

Editing a journal on academic integrity:

What to do when authors plagiarise
their research on plagiarism!

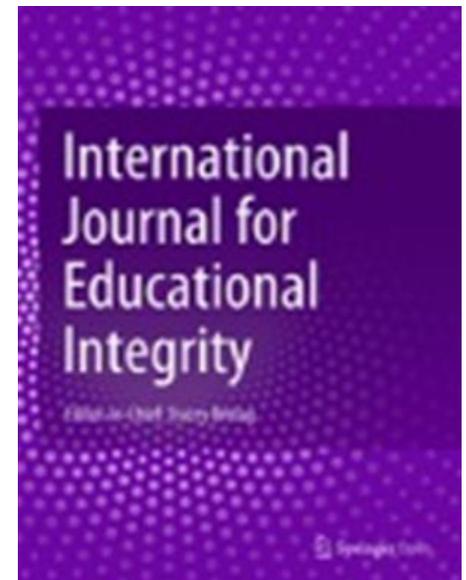
Associate Professor Tracey Bretag

Editor-in-Chief, International Journal for Educational Integrity,
www.edintegrity.com

Director: Office for Academic Integrity, University of South Australia
Tracey.Bretag@unisa.edu.au; Twitter: @traceybretag; #academicintegrity

Overview

- Defining plagiarism
- How to determine seriousness of plagiarism
- Responding to scholars' plagiarism
- Current climate in higher education
 - increasing pressures to publish
 - systemic practices
- COPE Guidelines
- Mentoring role of the editor
- Illustrative cases from the IJEI
- Conclusion



Defining plagiarism

“plagiarism varies in both **intent and extent**, ranging from deliberate fraud, to negligent or accidental failure to acknowledge sources of paraphrased material and misunderstandings about the conventions of authorship”
(James, McInnes & Devlin (2002), p. 5).

Defining plagiarism for researchers

“Plagiarism is a specific form and serious act of misconduct. It is the use of another person's words or ideas as if they were one's own. It may occur as a result of **lack of understanding** and/or inexperience about the correct way to acknowledge and reference sources. It may result from **poor academic practice**, which may include poor note taking, careless downloading of material or failure to take sufficient care in meeting the required standards. It may also occur as a **deliberate misuse** of the work of others with the intent to deceive. It may include, but is not restricted to:

- a. using another person's ideas work, product or research data **without acknowledgment**;
- b. arranging for someone else to undertake all or part of a piece of work and **presenting that work as one's own.**”

Defining plagiarism for authors/scholars

- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research
- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007 (The Code)

- Best practice for both institutions and researchers.

Reference to plagiarism: Section 4.6 'Cite the work of other authors fully and accurately...use of the work of other authors without acknowledgement is unethical'.

- Framework for handling breaches of the Code and research misconduct.

How to determine seriousness of scholars' plagiarism*

- Whether the plagiarism is intentional or accidental.
- The **nature** of the new work (top of list refereed papers, bottom of list unpublished materials, textbooks somewhere in the middle).
- The extent to which originality is claimed in the new work.
- The nature of the incorporated material.
- The nature of attribution provided.

* (Clarke 2006, p. 15)

Responding to scholars' plagiarism

- There is no framework (in Australia) for ensuring that authors/scholars receive adequate education and training in ethical research **writing practices**.
 - Focus tends to be on ethics compliance, particularly in relation to research subjects

Increasing pressures to publish

Ever changing policy framework with increasing pressures to publish in terms of both quality and quantity.

- Research Assessment Exercise UK
 - Rise in some forms of research misconduct (eg redundant publication or self-plagiarism)
- Research Quality Framework (RQF), 2006-2008, never implemented.
- Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) 2008-2010, significantly modified 2011-2015.
- What next?

Systemic practices which perpetuate academic misconduct

Research misconduct is the result of 4 related factors:

- 1) High level of competition within discipline;
- 2) Perception that colleagues are acting unethically;
- 3) Working contexts characterised by unfair practices and decision-making;
- 4) those who are mentored to 'play the system' are more likely to engage in misconduct (Anderson 2008)

COPE: Code of conduct for journal editors

Dealing with possible misconduct

- 11.1. Editors have a duty to act if they suspect misconduct or if an allegation of misconduct is brought to them. This duty extends to both published and unpublished papers.
- 11.2. Editors should not simply reject papers that raise concerns about possible misconduct. They are ethically obliged to pursue alleged cases.
- 11.3. Editors should follow the COPE flowcharts where applicable.
- 11.4. Editors should first seek a response from those suspected of misconduct. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should ask the relevant employers, or institution, or some appropriate body (perhaps a regulatory body or national research integrity organization) to investigate.
- 11.5. Editors should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a proper investigation into alleged misconduct is conducted; if this does not happen, editors should make all reasonable attempts to persist in obtaining a resolution to the problem. This is an onerous but important duty. http://publicationethics.org/files/Code%20of%20Conduct_2.pdf

The mentoring role of the journal editor

The role of journal editors is complex and multi-faceted. It includes:

- Assisting in the dissemination of research
- Providing opportunities for a diverse range of perspectives to contribute to a field of inquiry
- Recognising that not all authors have been adequately trained in publication ethics
- Mentoring authors (and reviewers) to report research with honesty and integrity
- Ensuring the integrity of published research
 - Investigating possible cases of misconduct
 - Collaborating with a range of stakeholders to ensure appropriate processes are followed

International Journal for Educational Integrity



- Established December 2005
- Open Journal System
 - Inexperienced editor, new field of inquiry
- From 2015 published by Springer Open – access to vast resources and experience
- So many lessons learned in a decade!

The screenshot shows the website interface for the International Journal for Educational Integrity. The browser address bar displays the URL <http://edintegrity.springeropen.com/>. The page features a navigation menu with options like 'Home', 'myUnSA', and 'International Journal for Ed...'. The main content area is titled 'Articles' and includes a 'Recent' tab. Below this, there are several article listings:

- Using Internet based paraphrasing tools: Original work, patchwriting or facilitated plagiarism?** by Ann M. Rogerson and Grace McCarthy. Published on 26 January 2017.
- Are Essay Mills committing fraud? An analysis of their behaviours vs the 2006 Fraud Act (UK)** by Michael J. Draper, Victoria Ibezim and Philip M. Newton. Published on 25 January 2017.
- Defending university integrity** by Brian Martin. Published on 9 January 2017.
- Role-playing institutional academic integrity policy-making: using researched perspectives to develop pedagogy** by Erika Löfdåm. Published on 22 November 2016.
- Networked participatory online learning design and challenges for academic integrity in higher education** (Case study).

On the right side of the page, there are several promotional sections:

- A text block stating: "that identifies the contexts and causes of contract cheating, and provides evidence-based solutions. I look forward to receiving your submissions." Tracy Breitlag, DED
- A section titled "Apply for APC funding in education research" featuring a graphic with the word "OPEN" in large letters. Below it, text reads: "Did you know that there are almost 200 open access article processing charge (APC) funds available to researchers worldwide? Many funding bodies require that research publications resulting from their grants are made freely available to all. By publishing your research with us you fully comply with open access mandates, and the publishing costs may be entirely covered by the research grant. This means that you won't have to pay any publishing fee and you retain the copyright. Check here how to discover and apply for APC funding." A "Read more" link is provided.
- A section titled "Waivers" stating: "Authors without funds to cover the Article Processing Charge (APC) are eligible for a discretionary waiver of the APC, and should request a waiver during submission." It also mentions that the journal has waivers available at the Editor's discretion and provides a link for more information.
- A section titled "Reference reading" with a "Read more" link.

The bottom of the page includes a cookie consent message: "We use cookies to improve your experience with our site. More information" and a "Close x" button. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including a terminal window and a file explorer.

Case 1

Self-plagiarism or misunderstanding?



- A mid-career academic presents a paper at the 1st Conference on Educational Integrity in Australia (2003).
- In 2005, this same author is invited to contribute the first volume of a new journal on the topic – the *International Journal for Educational Integrity*.
- The author submits a paper for review.
- The ‘new’ paper seems very familiar to the editor, who then checks it against the 2003 conference paper.
- The two papers are virtually identical except that the title and abstract have been reworded, and the paragraphs slightly rearranged.
- How the case was resolved.

Case 2

Plagiarism or poor academic practice?

- A junior academic from a developing country submits a paper to the IJEI for review.
- The research is innovative and potentially makes a valuable contribution to the field.
- However, it is clear to the Editor that there are whole sections of the paper which are either poorly referenced or not referenced at all.
- A quick google search shows that the literature review has been cut and paste from Internet sources with little attribution.
- How the case was resolved

Case 3:

Text matching software and plagiarism

Given increasing competition in the academy, what is to stop someone from submitting your work, perhaps published over 20 years ago, to Turnitin/iThenticate and then making an accusation of plagiarism?

- How would you feel if this happened to you?
- How might the journal editor respond?
- How might your university respond?
- What factors might you use in your defense?

Conclusion

- Plagiarism is a serious threat to the integrity of published research.
- Not all plagiarism is deliberate misconduct.
- Not all plagiarism requires a punitive response.
- The journal editor has a responsibility to:
 - mentor inexperienced authors to ensure ethical practices
 - Investigate misconduct when it occurs

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