibility of the architect realised the importance of revising and updating their questions on a regular basis. At this level, there may be less plagiarism prevention

and detection activity during the process of course delivery and more upfront planning and analysis during course design and preparation as well as at end of semester review once results and student performance has been observed. This level exhibits an awareness of the extent to which plagiarism prevention involves a shared responsibility for preventing deliberate cheating and for learning proper acknowledgement practice.

Staff members who performed academic administrative roles that involved programme convening or curriculum development tended to display attributes associated with the role of *city planner*. These city planners tend to appreciate the relationship between 'course' and 'programme' levels in their plagiarism prevention strategies. They tend to initiate reviews of assessment tasks across the programme, and develop a schedule of progressive assessment tasks that increased in complexity from first year through to the final year of study. City planners also have a view for how a programme of study may be structured to develop student study skills. They may even see students as a teaching resource, guiding and working with other students as role models, passing on good academic practice and hence assisting in plagiarism prevention. The efforts of the city planner are complemented by those of the senior administration such as the Head of School or Departmental Chair who display the sensibilities of the *public health manager*. These staff members have an overview of the different programmes within the School, and coordinate strategies across courses and programmes to detect and report plagiarism. Typically, these efforts are guided by the principles of fairness, consistency and equity, and are enhanced by the knowledge of university guidelines along with the maintenance of a School-based plagiarism register. At these upper levels, activity is focused on policies, guidelines and understandings of good practice. Tasks are more analytical, investigative and have a focus on relationships between components that constitute a programme or school-wide approach to plagiarism prevention and detection. This might include for example, a bi-annual review of assessment tasks across all courses that constitute a three year programme, or school-wide staff training to build awareness of plagiarism policy and procedures as well as understanding access and use of the plagiarism register.

Figure 1 illustrates these roles in a sequential and hierarchical relationship. How these roles relate to specific plagiarism detection and prevention strategies is also specified. Our Toolkit that was produced from this research identifies specific activities that staff and academic units might consider when taking action at each of these levels (student/teacher, course, programme, school) and by staff occupying the associated roles.

This explanation of the differing roles that staff may undertake in plagiarism prevention as responsibility shared between staff member and student is an effective reference point for schools and heads of departments when critiquing their own organisational approach towards plagiarism. The value of this framework is in the way it connects staff approaches and action to individual circumstances, knowledge and preferences. Staff preferences for individual action are linked to self-perceptions of role and this relates to key reference points that support and enhance plagiarism detection and prevention (policing activity, course and programme design, school and institutional policies). The implications for academic units that draw on this framework for reflection and analysis is that they may find resources and effort can be more strategically deployed to influence the incidences of plagiarism. For example, the analysis may show that staff of the unit undertake significant policing at the expense of more effective preventative strategies at the course and programme level; tasks more aligned to the role of *architect* and *city planner*. If, by raising staff awareness about their potential roles in plagiarism prevention, policing efforts can be redirected toward course design, programme structure and the better integration of institutional policies and practices, it is likely that policing work can

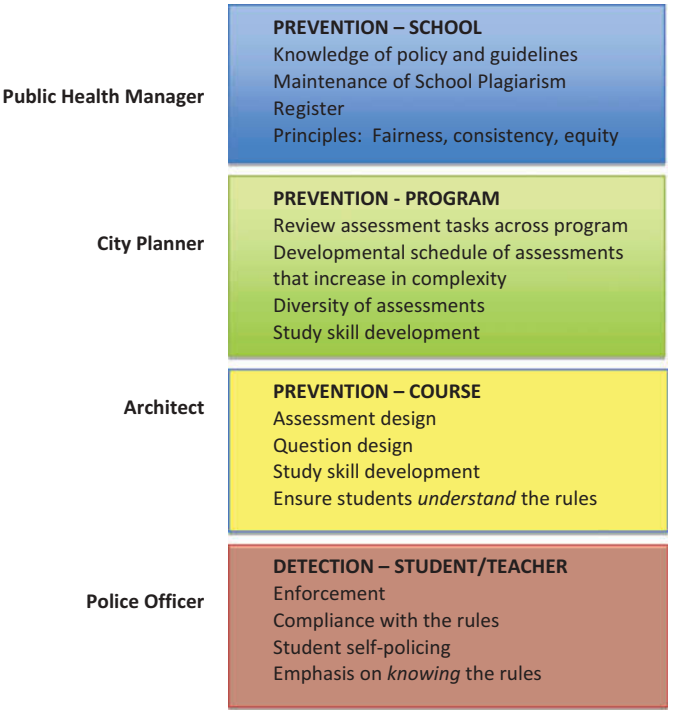

Figure 1. Plagiarism prevention and detection roles.

be significantly reduced and more robust and enduring approaches towards plagiarism prevention be instituted. This conceptual framework helps to ensure that any directed shift in staff effort can occur within a broader understanding of how new action in learning and teaching, course and programme design links to student study skills and understanding, as well as to school and institutional policies and guidelines. It also helps to ensure that students and staff exercise an awareness that they all share a responsibility to prevent plagiarism in both its deliberate and unintentional forms.

Our study shows that staff attention and action (or inaction) is influenced by the way they perceive student attitudes and practices around plagiarism. Our framework of individual staff roles effectively links different types of plagiarism prevention and detection strategies to an integrated hierarchy that reflects organisational structure and relations. This helps both the analysis and understanding of current practice. In addition, the use of our framework can help guide action that seeks a more strategic integration of plagiarism detection and prevention efforts and to highlight the mutual responsibilities of students and staff in preventing cheating and developing proper academic skills.

Conclusion

Our research demonstrates that the kinds of strategies and responses adopted by staff members relate to their participation at course, programme or school levels. Most staff members adopt the role of police officer simply because their primary responsibilities are with teaching and convening courses. Those with more administrative experience tend to have a broader appreciation of the range of demands and strategies for action at the

different levels of school governance. Here, they tend to be more concerned with applying and developing the school or university learning and teaching policies on plagiarism prevention. Understanding the roles, actions and the network of relationships amongst those with an interest in plagiarism is central to developing an effective strategy (Sutherland-Smith, 2010). If the university is analogous to a city, and its students and staff members are its citizens, then it might be possible to conclude that its effective governance depends on the overlapping and reinforcing roles of its police officers, architects, city planners and public health managers. A key challenge for academic managers and leaders is how they go about harnessing the efforts of these participants into a coherent and sustainable strategy. Our framework aims to provide some guidance in achieving this outcome.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of New South Wales [grant number PS13564].

References

Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. W. (2010). *Analysing qualitative data: Systematic approaches*. London: SAGE.

Chester, G. (2001). *Plagiarism detection and prevention: Final report on the Joint Information Systems Committee electronic plagiarism detection project*. London: Joint Information Systems Committee. Retrieved from http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/plagiarism/plagiarism.pdf

Coren, A. (2011). Turning a blind eye: Faculty who ignore student cheating. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, *9*(4), 291–305. doi:10.1007/s10805-011-9147-y

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London: SAGE.

Devlin, M. (2006). Policy, preparation, and prevention: Proactive minimisation of student plagiarism. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *28*(1), 45–58. doi:10.1080/13600800500283791

Devlin, M., & Gray, K. (2007). In their own words: A qualitative study of the reasons Australian University students plagiarise. *Higher Education Research & Development [HERDSA]*, *26*(2), 181–198. doi:10.1080/07294360701310805

East, J. (2010). Judging plagiarism: A problem of morality and convention. *Higher Education*, *59*(1), 69–83. doi:10.1007/s10734-009-9234-9

Fischer, B. A., & Zigmond, M. J. (2011). Educational approaches for discouraging plagiarism. *Urologic Oncology: Seminars and Original Investigations*, *29*(1), 100–103. doi:10.1016/j.urolonc.2010.11.014

Hansen, B., Stith, D., & Tesdell, L. S. (2011). Plagiarism: What's the big deal? *Business Communication Quarterly*, *74*(2), 188–191. doi:10.1177/1080569911404695

Heckler, N. C., Rice, M., & Bryan, C. H. (2013). Turnitin systems: A deterrent to plagiarism in college classrooms. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, *45*(3), 229–248. doi:10.1080/15391523.2013.10782604

Holliday, A. (2002). *Doing and writing qualitative research*. London: SAGE.

Howard, R. M. (2007). Understanding "internet plagiarism". *Computers and Composition*, *24*(1), 3–15. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2006.12.005

Howard, R. M., & Davies, L. J. (2009). Plagiarism in the internet age. *Educational Leadership*, *66*(6), 64–67. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx

Insley, R. (2011). Managing plagiarism: A preventative approach. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *74*(2), 183–187. doi:10.1177/1080569911404058

James, R., McInnis, C., & Devlin, M. (2002). *Assessing learning in Australian universities*. Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education [CSHE], The University of Melbourne for the Australian Universities Teaching Committee, Federal Department of Education Science and Training [DEST]. Retrieved from http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/docs/PlagMain.pdf

Kenny, D. (2007). Student plagiarism and professional practice. *Nurse Education Today*, *27*(1), 14–18. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2006.02.004

Kiehl, E. (2006). Using an ethical decision-making model to determine consequences for student plagiarism. *Journal of Nursing Education*, *45*(6), 199–203. Retrieved from http://www.healio.com/journals/jne

Koh, H. P., Scully, G., & Woodliff, D. R. (2011). The impact of cumulative pressure on accounting students' propensity to commit plagiarism: An experimental approach. *Accounting & Finance*, *51*(4), 985–1005. doi:10.1111/j.1467-629X.2010.00381.x

MacDonald, R., & Carroll, J. (2006). Plagiarism—A complex issue requiring a holistic institutional approach. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *31*(2), 233–245. doi:10.1080/02602930500262536

May, T. (2001). *Social research: Issues, methods and process* (3rd ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.

McGowan, U. (2005). Plagiarism detection and prevention: Are we putting the cart before the horse? In A. Brew & C. Asmar (Eds.), *Higher education in a changing world. Proceedings of the HERDSA conference* (pp. 287–293). Sydney. Retrieved from http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2005/pdf/refereed/paper_412.pdf

Morris, E. (2010). *Supporting academic integrity: Approaches and resources for higher education*. York, UK: The Higher Education Academy [HEA], Joint Information Systems Committee [JISC] and Academic Integrity Service. Retrieved from https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/SupportingAcademicIntegrity_v2_0.pdf

Park, C. (2003). In other (people's) words: Plagiarism by university students–Literature and lessons. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *28*(5), 471–488. doi:10.1080/02602930301677

Park, C. (2004). Rebels without a clause: Towards an institutional framework for dealing with plagiarism by students. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *28*(3), 291–306. doi:10.1080/0309877042000241760

Shababuddin, S. (2009). Plagiarism in academia. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *21*(3), 353–359. Retrieved from http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/

Stake, R. E. (2004). *Standards-based and responsive evaluation*. London: SAGE.

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2008). *Plagiarism, the internet and student learning: Improving academic integrity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2010). Retribution, deterrence and reform: The dilemmas of plagiarism management in universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *32*(1), 5–16. doi:10.1080/13600800903440519

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2014). Legality, quality assurance and learning: Competing discourses of plagiarism management in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *36*(1), 29–42. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2013.844666

Sutherland-Smith, W., & Pecorari, D. (2010). *Policy and practice in two academic settings: How the administrative structures of Australian and Swedish universities serve a culture of honesty*. Paper presented at the 4th International Plagiarism Conference, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne. Retrieved from http://dro.deakin.edu.au/view/DU:30031166

Sutherland-Smith, W., & Saltmarch, S. (2009). *Plagiarism, ethics and education: Where to now?* Paper presented at the 4th Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity [4APCEI], University of Wollongong, Wollongong. Retrieved from http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1036&context=apcei

Wilkinson, J. (2009). Staff and student perceptions of plagiarism and cheating. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *20*(2), 98–105. Retrieved from http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/

Appendix

Why do students cheat?
Interview Schedule

Background Information Questions

- How many years have you been teaching (F/T, P/T)?

– Have you completed any formal programme on University Learning and Teaching (eg, the Foundations of University Learning and Teaching offered by this institution), or a similar programme at another University?

Understanding of topic

Q1. Can you give us an indication of your understanding of what constitutes plagiarism?

Occurrence and spread of activity

Q2. How extensive do you think plagiarism is amongst the student body in this faculty?

Q3. What factors do you think influence the occurrence of plagiarism to the level you have just described?

Q4. Can you describe what you think the general attitude and practice of staff is towards academic writing and research?

We now want to talk more specifically about staff and their responsibility towards plagiarism.

Q5. What barriers inhibit staff from detecting plagiarism?

Q6. What barriers inhibit staff from staff reporting plagiarism?

Resources and processes

Q7. What supports and resources do you think would benefit teachers in detecting and reporting plagiarism?

– Is it learning to use Turnitin [an internet-based plagiarism detector]?

– It is knowing more about the design of assessment

Q8. Of the formal mechanisms that are in place to deal with plagiarism, which ones do you think are effective and which ones are ineffective?

Other

Q9. Is there anything you would like to add to our investigation into plagiarism/?

Supplementary

Q10. Do you think there is a distinct cultural difference between 'New Hire' staff and more longer-term staff in their attitude towards plagiarism?