

Article

A Foucauldian-Vygotskian Analysis of the Pedagogy of Academic Integrity

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Abstract

This paper provides a Foucauldian-Vygotskian analysis of the pedagogy of academic integrity in the North American post-secondary context. In particular, the issue of ‘unintentional plagiarism’ is examined. The main implication of this analysis is that the notion of unintentional plagiarism places students, particularly junior students, in a position of being asked to engage with complex academic discourses in a context that divorces ethical behaviour from intent. The removal of intent from the concept of plagiarism renders it unintelligible, and this can lead students to believe that they do not have access to the monitoring processes that they need in order to ensure that their voices are clearly distinguished from the voices of other authors. Several suggestions for improving the pedagogy of academic integrity emerge from this analysis and these are outlined in the paper.

Keywords: academic integrity; plagiarism; writing pedagogy

Introduction

An educational issue that has emerged in my post-secondary institutional context is one that has also become quite salient in recent research literature: ‘unintentional plagiarism.’ Though breaches of academic integrity are widely believed by university administrations to reflect a sort of moral failing on the part of students, research has consistently demonstrated that issues related to plagiarism quite often stem from a developmental stage rather than an issue of morality or ethics (Abasi & Akbari, 2008; Chandrasoma, Thompson, & Pennycook, 2004; Childers & Bruton, 2016; Crook, 2018; Currie, 1998; Hirvela & Du, 2013; Howard, 1999; Keck, 2014; Li & Casanave, 2012). Despite the building evidence that the ways in which universities define plagiarism is ambiguous and inconsistent at best (Eaton, 2017; McGrail & McGrail, 2015; Sutherland-Smith, 2011), these

institutions of higher learning continue to uphold definitions that undermine students' efforts to self-regulate their learning by virtue of the claim that intention is not an integral feature of an integrity breach (Harvard Extension School, 2018).

Much literature has addressed the topic of unintentional plagiarism without considering the ways in which the concept itself might be problematic. For a long time now, plagiarism has been framed as divided into two subtypes: intentional and unintentional (McLeod, 1992). Some preventative measures for unintentional plagiarism have been focused on improving students' authorial identity (Elander, Pittam, Lusher, Fox, & Payne, 2010) but, more often, they are focused on training students in paraphrasing practices (Stahl & King; 1991; Newton, Wright, & Newton, 2014; Walker, 2008). However, as Vardi (2012) argued, there are many grey areas when it comes to citation practices, which institutions tend not to fully acknowledge. Rather, they tend to focus on teaching "convention" to students and, unfortunately, this approach "relegat[es] [students] only to restating, not engaging with and responding to the ideas in the literature" because they are afraid of making mistakes with respect to citation (p. 923). Furthermore, I argue that the removal of the characteristic of intent from the concept of plagiarism renders it unintelligible. If a moral failing as serious as murder cannot be unintentional (of course, we call accidental killing manslaughter, therefore distinguishing it from murder in both name and meaning), then how can plagiarism, an arguably less weighty failing, possess an unintentional form? I believe that unintentional plagiarism ought to be given a name that reflects what it is: an act that was not intended to deceive and, furthermore, an act born of learning. In short, plagiarism cannot be unintentional as intent is central to its definition. What we are speaking of is a separate phenomenon; however, for the remainder of this paper, I will cite literature that speaks to 'unintentional plagiarism' as that is the name to which the phenomenon has long been referred.

In 1993, Wells addressed the issue of unintentional plagiarism for an audience of writing centre administrators, claiming that most cases of unintentional plagiarism could be more accurately referred to as "the plagiarism of desperation" (p. 61). She argued that students "prefer 'getting something in' as opposed to getting nothing in," and describes the circumstances under which many students find themselves as "desperate situations" resulting from a lack of certainty about their abilities and/or unfamiliarity with the requirements of academic writing and their teacher's expectations (p. 61). While I appreciate Wells' attention towards the learning and developmental issues involved in unintentional plagiarism (and, in particular, her well-developed suggestion that teachers of writing would do well to engage in Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development with

respect to teaching source use), I depart from her argument at the point at which she claims that students are using “desperate measures” when they engage in “unintentional plagiarism” (p. 61). I believe that unintentional plagiarism is just that: *unintentional*. They do not know that what they are doing is problematic, and therefore, I do not think that they can be held accountable for their actions until the point at which the institution has good reason to believe that they are, in fact, plagiarizing (with intent).

The difficulty with removing the characteristic of ‘intent’ from the concept of plagiarism, aside from lumping mistakes in with acts of intentional deception, is that it can lead students to believe that they do not have access to the monitoring processes that they need in order to ensure that their work is properly cited. They may wonder how they can identify something that they would not intend to do, which is, in my view, a fair concern. This concern was expressed by one junior student at a Canadian university, who said that her main strategy for avoiding plagiarism was to have writing tutors check over her completed papers for originality (Crook, 2018, p. 79). While perhaps ironic, this strategy is, in spirit, not far off from many universities’ recommendations to run essays through anti-plagiarism software programs such as Turnitin™ (Dahl, 2007; Evans, 2006; Mozgovoy, Kakkonen, & Cosma, 2010). Rather than helping students to internalize the principles that underpin the maintenance of academic integrity, the current approach to plagiarism is leading some (and perhaps many) students to outsource the monitoring of the boundaries between their work and the works of others.

The Purpose of This Paper

In this paper, I propose a Foucauldian-Vygotskian approach to analyzing the dynamics of learning to write with academic integrity. I will use this framework to consider the ways in which North American and Commonwealth nations have conceptualized the phenomena of academic integrity and academic dishonesty (specifically, in terms of ‘unintentional’ plagiarism). I will analyze the power dynamics that are inherent in the process of learning this skill set and the ways in which power relations might lead students away from meaningful learning and towards external regulation. I will also comment on how the current approach to teaching students to write with academic integrity may be neglecting the ZPD and reaching beyond the developmental level of the majority of novice writers.

The Administrative Burden Created by The Current Approach to Plagiarism

On a bureaucratic level, the current approach to plagiarism appears to be placing a great burden on faculty members rather than lightening their administrative load. Faculty members are, quite often, tasked with the responsibility of reporting potential instances of plagiarism to a higher authority – usually, at my institution, a department head or dean (University of Manitoba, 2018b). To initiate this process, usually some kind of report is required to be submitted that explains the reasons behind the faculty member’s belief that plagiarism has occurred. Original documents are generally attached, and, in some cases, reporting faculty member(s) are required to be present for the resulting disciplinary hearing(s) (University of Manitoba, 2016). In short, such a system of discipline amounts to a quasi-legal framework, which treats the issue at hand as a breach of institutional policies rather than as an issue of teaching and learning (Senders, 2008). While some students are assigned “educational outcomes” as a penalty (e.g., writing skills instruction or Cite Right, a program that teaches paraphrasing and citation skills—see the full list of outcomes at University of Manitoba, 2018a), this does not mean that students are being afforded the opportunity to learn how to monitor their own use of source materials prior to engaging in behaviours that might land them with a charge of plagiarism.

Novice Writers and Secondary Source Use

In my particular institutional context, I work mainly with first-year university students, many of whom have very limited experience with citing secondary source materials. Some instructors at the university bemoan the weaknesses of high schools in teaching students to write for university but, in my view, that is not the responsibility of high school teachers. University is a rarified environment, and the skills that one needs to succeed at university study are quite particular. As such, I believe that universities should be responsible for, among other things, teaching students how to write for university. Most of the time, students are required to explicate arguments that are grounded in extant literature (Wingate, 2012), which is typically introduced, if at all, only on a basic level during the course of secondary education.

Given first-year students’ relative novice-ness with respect to engaging in academic argumentation, it is not surprising to me that they tend to struggle with establishing authorial voice. Neither was this surprising to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), who noted that novice writers tend to “knowledge-tell,” meaning that they incorporate large volumes of information into their work

without purpose. Furthermore, the phenomenon identified as “patchwriting” by Howard (1992; 1999) appears to reflect genuine attempts to engage with research literature by changing some of the words and sentence structure in order to fit one’s own paper. Anecdotally, I can attest to the fact that some students believe this to be an effective strategy for incorporating sources. I have had students over the years ask me how many words have to be changed in order for a quotation to become a paraphrase. In one case, a student simply informed me that copying seven words in a row constitutes plagiarism, but fewer than that does not. It would seem that the quasi-legal approach to plagiarism has led students towards legalistic approaches to source incorporation.

In the program in which I primarily work, teaching students to incorporate source materials effectively is an official learning outcome. Therefore, instructors in our program have more flexibility than most others would do when it comes to dealing with matters of patchwriting and knowledge-telling. Under the direction of departmental leadership, the instructors are able to judge whether or not a particular textual instance reflects a learning issue or whether it might represent an intention to deceive the instructor about authorship. The former is an opportunity for an instructor to meet with students one-to-one to guide them towards more acceptable practices.

However, most faculty members at my institution (and, most likely, many others), do not have this luxury because their courses are not explicitly concerned with the teaching of writing. Even courses that fulfill the written requirement at the University of Manitoba are typically designated as such because of the amount of writing that students are asked to complete, not because the content of the course focuses on writing processes (University of Manitoba, n.d.). Therefore, faculty members generally are required to pass along instances of “transgressive intertextuality” (Chandrasoma et al., 2004) to department heads, who may each have their own interpretations of acceptable practice. In fact, research demonstrates that it is difficult for faculty administrators to reach consensus on what constitutes plagiarism (Bennett, Behrendt, & Boothby, 2011; Marzluf, 2013; Pecorari & Shaw, 2012; Schwabl, Rossiter, & Abbott, 2013).

In short, the issue that I have identified is that university policies on academic integrity are typically applied via a fairly high level of administration, even in cases where the root of the problem is one of learning rather than intentional deception (which, therefore, results in what we tend to call ‘unintentional’ plagiarism). I argue that it would be both more efficient and more effective to deal with cases of unintentional plagiarism through the role of the classroom instructor rather than through higher-level administrators. I have made this argument alongside my colleagues in the past, including during a presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research

Association (Crook, Cranston, Renaud, & O'Brien-Moran, 2019) and at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (Crook & O'Brien-Moran, 2019).

The Aim of the Present Analysis

In this present paper, I aim to analyze the issue of unintentional plagiarism through the lenses of two social theories. The first is Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning. The second is Foucault's (1969) archaeology of knowledge. Each of these theories have contributed to my understanding of the dynamics at play within the learning processes related to secondary source use. These theories have also led me to recognize the importance of composition theory to the construction of policies concerning plagiarism. In particular, Flower and Hayes' (1981) cognitive process theory of writing relies on Vygotsky's (1978) ideas and frames writing as a process that is iterative and recursive rather than as a linear process of discrete stages. In the sections that follow, I will outline each theoretical perspective, the key concepts of each, and then apply a unified theoretical framework to the issue of 'unintentional plagiarism.'

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning is familiar to primary and secondary school teachers who have been trained within the Western tradition of education (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006), but formal training in pedagogy is not generally required for higher education instructors (Robinson & Hope, 2013). In other words, faculty members do not necessarily have a robust understanding of the cognitive processes involved in learning nor the teaching and learning strategies that might capitalize upon these processes. Verenikina (2003) described Vygotsky's life work as culminating in a sociocultural theory of cognition. She identifies the concept of "mediation" as being the most central to his theory and describes it as the way in which "consciousness is constructed through a subject's interactions with the world" (p. 4). John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) outlined three main components of Vygotsky's theory: (a) "social sources of development"; (b) "semiotic mediation"; and, (c) "genetic analysis." They further elaborate these components through explaining that a Vygotskian framework acknowledges the ways in which learning is intertwined with social relationships and the ways in which human development is mediated through signs and symbols. Finally, they defined genetic analysis as Vygotsky's approach to "examin[ing] the origins and the history of phenomena" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 194).

In particular, research embedded in Vygostkian tradition tends to focus on the “concept of internalization,” which refers to “the learners’ appropriation of socially elaborated symbol systems” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 195-196). Jaramillo (1996) discussed the social nature of symbol systems at length, explaining that human beings construct their sense of objective reality through the mediation of language and all other symbol systems, all of which are interpreted and also created in concert with other human beings. Jaramillo (1996) also emphasized that a person’s social environment changes by virtue of that person’s participation in society. This modification of the environment, coupled with the environment’s influence on the individual, makes up the essence of a dialogic dynamic (Jaramillo, 1996).

Vygotsky (1978) identified the dialectical method as the primary mode of investigation for developmental phenomena. Vygotsky (1978) discussed the dialectical relationship between thought and language, the concept of word meaning as being “a unit of both generalising thought and social interchange” (p. 9). He argued that the unification of these concepts, which were traditionally viewed as opposites of one another, would enrich both the analysis of thought development as well as of language development.

Silvonen (2010) articulated Vygotsky’s ideas in light of Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge, arguing that Vygotsky’s theory emerged from the cultural milieu of the Soviet regime and that it must be understood through this frame. While I do not disagree with Silvonen (2010), I am more interested in the possibilities inherent in combining Vygostkian theory with Foucauldian theory rather than in a Foucauldian analysis of Vygostkian theory. I wish to combine these theories in order to better understand the pedagogical phenomena that emerge from the concept of unintentional plagiarism.

Foucault’s Archaeology of Knowledge

Foucault (1969) argued that history has been shaped by discourse(s) and that the analysis of discourse is central to understanding the ways in which the societal understanding of history is regulated. In short, he argued that discourse shapes thought, in that it privileges a limited set of ideas as “natural and self-evident” (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p. 113). In other words, “[d]iscursive knowledge regulates, among other things, what can be said and done, what constitutes right and wrong, and what counts for knowledge in the first place” (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p. 113).

In his later works, Foucault (1971) borrows the concept of genealogy from Nietzsche and applies it to seemingly disparate topics, including punishment and sexuality (as cited in Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006). Foucault (1971) described his method of genealogical analysis as “operat[ing] on

a field of tangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times" (p. 139, as cited in Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p. 116). Overall, Foucault's methodology focused on historical analysis as a way of discovering the dynamics of power relations and their effect on the human condition and human understanding (Silvonen, 2010).

Jobe (2017) argued that Foucault's later work made significant contributions to critical social theory, including the differentiation between control and direction. According to Jobe (2017), this distinction enables a conceptualization of the influence of power relations on society as not necessarily deterministic, casting power relations to be an inescapable feature of society but not necessarily a coercive one. Foucauldian analyses of power relations enable critical theorists to uncover the ways in which members of society are directed towards particular points of view while still leaving room for societal revolt against any attempted control of thought. For example, a Foucauldian analysis of the concept of authorship uncovers the perceived essentialism of ownership and the ways in which such ownership has come to be understood as a given (Foucault, 1977b). Without the concept of the ownership with respect to creative works, which Foucault (1977b) argues did not exist until the 17th century, the concept of plagiarism could not exist, and neither could the regulation of moral deviance with respect to the misrepresentation of authorship (Foucault, 1977a).

Bringing Vygotsky and Foucault Together

I argue that a theoretical framework informed by both Vygotsky and Foucault provides a sociocultural lens through which to critically analyze the discourses that shape the learning process and transmit power through the construction of knowledge. That is, bringing together Vygotsky's understanding of learning as a social enterprise and Foucault's focus on the archaeology of knowledge can enable a researcher to consider the ways in which the business of learning necessarily involves the transmission of power and the regulation of deviance. Within such a framework, it becomes possible to engage in a critical analysis of the ways in which various social actors (e.g., students, teachers, and administrators) are situated in terms of power relations and the ways in which discursive framing regulates this status quo.

Furthermore, it becomes possible to consider the ways in which learning is an inherently political process. Such a recognition enables researchers and other interested parties to work towards rendering the discursive framing of a particular learning process explicit. Once that information is out on display, it becomes easier to reconsider the status quo. Unfortunately, I would argue that novice writers represent a group who have, in many cases, been stripped of the opportunity to

participate meaningfully in the conversations that we have about authorial voice and academic integrity.

Synthesizing the Key Concepts of the Chosen Theories

The key Vygotskian concept that is perhaps the most useful to an analysis of the issue of unintentional plagiarism is the zone of proximal development. According to Tharp and Gallimore (1988), Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a central feature of his constructivist theory of learning because it explains the ways in which apprenticeship (i.e., a relationship) plays a key role in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) explained that the ZPD refers to the stage in which a student may complete a task with some degree of assistance from a more knowledgeable person. They argue that the ZPD is composed of four stages: (1) "assistance by others"; (2) "assistance by self"; (3) "internalization"; and, (4) "deautomization and recursion." In sum, a student's developmental trajectory progresses gradually from the point at which they can only complete a task with outside assistance to the point at which they can regulate their own learning and revisit the ZPD at will. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) refer to the ZPD as "scaffolding," using the metaphor of temporary support structures that construction workers use to complete building projects. According to Wood et al. (1976), instructors must introduce temporary learning supports to students as they begin to approach new levels of development to ensure that they are able to reach the next steps. It seems that the very existence of 'unintentional' plagiarism argues against the position that students are being afforded these supports, especially when most such cases of so-called plagiarism involve behaviours that are seemingly appropriate to the student's developmental level (Howard, 1999).

As for a Foucauldian perspective, the analysis of power as it operates through disciplinary systems (as elaborated in *Discipline and Punish, 1977*) is relevant to understanding of the way in which institutional academic integrity policies and the discourses regarding these might shape students' understanding of concepts such as plagiarism and its 'unintentional' subtype. According to Foucault (1977a), power operates through the regulation of deviant behaviours. In addition, he argued that the regulation of deviance necessarily requires those in power to label some individuals and groups as essentially deviant. In my Master's thesis, I used Foucault's concept of deviance to explore the construction of the identities of plagiarist and non-plagiarist, arguing that "plagiarism [has become] central to the shaping of student identity from the institutional perspective" (Crook, 2018, p. 8).

Applying the Framework to the Issue of Unintentional Plagiarism

Bowden (1996) identifies the teaching of academic integrity as an area of curriculum that is ripe for the benefits of the ZPD, particularly with English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) learners. He explains that university writing centre staff in particular often feel afraid of embroiling themselves in plagiarism cases and, due to that fear, they may not scaffold learning as well as they could do for students. As a person who used to work in a campus writing centre, I am not particularly surprised by this concern. While I was trained on the boundaries involving collaboration as well as what would constitute inappropriate collaboration, my impression was that the centre's approach to collaboration was somewhat conservative. That is, rather than risk approaching the boundaries of collaboration too closely, I understood that it was preferable to forward students to their instructors for questions about course content.

While holding students at arm's length does seem to be a prudent approach given the current climate surrounding academic integrity on university campuses, it does leave much to be desired as far as guiding students towards mastery of their work. Writing centres are a highly specific sort of resource; that is, they are the only university-sanctioned third party that students are encouraged to access for writing supports outside of the teacher-professor relationship. Writing centres may not be a panacea for students' writing difficulties, but they do represent a "beyond-the-classroom space where students can explore confusing or challenging educational issues through dialogic relationships" (Penti, 2007, n.p.). However, the current institutional culture around academic integrity makes even such an ideal space for conversation and collaboration into one that writing tutors approach with caution. This may, unfortunately, mean that students miss out on the opportunity to operate within the ZPD during writing centre appointments when it comes to issues related closely with the concept of plagiarism.

At present, university administrations tend to use language in their academic integrity policies that frames plagiarism as a sort of intellectual crime. Much research attention has been devoted towards analyses of academic integrity policies (Eaton, 2017; McGrail & McGrail, 2015; Sutherland-Smith, 2011) and, in sum, such policies act as a quasi-legal code (Senders, 2008) that encourage students to fear inadvertent plagiarism (Crook, 2018), particularly when, as it so often is, an institution identifies intent as an irrelevant factor to the charge of plagiarism (Harvard Extension School, 2018).

Harris-Moore (2008) has argued that the pervasive use of plagiarism-detection software has created a culture of suspicion and surveillance, casting faculty members in the role of “surveyor” and students in the role of “criminal.” Harris-Moore (2008) referenced Foucault’s work on power relations to illustrate that plagiarism-detection software has become a channel for power, and that its function is the regulation of the behaviour of both students and faculty members. She elaborated on this claim by explaining that “[m]any instructors do not challenge the use of the technology and allow it to become an apparatus of power” (p. 103). She also describes students as “constantly fear[ing] the process of writing” when such technologies are widely used, which hardly allows for learning to take place in the ZPD. Learning necessarily involves risk and even failure (Paris & Winograd, 1990), and failure does not seem to be tolerated when it comes to developmental phases of writing such as “patchwriting” (Howard, 1999). Plagiarism-detection software identifies patchwriting as being too similar to original source materials and, often, instructors take the word of such software as gospel (Harris-Moore, 2008).

In order for students to have access to the ZPD, a few conditions are necessary. First, they must be able to recognize academic integrity and plagiarism as concepts that they should be learning, but these concepts are often relegated to a mention on a course outline rather than integrated into instruction (Crook, 2018). This may make it difficult for students to recognize that they do not have all of the skills that they need in order to engage appropriately with secondary source materials (students enter university with differing skill levels in writing). Second, students must have relationships with their instructors that permit dialogic learning. I have already demonstrated that dialogic learning may not be as accessible in writing centres as it could be, but it is also the case that this can be difficult to achieve with classroom instructors and faculty members. Once plagiarism-related phenomena enter into a summative assessment, faculty members at my institution are required to pass along the assignment to a higher authority for consideration. This policy is institution-wide and almost irrespective of subject matter (that is, unless the subject matter itself is focused specifically on learning to use sources). Such a policy makes it difficult for faculty members to exercise their own judgment about a students’ learning needs and it often escalates the situation to the level of a formal case.

The third condition that is necessary for access to the ZPD is that students must be taught in a way that facilitates the internalization of learning goals. However, instruction with respect to academic integrity and plagiarism has begun to respond more to the risk of detection and less to the need for the internalization of principles. Perhaps the most illustrative example of this is the teaching of

paraphrasing. Rather than teaching paraphrasing as a way to assert authorial voice, paraphrasing has frequently come to be identified as a method of avoiding plagiarism. Students are frequently told to change both the sentence structure and the words in order to avoid plagiarism (e.g., see UW-Madison Writing Center, 2018). This sort of instruction leaves students wondering how many changes are enough to make their writing truly different from the original piece. They do not seem to be considering the unique purpose for which they will use the information in their work; rather, they seem to be trying to fit someone else's work onto the page with a bit of adjustment. Such instruction obscures the goals involved in writing at the university level – most commonly, to assert a unique argument (Wingate, 2012). This obfuscation of the goal makes it nearly impossible for students to engage in the ZPD.

A Foucauldian perspective on such instruction regarding paraphrasing allows me to understand that the ZPD is sacrificed in order to keep students from falling into a criminal status. That is, instructors, though well-meaning they may be, have come to identify with the culture of surveillance and they are trying to help students from accidentally committing what is perceived as an academic crime rather than working against that system of power and engaging students in intelligent conversations about writing and source use. In fairness, the instructor role itself works against such action because the institution does not permit instructors to make their own judgments about students' missteps. They must, by virtue of policy, report the matter to a disciplinary authority.

I will now consider Tharp and Gallimore's (1988) summary of the ZPD's four stages: (1) assistance by others; (2) assistance by self; (3) internalization; and, (4) deautomization and recursion. With respect to academic integrity and plagiarism, the ZPD is, unfortunately, interrupted at the first step. That is, students are, in many cases, not afforded much assistance by others. More often, they are provided with either a pass or a punishment, and they do not necessarily internalize the idea of academic integrity, which is not surprising given the relative lack of dialogic relationships with instructors. Therefore, they do not tend to reach the stage of deautomization, which would allow them to self-regulate their use of sources and to ask intelligent questions about source use. Flower and Hayes' (1981) cognitive process theory of writing outlines expert writing as a process of self-regulation stemming from deautomization. In short, faculty members are addressing plagiarism-related issues as inherently moral issues and violations of code rather than as opportunities for learning, which they tend to be. However, this is a result of the systematization and centralization of academic integrity policy, which maintains institutional power and disempowers both faculty members and students.

Conclusion

Applying a Vygotskian-Foucauldian perspective to the issue of unintentional plagiarism allows for a realization of the ways in which both students and faculty members might internalize the discourses that are, generally, presented at the institutional level. In my own institutional context, the framing of plagiarism as academic 'crime' seems to have permeated the consciousness of all parties involved and it seems to have had an impact on how paraphrasing is taught, particularly because discussions of paraphrasing often no longer involve discussions of authorial voice. While the purpose of paraphrasing is to incorporate others' ideas to one's own writing in a new way, the way that paraphrasing is taught as a strategy for avoiding plagiarism does not teach this purpose; rather, it simply reinforces the idea that plagiarism must be avoided at all costs. Avoidance, unfortunately, makes learning impossible.

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