Plagiarism: The ethical power and place of the teacher

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Abstract

Despite the introduction of electronic detection software in most universities, plagiarism remains a widespread problem. Complex contextual factors influence student plagiarism behaviours, and while the forbidden and unethical nature of intentional forms of this misconduct by students is almost universally accepted, the rule-based and ethical responsibilities for teachers have received less attention. This paper looks at the theoretical and practical origins and directions of this responsibility, the published documents available to lecturers and students at New Zealand universities and selected polytechnics, and how the term “ethical responsibility” might be operationalised in the area of plagiarism, such that this responsibility is shifted from aspirational concept to effective action. The ethical models involved in plagiarism differ for students and teachers, since the teacher is not the central person in the act. However any “sins of omission” on the part of the teacher who fails to take proactive steps to prevent plagiarism, or takes no action when cases are identified, place the teacher in the same arena of unethical behaviour as the student who achieves this through his/her “sins of commission” of plagiarism. Lack of action for good can be just as unethical as action for harm. New Zealand tertiary organisations all publish rules on student plagiarism, but the documentation on staff responsibilities is variable, ranging from the aspirational to the specific. Honour codes for students and professional codes of conduct for teachers can promote positive behaviour, but are not solutions on their own. Despite the irksome or time-consuming nature of some of the responsibilities, teachers owe a professional and ethical duty to their students, their organisations, their community and themselves to act as ethical role models, and take action to prevent, identify and/or penalise plagiarism.

Introduction

Plagiarism in its multiplicity of forms is a continuing unpleasant presence in academia, despite the recent introduction of various electronic detection mechanisms. The large survey (71,071 undergraduates, 11,279 graduates, 12,316 faculty and 1,747 teaching assistants) carried out in the US and Canada from 2002 to 2005 by the Duke University Center for Academic Integrity showed disturbingly high levels of a variety
of dishonest behaviours (McCabe, 2005). An Australian study (Sheard, Dick, Markham, Macdonald & Walsh, 2002) found a high incidence of lower-end cheating, with a lesser but still problematic number of higher-end transgressions. In reviewing the incidence and treatment of plagiarism in the United Kingdom, Larkham and Manns (2002) note the problems of obtaining information from universities concerned about privacy and possibly reputation. However it is evident that the cut-and-paste facilities of word-processing programs combined with the ubiquity of the internet and on-line journals have substantially increased the opportunity for and incidence of plagiarism (Bennett, 2005; Chandrasoma, Thompson & Pennycook, 2004) while paradoxically the internet-based service of the Turnitin® program reports that it has contributed to a reduced incidence of plagiarism (iParadigms, LLC, 2006), although this claim relates only to electronically traceable material. While there is disagreement in the literature about definitions, precise incidence, and research methodologies, there is consensus that plagiarism is widespread.

The forbidden and unethical nature of plagiarism from the student perspective is almost universally accepted, however the ethical position and responsibilities of the teacher¹ are also of critical importance, although receiving less attention in the literature. While the general nature of this ethical responsibility might be readily acknowledged, this paper investigates in more particular detail the theoretical and practical origins and directions of this responsibility, the published documents available to lecturers and students at New Zealand universities and selected polytechnics, and how the term “ethical responsibility” might be operationalised in the area of plagiarism, such that this responsibility is shifted from aspirational concept to effective action. As professionals it is appropriate that we examine not only the higher ideals of our ethical principles but also the sometimes irksome practical ways that these principles need to be manifested.

In addressing such a wide-reaching topic, it is necessary to note some limitations. The major focus of this paper is the tertiary academic environment, while acknowledging

¹ The term “teacher” is used to cover all those who teach in the tertiary environment, including but not limited to professors, lecturers and tutors.
that other areas such as business face significant ethical issues (Ethics Resource Center, 2007). The ethical case is presented in general terms, since a full ethical analysis is beyond the scope of this paper. The practical focus of the study has been limited to New Zealand; specifically the eight universities and three largest polytechnics.

To plagiarise is defined in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (1995) as to “take and use (the thoughts, writings, inventions, etc. of another person) as one’s own; pass off the thoughts etc. of (another person) as one’s own (p.1043). Most academic organisations in New Zealand use a virtually identical definition, and while academics may almost universally lay claim to authorial rights, the legal view can be more complex. In 1938 the United States Law Review (Schweitzer, p.439) reiterated the US legal position that although patent laws protected ideas applied to mechanical devices or processes, and copyright protected ideas expressed in a particular format, “Ideas in the abstract, however, have consistently been denied the status of a property right, regardless of their originality.” Since ideas are not legally regarded as property, they cannot therefore be subject to theft - although plagiarism is derived from the Latin word *plagium*, meaning stealing a slave or child (Green, 2002). Until a concept is converted to a tangible form, legal protection cannot be sought. This apparent limitation has four partial explanations:

- Authors may not claim legal “ownership” of ideas, but they expect attribution (Green, 2002).
- Legal and ethical judgements are not always synonymous.
- Students and academic writers are part of a community whose rules may lack legal power, but may still exert normative power.
- Most academic organisations have policies and regulations by which staff and students must abide, regardless of whether the rule is a categorical or hypothetical imperative.

This US model is not universal however, as Green (2002, p.206) notes that in Europe and other countries, a “doctrine of moral rights is well established”, particularly as related to an author’s right of attribution. While the World Intellectual Property
Organization’s Berne Convention (1979) with 163 current signatories does refer in many places to authors’ “rights” and “protection”, this is qualified by Article 6bis, Item (3) which states “The means of redress for safeguarding the rights granted by this Article shall be governed by the legislation of the country where protection is claimed.” Osen (1997) also notes that the restrictions imposed by the Berne Convention can limit creativity and some scholarly pursuits.

Apart from the legal versus ethical position of plagiarism, the term also encompasses a scale of offences of varying magnitude, the perception of the severity of which could also be said to be culturally grounded (Larkham & Manns, 2002). “Minor” plagiarism might begin with small, possibly unintentional, errors of referencing or paraphrasing (Standler, 2000), through collaboration with another student on an individual assignment (Sheard et al., 2002) across a continuum to more “major” forms of plagiarism such as the use of an entire work of someone else (Bennett, 2005) or paying someone else to take an examination for you (Sheard et al., 2002).

These concepts of authorship and plagiarism raise a complex range of contextual and cultural issues (Park, 2003; Valentine, 2006). Valentine (p.90) proposes that “plagiarism involves social relationships, attitudes and values as much as it involves texts and rules of citation”, and that the issue should not be seen as a “binary of honest and dishonest” since there is a multi-layered interplay of the requirements of a particular academic discourse; students negotiating an identity within this discourse; intentional or unintentional behaviour; culture-based models of “work” and its value; and academics’ judgements on behaviours which they describe as plagiarism. She suggests (p.106) that students’ citation and referencing instruction should be accompanied by an explication of how and why the academic context demands specific behaviours, so that plagiarism and citation are seen as literacy “practices rather than as skills that result from rule following and the stable and singular identity of an honest person.” Pennycook (1996) describes experiences in China and Hong Kong where students were proud of the ability to memorise and reproduce texts, an action viewed as plagiarism by Western academics, and probes the shifting ground of “how Western views on textual ownership have developed” (p.204). While Plato and
Shakespeare built on earlier works without attribution, the 17th and 18th centuries saw the development of the role of the author as individual, a position now often viewed as a moral absolute; the post-modernist Foucauldian view of the untenability of the author’s position has not yet taken root in academia. The multi-cultural classroom may therefore contain students enculturated with varying views of the ethics of reproducing the words or ideas of others. Liu (2005) however challenges the position that views on plagiarism are culture-specific, and that copying the work of others is acceptable academic behaviour in China or other Asian countries, citing his own university education in China during which time he was clearly instructed that plagiarism was unacceptable, and Chinese composition textbooks containing the same viewpoint.

Howard (1992) and Chandrasoma et al. (2004) have also challenged the prevailing plagiarism definitions and paradigms. Howard proposes that many practices judged to be plagiarism and penalised accordingly should instead be viewed as transitional composition strategies. For example the “patchwriting” (p.234) process in which students use the basic structure of an original piece, then make varying levels of vocabulary, grammar or syntax changes, she interprets as being a developmental stage of summary writing, “a preliminary way of participating in unfamiliar discourse” (p.239), rather than an intentionally dishonest act. Chandrasoma et al. (2004, p.171) suggest that plagiarism should be reframed “in terms of transgressive and nontransgressive intertextuality”. In similar vein to Valentine (2006) and Bennett (2005), they see plagiarism as deriving from many personal, contextual and developmental factors. Howard’s “patchwriting” thus falls into the nontransgressive category since its motivation derives more from a lack of confidence in the personal voice when confronted with the language and conventions of unfamiliar academic discourse than from a desire to deceive. Indeed, motivation is the first of 10 criteria that Chandrasoma et al. (2004, p.189) suggest be applied to cases of possible transgressive intertextuality: “intentionality, development, identity, resistance, student epistemologies, common knowledge, mediated discourse, interdisciplinarity, variability, and task type”.

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The discourse of plagiarism therefore, in common with most ethical issues, does not present an unambiguous picture of blame or guilt, right or wrong. Teachers inhabit an environment which in practical terms regards plagiarism as a sub-set of the broader offence of academic dishonesty, both of which acts can be described as threats to academic integrity. While debate progresses on the nature of plagiarism, teachers must continue to balance an understanding of these philosophical challenges, with the practical demands of the classroom and their organisations.

**Plagiarism, Ethics and Students**

While this paper focuses on the ethical responsibilities of the teacher, it is important also to identify the influences that contribute to the presence or absence of student plagiarism, since the teacher’s attitudes and behaviours (see Figure 1) are one of the direct influences on the student’s predisposition to, or the subsequent control of plagiarism, and the one with the most immediate connection with the student’s “classroom experience”. If one accepts the unethical nature of the student’s behaviour, on the basis of the teacher’s causative influence, he/she would also appear to be ethically accountable.

Granitz and Loewy (2007) have investigated the ethical reasoning behind students’ justification of their plagiarism behaviours: “deontology, utilitarianism, rational self-interest, Machiavellianism, cultural relativism, or situational ethics” (p.293). The rankings (p.299) show that deontology ranked highest at 41.8 percent; for these students, while the abstract concept of plagiarism is acknowledged to be wrong, they did not acknowledge that their own specific behaviours constituted plagiarism. Ashworth and Bannister (1997) had commented on similar perceptual differences between academic institutions and students, and Valentine (2006) notes the complication of a culturally-determined discourse of plagiarism ethics. The implication of this for teachers is the imperative for providing culturally-informed, pedagogically-sound instruction. The 18.4 percent ranking for Machiavellianism - doing whatever one can get away with for personal benefit - indicates that despite the distaste of some, policing methods are necessary, while the 19.9 percent situational
ethics ranking shows that students need assistance in dealing with the external influences used to rationalise their plagiarism. The authors also note the important effect of teachers modelling ethical behaviour. Townley and Parsell (2004) comment that despite practical obstacles, building students' awareness of academic community and its concomitant responsibilities is the most effective way of promoting ethical behaviour.

![Diagram of factors influencing student plagiarism]

**Figure 1. Some factors influencing student plagiarism.**

Honour codes have shown some effect on reducing academic dishonesty in US colleges (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999, 2002; McCabe, 2000; Scanlan, 2006; Whitaker, 2007). These codes range from student-centred traditional forms such
as those practised at some private colleges, to modified shared responsibility systems such as those at Kansas State University (2007) and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (2000; Dodd, 2007). Students in these studies comment that it is the presence of the code rather than its policing processes which has the most influence on their behaviour. Interestingly, the codes have been shown to be effective not only in selective private universities, but also in large public colleges (McCabe, 2000).

**Plagiarism, Ethics and Teachers**

McCabe (2005) reports on a study of 83 campuses in the US and Canada from 2002-2005 involving over 14,000 staff in which 41 percent acknowledged that they had in some cases ignored cases of plagiarism, citing the effort and burden of proof required in confronting offenders. This then is the reality of the ethical challenge faced by teachers.

Teachers, due to their heterogeneity, cannot be assigned to any one ethical belief category; however their professional role demands a base level of general responsibilities, overlaid by varying personal and/or organisational codes. Abbott (1983) proposes that professional ethics may be viewed from various viewpoints: imperative functionalist (necessary because of the danger of uncontrolled expertise); monopolist (designed to exclude others); or as a means of conferring status. Terhart (1998) notes the possible tension between the autonomy and presumed trustworthiness of the teacher, and the imposition of a code of conduct. Whether professional ethics are viewed as a selfish exclusionary monopolistic mechanism, or an altruistic means of ensuring safe practice, virtually all professions do operate by such codes, whether formal or informal. As Campbell (2000) says, “increased awareness of the ethical dimensions and responsibilities of teaching is essential for both enhanced professionalism and, more significantly, improved practice” (p.203).

The responsibility of teachers for their students has been long debated. The Greek sophist Gorgias argued that teachers could not be held responsible for their students, regarding the role of the teacher as morally neutral, a position further interrogated by
Plato (Murray, 2001). The Hippocratic Oath highlighted the ethical connection of student to teacher, then of that student in the subsequent role of teacher himself (Campbell, Gillett & Jones, 1992). In modern times, Snook (2003) in *The ethical teacher* comments that “Teaching is an activity in which ethical issues are central……Teaching, then, involves ethics in its aims, its methods and its relationships.” (p.13)

The promotion of ethical behaviour through a “Code of Ethics” is problematic, since many such codes are aspirational rather than regulatory; primary and secondary teachers registered in New Zealand operate under the New Zealand Teachers Council Code of Ethics (2003), and it is the registration requirement that gives “teeth” to this code. Tertiary teachers have no such registration requirement, and also no general code of ethics, though some may be covered by the Association of Staff in Tertiary Education (ASTE) Code of Ethics (n.d.), an “aspirational” (p.33) document. Professional organisations to which some teachers belong espouse codes of ethics, e.g. Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (n.d.), Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union’s Journalists’ Code of Ethics (n.d.), and New Zealand Communication Association (2007). The construction and acceptance of a unified tertiary teacher ethics code would be a major task in the current fragmented educational environment and in the absence of compulsory registration. Ethical imperatives for tertiary teachers in the interim may need to operate more at the personal level, which is perhaps the truly important level. While codes of ethics might be criticised as being either too bland and meaningless, or too controlling and bureaucratic (Campbell, 2000; Terhart, 1998), ethical behaviour itself seems beyond reproach; the challenge that has exercised the minds from Plato to Augustine to Sartre, is to delineate this.

The ethical models operating around the actions of plagiarism differ for students and teachers. As previously discussed, students who practise plagiarism apply various ethical models to explain their actions, demonstrating beliefs ranging from not seeing their actions as wrong (deontological), through rationalisation of their actions (situational), to knowing they are doing wrong but hoping to escape detection
(Machiavellian) (Granitz & Loewy, 2007). For teachers, however, the ethical model/s must operate at different loci of the plagiarism act; teachers are not the ones committing the central act, but rather operate in the first instance at the education, prevention, detection and/or consequences levels, then also at a broader stakeholder level. This could also be viewed as the difference between a “sin of commission” in the student’s case (doing something wrong, e.g. plagiarism), as opposed to a “sin of omission” for the teacher (not doing something good, e.g. not taking action against plagiarism). It is perhaps an intuitive response that not acting could not be as seriously wrong as a specific act of doing, indeed Thomas Aquinas did suggest that in general the leaving out of good is not as serious as the taking up of evil, however there is still guilt measured by “the dignity of the virtue and the magnitude of the precept to which the omission is opposed as well as the amount of deliberation” (Delany, 1911, ¶ 1).

Edmund Burke’s oft-quoted - though possibly apocryphal (Knowles, 1999) - “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing” reinforces this judgement.

As depicted in Figure 1, plagiarism occurs within a social context in which the teacher holds a position of power and influence. Folger and Cropanzano’s (2001) “Fairness Theory” (Figure 2) provides a useful model for analysing this accountability.

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2 According to the Knowles-edited (1999) Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, this quotation is attributed to Burke by many sources, but it cannot be located in his writings.
Figure 2. Fairness Theory Model of Accountability (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001, p.4.)

**States of well-being**

The implication of the actions associated with plagiarism for the well-being of others is quite extensive. To ignore plagiarism harms the student involved by contributing to his/her participation in an act with serious external penalties, and possible personal, moral, intellectual and professional consequences. Other students are harmed by an unfair shift in their relative performance ranking, and by the temptation to commit the same offence if it is observed to go unpunished (e.g. Chandrasoma et al., 2004,
The organisation is harmed by the devaluing of its reputation and hence the credentials it awards. There is also a fundamental breakdown in the purpose of assessment which is to determine students’ knowledge and understanding. The wider community of stakeholders also depends on educational organisations to provide their stated services and products in the form of quality education and valid credentials. Professions such as medicine, law and business expect that ethical behaviour is reinforced for their students (Hall & Bernadino, 2006; Iyer & Eastman, 2006; Jacobson, 2007; Rennie & Rudland, 2003), although Callahan (2004) paints an alarming picture of the cheating environment in some US high schools and colleges which he proposes has paved the way for the unethical climate that has pervaded some areas of US society. Academic dishonesty clearly has an impact on the well-being of many.

**Principles**

It is not possible to attribute any one school of ethical principles to all teachers, however acts of dishonesty are generally judged to be unacceptable, whether based on the moral virtue of Aristotle, the absolute edicts of Kant, the “greatest good” evaluation of Utilitarianism, or being contrary to the “good” ideal of Moore (Cahn & Markie, 2002). Nietzsche’s “uermenschen” might not be constrained by such rules, and postmodern ethics presents infinite challenges to what, if any, the rules should be (Bauman, 1993), but to retain credibility, academic organisations must operate within stated boundaries. Proscribing dishonesty would seem to be a reasonably universal value, however this raises the problem of espoused ethical theories as opposed to theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974), the latter always involving personal decision.

**Conduct**

This is probably the key element of accountability for teachers, since despite the acknowledged philosophical complexities of the notion of plagiarism, inaction clearly
amounts to “omission of discretionary action capable of affecting others” (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001, p. 4). Discretion is a key professional element, since while some employers do explicitly prescribe staff actions related to plagiarism (see Figure 3), others may not, possibly relying on professional responsibility; the autonomy that tertiary teachers favour carries with it parallel expectations. In such cases where an employer publishes policies or procedures as described below, the plagiarism issue is influenced not only by the choices inherent in an ethical dilemma, but also by the imperatives related to rule-based or legal responsibilities. However, rules are always open to interpretation, so their presence does not always predetermine outcomes.

**Policies and Procedures**

A survey of the published documents related to plagiarism or academic dishonesty was made of the eight universities and three largest polytechnics in New Zealand. The list of documents from these organisations in Figure 3 has been obtained from paper copies of the Calendars, or the organisation’s website. A letter was sent to each organisation, listing these located documents and asking if anything of significance was missing. To date, seven have responded confirming that the list is substantially complete. The number or type of documents listed from each organisation is in no way intended to be an indicator of the attitude or actions of that organisation towards academic dishonesty; they are intended solely to give an overview of the context. It is clear that there are specific rules forbidding student plagiarism in all of these organisations, but the published policies on the responsibilities of teachers are much more variable, ranging from aspirational statements of ethical behaviour to quite explicit instructions on education of students, preparation of assignments, detection of infringements and processes for determining penalties. While clear policies are commendable, in a professional environment which precludes continual surveillance they cannot and should not be the sole driver of appropriate behaviour; they do however introduce a component of fiduciary responsibility to the ethical decision-making process since these rules become part of the contract that employees enter into to fairly and honestly perform the job for which they are being paid.

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3 There is no direct translation of “ubermensch”, but approximations such as an “ideal type” or
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A further question is how this information is propagated to students and staff. A UK student gained much publicity when he threatened to sue the university that was withholding his degree because of plagiarism noted at the end of his three-year programme. The student claimed that he did not know that his cut-and-pasting of Internet sources was forbidden, that similar behaviour had gained him good marks throughout his studies, and no-one had ever identified that what he was doing was wrong and taken remedial action (Baty, 2004). While this student’s reaction might seem self-serving, it does raise the issue of how proactive universities are in teaching students how to avoid plagiarism, rather than the “Gotcha” approach (Price, 2002, p.88). Ohio University’s mechanical engineering department received international exposure when previously undetected serious plagiarism was discovered in the theses of a large number of graduated students, leading to the disciplining of two academics (Grose, 2006). These cases highlight the problems of educating both students and staff, and the legal, employment and publicity issues that can arise if this is not done satisfactorily. Although based on US law, Bricault’s (2007) discussion of the legal aspects of dealing with academic dishonesty has general relevance, particularly the specific content and effective communication of policies. Macdonald and Carroll in “Plagiarism – a complex issue requiring a holistic institutional approach” (2006, p.233) suggest that such an approach begins with education in the shared responsibility of the education process.

**Conclusion**

There is ongoing valuable interrogation of the plagiarism paradigm/s, the related academic and socio-historical discourse, the influence of culture and context, and questioning of textual ownership and authorial voice. The student as individual negotiating identity in a strange landscape, to be guided and given the “latch-keys that
might unlock new discourse communities” (Howard, 1992, p.240) is a more constructive model than that of devious miscreant to be trapped. This model also provides a partial solution for those discomfited by what they perceive as an adversarial “teacher catching student” role. A collaborative process offers opportunities for engagement by both students and teachers in the meanings behind the rules, and an introduction to the values, powers and responsibilities of the academic community, while not denying that the less pleasant aspects of detection and penalty must still be a balancing but not dominating part of the equation.

So within this framework, what are a teacher’s ethical responsibilities for plagiarism in practical terms? From either a deontological or teleological perspective, inaction on plagiarism is clearly unethical. Applying the Fairness Theory model (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001, p.4), the responsibility falls in all three dimensions: “States of Well-being” and “Principles” represent more of a philosophical argument, while “Conduct” enacts the consequences of that argument. The “well-being” of the academy depends on honesty and integrity, and despite empathy with student actions driven by contextual factors, the truly transgressive exemplars of plagiarism are clearly contrary to the “principles” of honourable behaviour. To act in accordance with these decisions requires demonstration of ethical “Conduct”, where the “discretionary” behaviour referred to in the “commission or omission of discretionary action capable of affecting others” does not amount to inaction. This “sin of omission”, while tempting, must be resisted.

Folger and Cropanzano’s framing of ethics as a behaviour achieving fairness and accountability matches well with students’ concerns; they often tolerate the complex demands of academia with amazing equanimity, however “That’s not fair” can be their ultimate condemnation. Providing an environment where students are rewarded justly for their own work is something to which they have a fundamental right. Involving them in the collaborative process of achieving this can only be constructive.

The most effective collaborative model involves not only teachers and students, but also the organisations and contexts within which they operate. Teachers’ workloads
seem to increase inexorably, so instigating or carrying out these strategies may seem a burden, but they are critical for maintaining academic integrity.

1. *Advocate clear policies and procedures, disseminated effectively as part of an organisational commitment to integrity.*

   Teachers can not achieve this alone, but they need to promote organisational action, including debate on the role of honour codes.

2. *Educate and motivate students.*

   Students need to be taught how to interpret, paraphrase and reference, offered formative exercises, and introduced to the concept of integrity in the academic community.

3. *Design effective assessments.*

   Update and contextualise assessments, including analysis and personal interpretation where suitable, to limit opportunities for “information dump” copying.


   For undergraduate students, how will you check that unsupervised work is done personally?

5. *Educate yourself.*

   There are a large number of indicators that a work might be plagiarised (e.g. Iowa State University, 2004). Could you identify these in your students’ work?

6. *Do not rely solely on electronic detection*

   There are many other types of plagiarism to which desperate students may resort.

7. *Mark “thoughtfully”.*

   This is the most challenging aspect. Applying the points from (5) above requires skill, concentration and time.

8. *Follow up on suspected cases.*

   It may be unpleasant and time-consuming but it is necessary.
9. Use small infringements for teaching purposes, as well as applying appropriate penalties.

In first year classes in New Zealand and Australia, students come from many cultural and educational backgrounds. Small errors or misunderstandings can provide teaching opportunities in ethical behaviour.

10. Apply penalties fairly and consistently.

Serious transgressions need commensurate penalties that all students are made aware of at the beginning of and throughout their studies.

11. Be an ethical role-model.

Our behaviour must provide for students an exemplar of fairness, honesty and integrity, as at a minimum we can practise no less than we ask of them.

Academic dishonesty undermines the values of academia, and the value of any credentials it bestows. We behave unethically towards ourselves, our students, our organisations, and wider society if we are less than conscientious in plagiarism’s control or elimination. Lack of action for the good of eliminating plagiarism can be just as unethical as action for harm by transgressors, thus the power and place of the teacher in this scenario presents an ongoing challenge.

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