



Guest Editorial

A 3-step teaching approach for a blended learning of ‘understanding and avoiding unintentional plagiarism’



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ABSTRACT

Plagiarism refers to the behaviour of taking other people's work or idea as one's work or idea. Lack of understanding of plagiarism can lead to unintentional plagiarism. Unintentional plagiarism occurs not only in nursing students' writing but also in other healthcare learners. However, teaching approaches for understanding and avoiding unintentional plagiarism in healthcare education are limited. This is particularly helpful for using blended learning to address the issue of unintentional plagiarism. This editorial will describe the impact of unintentional plagiarism and propose a teaching approach called ‘Understanding and Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism’ using blended learning to help avoid unintentional plagiarism. This teaching approach aims to assist healthcare teachers to deliver academic writing development programmes in three important steps: 1) Plan appropriate tasks, 2) Prepare essential resources, and 3) Perform effective delivery.

Unintentional plagiarism is a challenging issue for global education, it occurs when a writer incidentally fails to follow academic procedures for citation (DeLong, 2012). Ballantine and McCourt, 2012 have pointed out that undergraduates' lack of understanding of plagiarism may lead to unintentional plagiarism. Another study by Fierz et al. (2014) has suggested that graduate nursing students are also unaware of unintentional plagiarism regards to the plagiarism of idea. Avoiding unintentional plagiarism plays a very important role in nursing education because nursing students are trained to be trustworthy persons in order to meet the standard of professional qualifications in the Nursing and Midwifery Council (Price, 2014). Unintentional plagiarism is a specifically imminent risk to the nursing students because of the integration process of reading and thinking (Fierz et al., 2014). Another reason for nursing or healthcare students to unintentionally plagiarise is lack of referencing techniques (Theart and Smit, 2012). One way to address the potential problem of unintentional plagiarism is to provide academic writing development programmes. This editorial will focus on our experiences and recommendations to help students address unintentional plagiarism.

One problem of a face-to-face academic writing programmes is that most nurses work shifts that may affect their classroom attendance. To solve the issue of classroom attendance, blended learning has been applied in professional training for nurses (Jokinen and Mikkonen, 2013). Blended learning is a form of learning that combines classroom teaching with online learning (Glogowska et al., 2011). Advantages of blended learning for nursing students include flexible curricula, more communication opportunities, and better learning motivation and outcomes (Jokinen and Mikkonen, 2013). This flexible study mode helps them to save time and cost by transferring knowledge from local education to other parts of the world through electronic communication application software such as Skype (Glogowska et al., 2011).

Few studies have been done to avoid unintentional plagiarism using blended learning environments in nurse education. Blended learning

includes classroom and online learning. Classroom learning enables students to adopt a traditional face-to-face teaching on campus, while online learning provides students with flexible learning spaces (such as they can access their own learning processes anytime and anywhere). Glogowska et al. (2011) has found that the classroom and online environment has not maintained a balance in some teaching approaches. Thus, this editorial proposes a new way of helping students with a 3-step teaching approach, ‘Understanding and Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism’ by applying balancing blended learning.

A teaching approach for ‘Understanding and Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism’

This approach may provide a feasible pedagogy to nurse and healthcare educators for promoting academic integrity. To support nursing and healthcare teachers in developing and delivering a blended learning approach for ‘Understanding and Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism’, this teaching approach consists of three steps: 1) plan appropriate tasks, 2) prepare essential resources and 3) perform effective delivery.

Step 1 Plan appropriate tasks

Identifying blind spots is essential to prevent potential mismatches between teachers' and students' desired goals and focuses. One recommendation is to have collaborative planning panels with teachers and students. These planning sections can help identify these blind spots. The design of content and activities should be relevant to the current students' needs and meet the expected learning outcomes simultaneously. When a teacher starts a blended learning programme for the first time, a small or specific scope of the task is recommended. For instance, a 3-week programme on ‘Basic Paraphrasing Skills for Healthcare Beginners’ may be a concise approach. Skilled teachers can

Table 1
A sample of a programme schedule for 'Basic Paraphrasing Skills for Healthcare Beginners'.

Session	Mode of learning	Topics	Goals and focuses
1	On-site	1. Introduction to the basic paraphrasing skills	1. Review steps of paraphrasing 2. Demonstrate the paraphrasing steps 3. Return demonstration of the paraphrasing steps
2	Online	2. Revision of paraphrasing steps	1. Practice writing tasks (e.g. Via Google Docs) 2. Post works to the online platform (e.g. Via Google Slides) 3. Discuss the writing tasks (e.g. Via Skype)
3	On-site	3. Explanation of the group presentations	1. Address any confusion of previous sessions 2. Prepare group presentations 3. Provide clarification as needed
4	Online	4. Working on the group presentations	1. Refine group presentations (e.g. Via Google Slides) 2. Post the group-based outline Presentations (e.g. Via Google Slides) 3. Discuss the outline presentations (e.g. Via Skype)
5	On-site	5. Presentations cum a celebration	1. Listen to the presenters 2. Feedback to the presenters 3. Celebrate the success

Notes. The balance of traditional on-site learning (session 1, 3 and 5) and online e-learning (session 2 and 4) is illustrated.

design a higher-level teaching project; for example, by proposing a 'Developing Academic Writing Skills and Styles for Healthcare Scientists' programme. This programme may include 'Writing in Academic Styles', 'Paraphrasing and Summarising', 'Using Hedging and Reporting Verbs', 'Quoting and Referencing' and 'Editing and Proofreading'.

The sequence of the learning activities (classroom or online) is also an important concern for enhancing effective learning in a blended learning environment. To help teachers' decision on the mode of learning arrangement, three reflective questions can be asked:

- 1) What is the scope of the task?
- 2) Where does the task take place on-site or online?
- 3) Do all parties support the task?

These reflective questions can help to define the extent of learning tasks, learning mode and agreement of teachers and students. Furthermore, the learning tasks should be achievable, meaningful and feasible for all parties. All the details of the task should be incorporated into a structured programme handbook which includes programme details, teaching staff, teaching schedules, online and classroom work tasks. A programme schedule is an important tool to guide the learners because it includes the mode of learning, session topics, session goals and focuses for showing the sequence of learning tasks that can enhance and align the ongoing learning process of teachers and students (Table 1 below).

Step 2 Prepare essential resources

A useful guide for preparing essential e-learning resources to address unintentional plagiarism can be made based on the planning in step 1. Many writing skill materials can be found online including those dedicated to second language learners (e.g. Owl Purdue Online Writing Lab). These sites contain sections with interactive practice on paraphrasing and summarising exercises. Reviewing the three reflective questions are also a good way to determine suitable online resources. Another helpful idea for preparing essential e-learning resources is to video-tape the lectures and then make them available online. Nurse educators can edit the important parts of the lectures and save the content as a revision video.

Step 3 Perform effective delivery

There are several online platforms that deliver on-line learning (e.g., Socrative). However, a common problem among teachers and students when using the online learning environment is the self-discipline.

Teachers complain that some students are either under-contributing or over-contributing. Some students may also over-criticize their classmates. Therefore, at the beginning of the programme, all participants should be required to follow some mutually-agreed rules during online learning and online discussion.

The 3-step teaching approach and reflective questions described in this editorial can help nurse and healthcare educators determine the scope, rationale and the application of academic writing development programmes. This teaching approach is important because it is the key to educators helping students solve unintentional plagiarism. In addition, the sample of a programme schedule can help nurses and healthcare educators to balance the classroom and online learning. A programme schedule facilitates communication between educators and students and it is necessary to keep students focusing on the specific learning goals of the programme. Furthermore, academic writing development programmes should be led by the reflective questions to achieve the best outcome for all stakeholders. These reflective questions play a crucial role in designing tasks, defining learning mode and gaining support from all stakeholders. Educators following the outlined step by step teaching approach can provide high-quality teaching to nursing and healthcare students for understanding and avoiding unintentional plagiarism. The propensity toward unintentional plagiarism continues tenaciously. Of utmost importance is to help students in all fields to prevent unintentional plagiarism. Therefore, this blended learning approach can be applied not only to nurse and healthcare education but also to all other fields of education.

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