

Research Paper

**Investigating First-Year University Student Plagiarism:
Fostering a Culture of Academic Integrity**

Jim Hu

Thompson Rivers University

Sixuan Li

Thompson Rivers University

Qinzhu Xie

*Thompson Rivers University***Abstract**

Plagiarism has long been a challenge for higher education institutions. Despite extensive research on plagiarism, researchers have conducted limited investigations into first-year students at Canadian universities. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating plagiarism among first-year students at a western Canadian university. Using plagiarism cases from first-year students provided by the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) at the university where this study took place, this study analyzes the types and prevalence of plagiarism incidents to understand trends and causes. The study further provides recommendations for effective pedagogical and institutional strategies to prevent plagiarism. The following three questions guided the study: What types of plagiarism do first-year students commit? Why do first-year students commit plagiarism? How can universities and instructors prevent plagiarism? This study is devoted to fostering a culture of academic integrity and reducing plagiarism, especially among English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) students in the post-secondary environment in British Columbia.

Introduction**Research Problem**

Plagiarism poses a persistent challenge for higher education institutions, jeopardizing the integrity of universities and undermining their academic standards (Gustilo et al., 2024; Ndebele, 2020). Plagiarism can be seen as a form of academic fraud that compromises the intellectual property of the original author for personal gain. In addition, plagiarism deprives students of valuable skills such as research, reading, analysis, writing, and critical thinking (Gustilo et al., 2024; Yeo, 2023). Therefore, universities should invest time and resources in combating academic misconduct (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010).

While there is a wealth of existing research on plagiarism, studies based in Canada are limited (Eaton & Christensen Hughes, 2022; Kier & Ives, 2022; Packalen & Rowbotham, 2022). However, the first year of post-secondary education is a critical time for students to build a solid academic foundation, and research on plagiarism among first-year students holds great potential for reducing academic deception (Owen & White, 2013; Thomas & Van Zyl, 2012). Given the lack of research related to first-year university student plagiarism in Canada vis-à-vis its importance, this study aims to investigate the plagiarism cases of first-

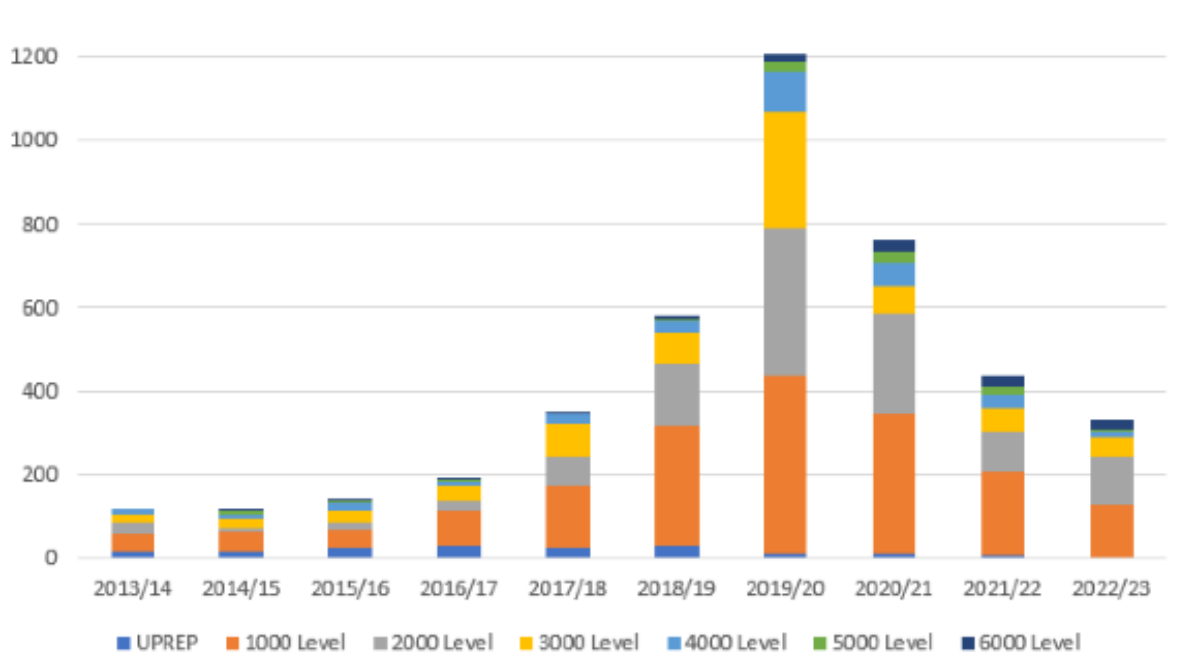
year students at a western Canadian university, understand the reasons for the offences, and recommend pedagogical and institutional strategies for plagiarism prevention.

Rationale

The western Canadian university in this study, hereafter referred to as Western Canadian University (WCU), is a medium-sized post-secondary research institution with an open learning branch. Figure 1 below shows the statistics reported by the WCU's Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) for academic integrity violations from 2013 to 2023. As shown in the figure, the number of violations rose dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be due to instruction mode constraints. Amidst the pandemic, schools had to swiftly transition from face-to-face instruction to online or blended learning models, and academic resources were limited. As a result, student stress and anxiety increased and teacher-student interaction as well as teacher supervision decreased, prompting some students to engage in academic dishonesty (Eshet, 2024).

Figure 1

Academic Integrity Violation Cases by Course Level—Year to Year



Note. (Academic Integrity Committee [AIC], 2023)

As Figure 1 shows, the cases at the first-year level consistently outnumbered those at upper levels. In addition, the widespread use of online technologies and more recently, artificial intelligence (AI), has contributed to student academic integrity issues. While there was a downward trend between 2021 and 2023 partly due to a return to in-person instruction, first-year student cases still constituted the most significant number.

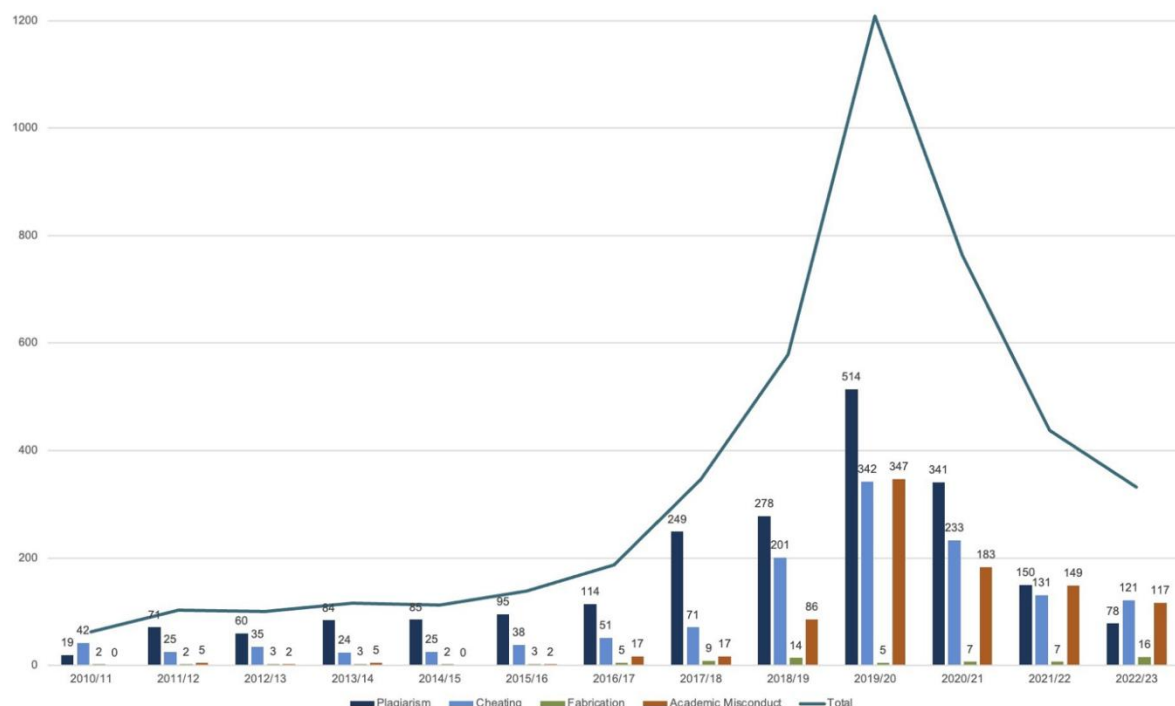
Furthermore, as found in a previous study (Hu & Yu, 2023), many incoming students, especially non-native English speakers (NNES), have limited knowledge and often misconceptions about plagiarism when they first enter university in North America. In addition, even native English-speaking (NES) first-year students are similarly challenged

with a subcultural shock as they navigate the complexities of plagiarism in a post-secondary academic setting. Therefore, the first year is an ideal teachable moment for academic integrity education, particularly in the context of plagiarism prevention, to build a solid foundation for first-year students' subsequent academic studies (Owen & White, 2013).

Figure 2 below shows the number of four types of academic integrity violations (plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and academic misconduct) recorded by the AIC from 2010 to 2023. During this period, the total number of academic integrity violations gradually increased, peaked in 2020 as classes pivoted to online delivery, and then steadily declined when in-person classes resumed. The dark blue bars represent plagiarism, and from 2011 to 2021, the number of plagiarism incidents consistently outnumbered those of the other types of academic integrity departures. However, during the 2022/2023 academic year, the number of plagiarism cases was lower than that of cheating and academic misconduct incidents while the numbers in all the categories decreased, except for fabrication. Nevertheless, 78 cases of plagiarism are still significant.

Figure 2

Types of Academic Integrity Violations (2010–2023)



Note. (AIC, 2023)

It is worth noting that violations via AI can be categorized as fabrication rather than plagiarism:

Fabrication is the intentional use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings, including the use of unapproved human assistance or unapproved tools which generate content, such as generative artificial intelligence [GenAI] or similar computer or machine learning tools (AI Tools). Examples include:

- a. Inventing data or source of information for research or other academic exercise, including the production of text, images, code, video ...using AI tools. (Thompson Rivers University [TRU], 2025a, 4.3 Fabrication).

Because AI-generated content cannot be traced to a specific source and verified in the traditional sense, such content is considered fabrication. Plagiarism, on the other hand, emphasizes using another person's words or ideas taken from a source without proper attribution (see below). The key distinction in terminology lies in the perspective of the phenomenon. Fabrication focuses on authorship, namely, who creates the content, a person or an AI tool, whereas plagiarism focuses on the source of content, namely, where the content originates, from the writer themselves or from another source, including an AI-generated source. Importantly, regardless of the categorization of the academic integrity departures, the outcome or sanctions remain the same at universities such as the one cited in the above quotation (TRU, 2025a).

In summary, it is critical to educate first-year students on plagiarism prevention and maintain a culture of academic integrity. By understanding the causes of plagiarism, institutions can implement targeted prevention programs at the initial stage of a student's entry into higher education.

Definition of Terms

Plagiarism can be defined as "the inclusion of someone else's words, ideas, images, or data as one's own work without proper acknowledgement" (TRU, 2025a, 4.4 Plagiarism). Examples include submitting someone else's work as one's own, using a paper from the internet, or submitting the same paper for multiple courses (TRU, 2025a). It is essential to give credit and properly cite sources following a specific style based on the professor's preference, such as the American Psychological Association's (APA) style (7th ed.) (American Psychological Association, 2020). Hu and Yu (2023) distinguished five types of plagiarism:

1. Complete plagiarism: Writers submit other people's entire work in their name. This type of plagiarism is the most obvious and most serious.
2. Direct plagiarism: The writer copies and pastes specific segments, sections, or paragraphs from the original source without using quotation marks, crediting, or acknowledging the original author.
3. Indirect plagiarism: The writer borrows another person's idea from a source but fails to cite the source. Another form of this type is categorized as *light* versus *strong* paraphrasing. A light paraphrase is one in which the writer quotes another person's work with only minor changes or deletions that make the text very similar to the original. In addition, the writer does not use quotation marks for the parts quoted verbatim. On the other hand, strong paraphrasing means that the writer paraphrases the text well in their own words but fails to provide the source.
4. Self-plagiarism: The writer submits the same paper to a different course for assessment without the second instructor's permission.
5. Translation: The writer translates work written by others in a different language, either through software or manual translation, and submits it in another language without proper attribution. Translation can be considered a sub-type of indirect plagiarism.

In practice, however, plagiarism is often used interchangeably with cheating, fabrication, and academic misconduct.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs attribution theory as a theoretical framework to explore psychological processes and decision-making mechanisms underlying plagiarism among first-year students. According to Graham (2020) and Snead et al. (2015), attribution theory is concerned with the perceived causes of success and failure, including internal and external factors. Its goal is to identify and understand participant perspectives on the causes that are meaningful to the events and outcomes. In other words, it seeks to understand the cognitive and motivational factors that influence how people attribute responsibility for their actions and the consequences that follow. By analyzing plagiarism cases reported to the AIC of the university where this study took place, we investigate whether students attribute their plagiarism to external factors such as stress, lack of knowledge about plagiarism, or the availability of resources. Through this analysis, we identify attributional patterns and trends to gain insights into students' mental processes and their explanations for their behaviour. Based on the findings from attribution theory, we will recommend prevention and intervention strategies to help first-year students understand and avoid plagiarism.

Literature Review

Causes of Plagiarism

Plagiarism in higher education has been the subject of extensive research, and various strategies have been used to deter and prevent such academic misconduct. These include learning centre tutoring for students, workshops for students and faculty, utilizing text-matching software like *Turnitin*, and implementing punitive regulations (Kier & Ives, 2022). While these strategies have the potential to help reduce plagiarism, the problem remains. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the perceptions of students and teachers and to delve deeper into the motivations behind plagiarism to provide more targeted solutions. The following examines related studies that reveal the complexity of plagiarism.

Palmer (2021) pointed out that the reasons students plagiarize are varied and complex. Palmer categorized the reasons as intentional and unintentional. Intentional plagiarism may be due to convenient sources to copy, lack of ethics, pressure from various directions, poor time management, and a desire for high grades with minimal effort. On the other hand, unintentional plagiarism may be due to students' lack of knowledge about plagiarism, cultural differences, language problems, and underdeveloped citation skills. From a teacher's perspective, student plagiarism may be attributed to a lack of writing skills. Some teachers may treat plagiarizing students leniently owing to a lack of school support, time constraints, heavy workloads, or disagreement with punitive solutions based on institutional policies. This also indirectly promotes plagiarism.

Hu and Yu (2023) investigated the academic integrity challenges of English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) students and indicated that English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) students plagiarize primarily because of their lack of academic writing experience and knowledge regarding plagiarism. Most of them did not have to write research papers or cite sources at the undergraduate level in their home countries. When they take standardized tests such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English

as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), they are not required to provide citations or source documentation. Students with emerging levels of EAL skills often struggle with reading comprehension and writing skills when completing paraphrasing tasks, leading to plagiarism due to limited language proficiency.

In addition, Zheng (2021) stated that the definition of plagiarism is complex and varied, making it challenging for EAL students to grasp the concept. For example, as Zheng pointed out, Chinese EAP students have difficulties understanding the Western concept of plagiarism. Because the Chinese education system, influenced by Confucianism, allows for verbatim borrowing from sources, Chinese students often perceive copying positively and lack an understanding of the adverse effects of plagiarism. Although most Chinese students have gained a better understanding of plagiarism in recent years and condemn it, they still struggle to recognize, correct, or avoid the problem.

Similarly, Lege (2021), an academic writing tutor in Japan who worked with EAL graduate students from various countries, found that when faced with a paraphrase, students often encountered language issues, such as a lack of lexical diversity and difficulty in paraphrasing with varied English expressions. Additionally, the students' cultural values may differ from those underlying Western academic writing. For example, some students may prioritize collective ownership of knowledge, valuing collaboration and collective contributions. Other potential causes include assignment deadlines, carelessness, and succumbing to the temptation to purchase a ghostwriting service (Lege, 2021). The last cause is also called contract cheating, as discussed in Chang (2018) when students are faced with academic pressure, language challenges, and academic expectations. For some universities (e.g., TRU) contract cheating is considered a form of fabrication (TRU, 2025a; see also Christensen Hughes & Eaton, 2022; Hu & Yu, 2023).

Furthermore, students may plagiarize because of a lack of interest and may resort to plagiarism as a shortcut to maintain good grades (Evering & Moorman, 2012). Evering and Moorman (2012) found that students do not consider plagiarism a severe offense, particularly because some of them believe that their work is not published on professional platforms and is only read by their teacher, so the act of plagiarism may seem less consequential. Additionally, some students feel that their teachers do not understand their burdens when the latter accuse them of being lazy; other students point out that unengaging lessons and heavy assignments contribute to plagiarism. Moreover, according to Kier and Ives (2022), both teachers and students agree that insufficient plagiarism education also contributes to the prevalence of plagiarism.

Cumming et al. (2016) reviewed 69 peer-reviewed journal and book publications from 1993 to 2013 that primarily featured participants as first- and additional-language learners at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels. They noted that students often struggle to understand the complexity of the original text, resulting in an inability to summarize and paraphrase accurately. As a result, they lack the confidence and motivation to rephrase the content, opting instead to use words or sentences directly from the original text, believing them to be safer. However, this can result in plagiarism if they do not correctly use quotation marks or citations (Cumming et al., 2016). The authors also found that students who were well-versed in academic content and had extensive experience with citation practices were more accurate in summarizing and paraphrasing, and therefore less likely to commit plagiarism.

Finally, Blau et al. (2021) highlighted the impact of the internet on plagiarism. The growth of the internet has helped students access information quickly. However, some students take advantage of this convenience by improperly copying and pasting information, resulting in plagiarism. In addition, with the growing use of AI for writing, educators have raised concerns that GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT, can generate text and even write entire papers based on user prompts. This can constrain students' creativity, make them overly reliant on AI, and even promote plagiarism (Nguyen, 2023).

In summary, the motivations behind plagiarism are varied, underscoring the complexity of the issue. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective education and intervention strategies to address and prevent plagiarism among university students, particularly those in lower-level courses.

First-Year Students

Singh and Ganapathy (2018) investigated plagiarism among first-year higher education students in Malaysia. They referred to the causes of plagiarism discussed above, including a lack of awareness about plagiarism, time management problems, and a lack of self-confidence. Additionally, advances in information technology have provided students with the convenience of copying and pasting. Students' lack of motivation, poor time management, lack of language skills, and stress may lead them to use the internet as a tool for writing, potentially resulting in plagiarism.

Moreover, students may have different understandings of plagiarism because of divergent learning cultures (Singh & Ganapathy, 2018; see also Hu & Yu, 2023). Singh and Ganapathy's (2018) findings suggested that although some students are aware that plagiarism is wrong, they lack knowledge on how to avoid it. In exam-oriented educational systems, schools follow a teacher-centred educational approach and rarely provide students with opportunities to question the authority represented by teachers and standard answers. For example, Chinese education encourages students to memorize original texts. During exams, students must recite the original texts accurately as marks are awarded based on how closely their answers match the standard version (Hu & Yu, 2023). In addition, some students do not view academic misconduct as serious; instead, they emphasize the importance of teamwork, such as learning together, collaborating on assignments, and sharing knowledge, resulting in the same product. Finally, some students hope that teachers may overlook plagiarism, allowing them to escape punishment.

Singh and Ganapathy (2018) recognized that transitioning from high school to university often presents challenges, including academic difficulties, different value systems, and subcultural shocks. The students may not immediately meet academic expectations, especially regarding writing conventions. However, the authors suggested that universities can prevent academic integrity departures if first-year students establish and maintain good academic habits, as the first year of an academic career is critical for students to build a foundation for future learning.

According to Thomas and Van Zyl (2012), first-year university students should receive information and training that clearly define academic integrity, ethics, and dishonesty. Educators should also teach students how to write academic papers and cite sources in an accepted format to support their future academic endeavours. Darab (2006) pointed out that many first-grade students lack citation skills, which leads to plagiarism.

Teachers should instruct students to cite quotations correctly and encourage them to write as authors to develop their agency and originality. Darab's study proved the effectiveness of this intervention with positive changes in students' behaviours and attitudes towards academic integrity. Moreover, schools should also be aware of students' academic dissonance during the transitional phase and provide support to help them adapt to the new academic, living, and cultural environment.

On the other hand, Li and Casanave (2012) argued that most first-year students involved in plagiarism should not be referred to as plagiarizers, but rather as beginners. The students struggle to complete their assignments because they lack sufficient knowledge about plagiarism and have limited experience in academic writing. Schools and teachers are advised to differentiate responses to plagiarism of first-year students versus upper-level students.

Gaps and Research Questions

The literature above has identified the reasons for plagiarism from different perspectives. First, English language learners (such as EAL students) often struggle with language issues and lack academic writing experience. As they are still learning English, their vocabulary diversity and sentence patterns are limited. When expected to follow Western academic citation norms, especially in paraphrasing, which require comprehension, composition, and reference skills (Pecorari, 2015, 2016), some of them may unintentionally violate academic integrity.

Additionally, students who transition from high school to university may experience subcultural shocks, especially with higher expectations for academic literacy. First-year students who lack academic writing training in high school are faced with university-level writing, which requires language proficiency aligned with rigorous citation norms. Moreover, unlike the relatively relaxed learning environment in high school, universities place greater emphasis on academic rigour and the development of critical thinking and creativity, requiring students to build the ability to construct independent arguments. However, academic integrity education is often inadequate in some high schools, resulting in certain students' limited understanding of plagiarism (Hu & Yu, 2023).

From a cultural perspective, different cultures may understand, define, and treat plagiarism differently. Compared with individualistic cultures, examination-oriented education in Confucian cultures tends to emphasize standard answers and rote learning instead of originality. Additionally, students may also avoid changing original texts out of respect for authority (Biggs, 1998; Leung, 1998; Maxwell et al., 2008; Zheng, 2021). Therefore, without adequate and proper plagiarism education, international students from examination-oriented education systems are prone to unintentional plagiarism.

The growth of the internet has expanded the channels through which students engage in various forms of plagiarism. For example, students can copy and paste online sources to present as their own writing. The advent of GenAI tools has posed additional challenges to upholding academic integrity. As GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT, allow students to bypass the writing process by generating coherent texts based on user prompts, they can lead to AI-generated plagiarism known as AIgism (Drisko, 2025; Hu & Dai, 2025; Khalaf, 2025; Tang, 2025).

While research has identified reasons for plagiarism among students in general, research gaps remain with first-year student plagiarism. First, research on plagiarism among first-year university students is particularly scarce in the Canadian context. Yet, the first year, as the starting point of students' academic journey, is an ideal teachable moment for establishing good academic habits to guard against academic integrity violations. Thus, the types of and reasons for plagiarism among first-year students need to be identified to provide a practical basis for responding to plagiarism. Second, some limited research has explored institutional policies for plagiarism prevention and intervention (Eaton & Christensen Hughes, 2022); however, these policies lack practical strategies for addressing specific situations. This study fills the gap. The questions guiding the study are as follows:

1. What types of plagiarism do first-year students commit?
2. Why do first-year students commit plagiarism?
3. What can universities and instructors do to prevent plagiarism?

Methodology

In this study, we use a mixed-methods approach. According to Ponce and Pagán-Maldonado (2015), the purpose of this approach is to measure objective aspects of research by exploring complex research questions and to gain a direct and accurate understanding of the performance of subjective factors. We use quantitative methods to explore objective factors in this study, including issues, trends, and patterns of plagiarism. Then, through qualitative methods, we analyze students' responses to plagiarism allegations to understand their subjective thoughts and gain more details about the causes of plagiarism.

The Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) of WCU provided the cases, which had been reported by instructors for September 2021 to August 2023 and categorized by the AIC as plagiarism. Universities, such as WCU, typically have detailed student academic integrity policies, with categories of departures from academic integrity and their accompanying sanctions. There will also often be guidelines for a reporting process, where to report suspected plagiarism, how to report it, how students can respond, where their responses go (such as to a dean's designate or a committee for adjudication), and how students can defend themselves (e.g., TRU, 2025a, 2025b). Regarding student defence, it is important to note that student responses may be strategically crafted to minimize personal responsibility and liability. In this sense, their statement accuracy may be limited, which constitutes an important methodological limitation.

In this project, quantitative methods were employed to identify trends in types of plagiarism, causes of plagiarism, intentionality, and other relevant factors. This study involves 111 cases of plagiarism by first-year students collected by the AIC of WCU during the 2021–2023 academic years. Of these, 65 cases occurred in 2021/2022 and 46 cases in 2022/2023. A total of 12 academic subjects were involved, with the highest number occurring in writing-intensive subjects such as English, communication, and psychology. For the 2021/2022 academic year, the AIC's learning strategist used the definitions outlined above in this paper and categorized the cases into direct plagiarism, indirect plagiarism, mixed plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and translation. For the 2022/2023 academic year, one of the authors conducted the initial categorization of the cases into the various types, which were confirmed by the principal investigator. The AIC learning strategist also categorized the causes of the 111 plagiarism cases as academic, emotional, and social. In the next section, we will employ descriptive statistical analysis to categorize plagiarism cases by subject and type.

This method will help to understand the distribution of plagiarism across subjects and the trends within the dataset.

By analyzing the allegations and student responses to the claims in the documents, we scrutinize the plagiarism cases to understand the faculty members' comments and the students' responses, analyze the reasons behind the plagiarism, the attitudes of the students and faculty toward academic misconduct, and the actions the university subsequently took. By analyzing these factors qualitatively, the aim was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of plagiarism among first-year students at the university, which will help to develop appropriate recommendations for plagiarism prevention.

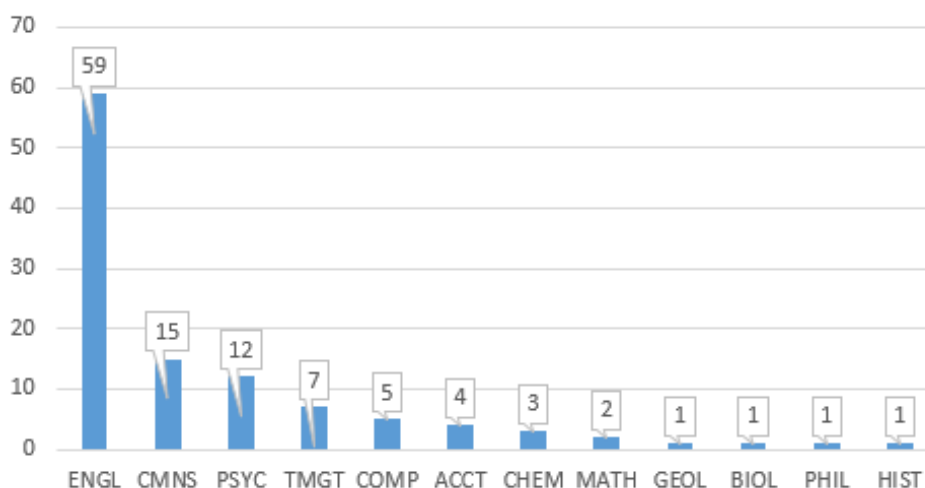
Results and Discussion

Plagiarism by Subject

Of the 111 cases, the subject with the most plagiarism instances was English (ENGL), which includes (1) Introduction to University Writing and (2) Literature and Composition, with 59 cases over the two years. The second highest number of cases was in Communication courses (CMNS), with 15 cases. Psychology (PSYC) ranked third with 12 cases. These data indicate that plagiarism is more prevalent in courses with writing-intensive assignments. Small numbers of plagiarism cases were reported in other subjects, as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

Plagiarism Cases by Subject



Types of Plagiarism

Regarding the type of plagiarism, the most prevalent was direct plagiarism ($n=86$), in which the writer directly uses one or more sections of one or more sources without quotation marks, a block quote, or source documentation (see Table 1 below). This was followed by indirect plagiarism ($n=13$), whereby the writer (a) paraphrases improperly or (b) paraphrases properly or cites the idea but fails to document the source. Then, there were eight cases of mixed plagiarism, indicating that the students plagiarized directly and indirectly in the same

assignment. Four cases involved complete plagiarism in which the writer submits other peoples' entire work under their own name. No self-plagiarism or translation was found.

Table 1

Types of Plagiarism

	Complete Plagiarism	Direct Plagiarism	Indirect Plagiarism	Mixed Plagiarism	Self-Plagiarism	Translation
Cases	4	86	13	8	0	0

Of all the cases, 60 students responded to the allegations of plagiarism, and 51 did not respond. Nine of the 60 students who responded acknowledged plagiarism and apologized, asking for forgiveness, without mentioning the reasons for plagiarism. The other 51 students provided reasons which were categorized into four groups: academic, social, cultural, and emotional.

Academic Causes

Thirty-eight cases of plagiarism were attributed to academic issues, which were further categorized into four subcategories. In 17 cases, the students were unaware of plagiarism; in another 17, the students misunderstood plagiarism. Three students submitted incorrect documents due to carelessness, and one student faced a language barrier, which prevented them from expressing their ideas in English.

Ignorance

In some cases, the students had been taught about plagiarism-related issues in the course, yet they still plagiarized. For example, in the following case, this student was from an ENGL course, and the faculty member's comment was:

In this course, we spent the first two weeks of class learning about academic integrity and plagiarism—understanding what it is by looking at examples and practice exercises of plagiarism, learning how to avoid it and possible consequences that may occur. This lesson culminated in an MLA [Modern Language Association] and Academic Integrity quiz valued at 10%, the student achieved 90% on this quiz. (Instructor A, 2022; original wording throughout the article)

The student responded:

After reviewing my assignment again, I see that I unintentionally plagiarized from the given online source. I know this goes against the Academic Integrity Policy. My original intention was to use the source for its paragraph formation however it ended up too close to the original source. I am solely responsible for this action and am deeply regretful. (Student A, 2022)

Thus, even though this student scored high on the MLA and Academic Integrity Quiz, they still used a significant amount of online information in their assignment without proper citation or paraphrasing. This suggests that teacher talk about plagiarism alone may not be sufficient and that students may need further practice than is afforded.

In another case, the student was taking a Tourism (TMGT) course. Instructor B commented: “Assuming this is a first case, I am recommending a punishment of a ZERO (0) grade for the assignment, and that the students receive training in Academic Integrity, such as ...” (2022).

The student’s response was:

After reading the comments made by the professor and attending the virtual meeting with him, I’ve been made aware of the mistakes we made. Even though I know that we worked very hard on this report and were very honest with the work but we can’t just deny the fact that the report had some parts where it attracted the mistake of plagiarism. We tried to cite and refer every source and parts where we had to write the lines from the other authors. This was a totally unintentional mistake. This is my first time to do anything related with plagiarism. (Student B, 2022)

Moreover, Instructor B felt that this student was missing too many classes:

As a result of this violation, and the subsequent ZERO (0) grade, the student will fail the course. I think this is reasonable, as the student was likely to receive a DNC [Did Not Complete] as a result of 15 absences from class (68% of classes unattended). (Instructor B, 2022)

Therefore, this student was unaware of plagiarism and did not realize that failing to cite sources constituted plagiarism. Their explanation for missing classes was that they also had a part-time job. Perhaps the instructor did provide information in class about avoiding plagiarism, but the student missed it due to absence.

The case below is about a student in a CMNS (Communication) course. The instructor asserted:

I found several incidents in which the information in your report was cut & pasted from websites without citations or attempts to put the information into your own words. As you are aware, I am obligated to report any cases of suspected plagiarism or academic dishonesty. (Instructor C, 2021)

The student responded:

I had no intention to plagiarize or copy someone else’s work as per my understanding. I have collected information from the websites and presented in report with references as required. I really have no idea what went wrong and whether I will be getting grades for this course as I did with all my hard work. (Student C, 2021)

The student in this case likely failed to use quotation marks or block quotes (for 40 words or more) for the copied parts. Providing references is necessary, but equally so is to put the quoted parts in quotation marks or block quotes. Failing either way constitutes plagiarism (see Hu & Yu, 2023). The reasons students plagiarize unknowingly are complex. In addition to the previously mentioned students who were aware of plagiarism but did not fully understand it, and those who were unaware of plagiarism altogether, there are cases involving students from countries that either lack or do not enforce academic integrity policies. In these types of cases, some students have had their work reviewed by a tutor at the university

writing centre before submission, believing that their work is thus devoid of serious problems, but the tutor has overlooked the plagiarism.

Misunderstanding

WCU places a high value on academic integrity and provides relevant resources for students and faculty. In one case, an English teacher said:

I predominantly teach first-year writing courses as a sessional instructor.... As part of all beginning—and ongoing—coursework, students are specifically given lecture material, handouts, PowerPoints, resources and links to citation and anti-plagiarism sites on Moodle. We have a workshop on academic honesty and the consequences of dishonesty, and we practice citation, quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing in class ... We do practice in class, as well as class assignments leading up to final paper. (Instructor D, 2022)

This instructor mentioned that they had responded to the increasing number of plagiarism cases by requiring students to complete and score 100% on an academic integrity quiz before submitting graded assignments. Therefore, the student should have had some understanding of plagiarism in class; however, the student reported in this case still had a misconception about plagiarism. This student made the following comment:

I have not copy pasted directly from the source. I have cited my sources and kept it to minimal, so I myself don't get confused as which source I have used; there is quantifiable data in source and I even asked this question in class on how to use quantifiable data or a primary research source and how to cite them, but the concept was still unclear to me. I have taken help from writing centre twice for this research work and I am aware of citing the sources. I also have appointment booking confirmation to back my claim, but I have not directly copy pasted the source. I have used citation as per APA 7th edition and this is the first time ever in my life that I have done a research on such topic. (Student D, 2022)

Based on the evidence provided by the professor, while the student provided in-text citations, they failed to use quotation marks or a block quote for the copied text. Thus, the student demonstrated some understanding of plagiarism but misunderstood it or how to avoid it. The Writing Centre also overlooked the problem. In this case, Instructor D presented academic integrity quiz examples, such as “Is it okay to copy and paste material from sources or online into your paper without citing them?” or “Is it acceptable to have a friend write a paper for you?” These questions are straightforward yes-or-no inquiries, offering students a chance to think about plagiarism but lacking depth. Students require more precise questions to grasp plagiarism-related concepts comprehensively. Furthermore, allowing students to take the quiz multiple times may lead to a lack of seriousness in their approach to the questions, as they can answer them correctly simply by avoiding earlier mistakes.

Another representative case is from a student taking an ENGL course, and the following is the faculty member's comment:

However, I noticed that the first section of the exam or a poem explication contained familiar words and phrases. A quick internet search revealed a website, with an analysis of the same poem with some identical phrasing and sentences. The passages

are too extensive for the similarities to be coincidental. Even if the student simply memorized these passages, there are no citations in the exam to indicate the original source. (Instructor E, 2022)

The student explained:

However, I did study a number of poem analysis while preparing for the exam from a bunch of different sources. I memorized some of them and honestly got lucky to get one of them in the exam... I did not [access] any sources during the exam, but memorized from the source during preparation and recognized that fact that I should have cited the source but I honestly did not remember the exact source and was too desperate to finish the exam that I missed the thought of citation. (Student E, 2022)

This student memorized some relevant information in preparation for the exam and felt fortunate enough to have the same topic on the exam and so copied the answer from memory. However, this student was accused of plagiarism because they did not provide a citation for verbatim quoting. A text from a source, even if memorized, must still be cited in academic assignments. Asian countries like India and countries influenced by Confucianism, such as China, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore, value memorization and rote learning as an approach to education (Biggs, 1998; Leung, 1998). When studying in Canada, students from these countries must be reminded to follow Canadian conventions.

Carelessness

In the case of carelessness, the main issue is that students copy and paste helpful information into a document while preparing to write an assignment. However, when students submit the assignment, they inadvertently upload this document containing the source information instead of the one they wrote. In the following case, the student from a psychology class responded to an allegation of plagiarism:

I used these sources, and I added references. I submitted wrong pdf. accidentally. I had 2 backups of my work saved on my desktop. I did not realize that I was referring to the unfinished assignment as my final. I am working hard for my online classes. My dream of becoming a Nurse and serve the community is totally dependent on this prerequisite course. It was an honest mistake. (Student F, 2022)

This student unintentionally plagiarized and could have avoided it if they had been more careful. Educators should also consider this factor and attempt to intervene to prevent students from engaging in academic dishonesty due to carelessness. For example, teachers can adopt formative assessment by providing comments for revision or improvement before students submit their final drafts. Thus, teachers can learn about students' problems and adapt their teaching, while students realize their mistakes or problems and use the teacher's comments as an opportunity to learn. Additionally, allowing students to revise their assignments and submit multiple drafts can help them manage their time more effectively, thereby meeting deadlines and reducing plagiarism arising from deadline pressure.

Language Difficulty

Lege (2021) noted that additional-language learners plagiarize intentionally or unintentionally when they have difficulty synthesizing or paraphrasing due to language

problems. One case in the current study was claimed to involve plagiarism due to language difficulties. The student responded, “I did not intend to [plagiarize]. I did not have [know how] to articulate my ideas correctly for that paragraph. I have learned from this mistake, and I apologize once again” (Student H, 2022). This student had no idea how to express themselves accurately in English and may have unintentionally plagiarized someone else’s writing. Having language difficulties is one reason additional-language learners are sometimes considered plagiarizers (Pecorari & Petrić, 2014). Indeed, successful paraphrasing demands competent comprehension, composition, and reference skills (Hu & Yu, 2023; Pecorari, 2016). Therefore, improving language skills is essential in reducing academic integrity issues. There is only one case of language difficulties in the data, possibly because other cases involving similar causes were not reported or overshadowed by other important factors. This single case is a surprise, given that WCU had over 6,500 international students among its total student enrolment of almost 28,000 students during the 2022/2023 school year.

Social Causes

Selemani et al. (2018) found that some students plagiarize because of pressure from work, family, and friends. Other students plagiarize due to approaching deadlines and a lack of effective time management skills. These reasons are categorized as social issues in this report.

The case below is from a student in a Communication (CMNS) course. The faculty allegation was:

Section of paper directly [plagiarized], with false sourcing. We covered writing methods, including APA citation, paraphrasing, and what plagiarism is as this is a first-year writing course. Students took an Academic Integrity Quiz prior to handing in written work, and student received 100%. (Instructor F, 2022)

The student responded: “I ended up replicating [copying] some information due to a lack of time and the desire to accomplish the assignment swiftly. I should have referenced my sources more accurately and put more effort into producing original work” (Student I, 2022). This student knew how to avoid plagiarism but chose to plagiarize because of poor time management.

In another case, a student from ENGL responded:

As a fulltime employee and a fulltime mother, life can be a little hectic at times. Under the busy schedule I had to manage my time and meet deadlines for the assignment. I was on a tight timeline for the assignment to be finished on time. As a result of submitting the assignment on time I accidentally submitted the parts of the notes that I forgot to paraphrase. (Student J, 2021)

The two students above engaged in intentional and unintentional plagiarism, respectively, due to poor time management and pressure from life and assignment deadlines. Many students study and work simultaneously because they need to cover tuition and living expenses. Schools should consider assisting such students by training them in time management skills, providing peer mentors to help them solve problems, and relieving stress through counselling.

Cultural Causes

Maxwell et al. (2008) noted that many Asian cultures are influenced by Confucian traditions which may affect students' perceptions of plagiarism. For example, Confucianism emphasizes etiquette and harmony in social relationships, leading students to believe that tampering with another person's writing, especially that of a well-known person, is disrespectful. In addition, in Asian cultures, many scholars are revered and paraphrasing their work may be presumptuous (Leki, 1992). Furthermore, as in the case of language difficulties, Asian education often emphasizes memorization, leading to students copying others' writing. Moreover, due to the lack of emphasis on academic honesty in some Asian cultures, students may not fully understand the concept of plagiarism or its consequences. Therefore, many Asian students struggle to understand plagiarism when studying in Western countries due to cultural differences.

The following case is from a CMNS student. The faculty member commented: "The student submitted a report that is mostly identical to the report submitted by another student. Also, the student's report has evidence of plagiarism in some lines" (Instructor G, 2022).

The student responded:

I'm an international student from India and being an international student in foreign university is challenging. It's just hardly been a month I've been in Canada and it's hard for me because I'm depressed, homesick and on constant culture shock, education shock, and it is tough for me to adapt [to] this new environment. (Student K, 2022)

This student came to Canada feeling shocked and overwhelmed by different cultures, which led to plagiarism. Many international students may have similar feelings upon arriving in Canada. The new culture, education system, and lifestyle may overwhelm international students and cause stress. Schools could consider measures to help new international students adapt to the environment and avoid academic integrity problems.

Emotional Causes

Tindall et al. (2021) found that students in higher education have higher rates of mental illness than other groups. In addition, there is substantial evidence that depression, stress, or anxiety can affect students' academic performance and lead to plagiarism. For example, Karim et al. (2009) found that students' anxiety and low mood were positively correlated with online plagiarism, meaning that an increase in students' negative mood increased the likelihood of plagiarism. In addition, Fu and Tremayne (2022) stated that high levels of negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and depression may reduce students' self-efficacy and self-control, which can lead to plagiarism. In the following case, the student from a CMNS course responded:

I am an international student from India, recently came to Canada a month back. Being an international student has been a tough call for me from emotional to mental instability. I am still processing and taking baby steps to adapt in this new culture and environment. This is the first time being all alone in a different nation and taking care of yourself physically, mentally and emotional makes me depressed and at the same

time homesick. As it's been a week and a half and I have a viral fever, cold and cough, and I also told my professor about my situation. (Student L, 2022)

This student plagiarized because they were new to Canada and had health issues, and the unfamiliar culture, environment, and way of life overwhelmed them. Higher education institutions should help these students. For example, teachers can show more care for new students, and schools can provide counselling resources and mental health seminars to help students address mental health problems, thereby reducing academic integrity issues.

In summary, among the responses of 51 plagiarism cases, academic causes were the most significant. Within the academic category, there were four subcategories: ignorance, misunderstanding, carelessness, and language barriers. Social problems ranked second. Cultural and emotional causes accounted for a tiny fraction, although we suspect that more cases were influenced by cultural differences (see Hu & Yu, 2023). In fact, in many cases, the students' responses contained multiple reasons, and we have selected the most important of these and categorized them accordingly. This highlights the complexity and diversity of causes for plagiarism among first-year students, particularly EAL students.

Recommendations and Conclusions

This section summarizes the conclusions based on the literature and the study and makes recommendations. The goal is to answer the research questions, inform educators, and prevent plagiarism among students.

What Types of Plagiarism Do First-Year Students Commit?

According to the data provided by the AIC of WCU for first-year students from 2021 to 2023, the major types of plagiarism were direct, indirect, mixed, and complete. Direct plagiarism, which involves copying one or more sources verbatim, was by far the most prevalent, and when combined with mixed plagiarism, accounted for nearly 85% of the 111 cases. Not surprisingly, most students involved in plagiarism were enrolled in writing-intensive courses, such as English, Communication, and Psychology. These findings suggest that in academic integrity education, special emphasis should target direct plagiarism and that writing-intensive courses may play a key role in shaping students' understanding of academic writing and citation norms.

Why Do First-Year Students Commit Plagiarism?

The study classifies the causes of all cases into four categories: academic, social, cultural, and emotional. First of all, academic problems involve students who are unaware of plagiarism, misunderstand it, upload the wrong files carelessly, and have language difficulties that prevent them from expressing themselves effectively in English. These problems can be attributed to a lack of understanding of plagiarism, insufficient attention, and inadequate language competence.

Social issues encompass various responsibilities, including family, friends, and work obligations. These responsibilities pressure students to balance studies with extracurricular activities. Additionally, students may lack effective time management skills and feel pressured to submit assignments on time and achieve good grades (see also Chang, 2018). As a result, they may plagiarize intentionally or unintentionally.

Cultural issues often arise with international students. The university where this study took place welcomed over 6,500 international students from more than 100 countries during the 2022/2023 academic year, accounting for approximately 24% of all university enrolments, including both on-campus and online registrants. In addition, a majority of incoming NNES students have IELTS or other English language test scores high enough to be admitted directly into academic programs. Most cases (78%) in 2021/22 involved NNES students (Hu & Porco, 2023). They face a new culture, educational system, and way of life without a transition, which may lead some students to plagiarize. In addition, even some NES students may experience subculture shock because what is expected at the university can be different from that in high school. Similarly, some students who come to school in Canada for the first time may feel uncomfortable with the unfamiliar culture, lifestyle, and education system. Coupled with the pressures of school, work, and life, they may experience mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress, which can lead to plagiarism.

Other studies have suggested further reasons. For example, some students may defy authority, believing their plagiarism will not be detected (Ferro & Martins, 2016). Teachers may be reluctant to increase their workload, thus ignoring students' academic dishonesty (Devlin & Gray, 2007). In addition, with the development of the internet and technology, it has become easier for students to copy and paste, thus exacerbating plagiarism (Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre, 2010). Hence, the causes of plagiarism are complex and varied. The recent emergence and ubiquitous use of GenAI tools among students, especially, AI-generated plagiarism (Peters, 2023), also known as AIgiarism (Tang, 2025), have aggravated the complexity.

What Can Universities and Instructors Do to Prevent Plagiarism? Pedagogical and Institutional Recommendations

Eret and Ok (2014) recommended that schools offer a required non-credit course and set it during the first semester of first-year student enrolment. The course should include instruction on using scholarly sources and the internet, as well as avoiding issues related to academic integrity. Such hands-on opportunities can be effective in reducing plagiarism. Some schools have already adopted a similar approach.

For example, the University of British Columbia (UBC) (n.d.) offers four open online Academic Integrity Canvas modules. Students can self-enrol and earn certificates of completion, and faculty can have students provide certificates (see Appendix A). In addition, UBC's Okanagan campus offers a dedicated module for Academic Integrity in the Arts and provides personal counselling services for students who need assistance.

At Simon Fraser University (SFU), the SFU Academic Integrity Coordinator, the Library, and the Student Learning Center (SLC) have collaborated to develop an academic integrity course. The course teaches students how to avoid plagiarism, where to find support resources, and what the university expects of them regarding academic integrity (see Appendix B). The course typically takes 20–30 minutes and includes two quizzes. The course developers recommend that faculty incorporate this academic integrity course into their curriculum and track student completion (Power, 2025).

However, the academic integrity courses offered by the above-mentioned universities are usually elective and depend on the students' voluntary participation and the professors' decisions. Additionally, these courses are often non-credit bearing, resulting in a lack of

incentives for students to enrol. In contrast, Douglas College (2020) provided one course, DCUE 0100: Academic Integrity, which is a course required for all incoming students that takes 30 minutes to complete on Douglas College's online learning management system (see Appendix C). At the end of the course, students must complete an exam with a passing score of 80%. They have three opportunities to take the exam. Therefore, incoming students can learn about academic integrity and work to avoid plagiarism in their future studies. However, like the SFU course, this course is brief, lacks practical experience, and may not provide students with a thorough understanding of plagiarism.

TRU offers a one-credit course called STSS 1070: Enforcement of Academic Standards (see Appendix D). The course focuses on instructing students on academic integrity, including techniques such as paraphrasing, proper use of quotation marks, and writing citations and references (TRU, n.d.). The course lasts one month, providing ample time for students to learn. However, only students who are reported to have plagiarized are required to attend. Hence, Hu and Yu (2023) recommended that all incoming students take a one-credit module or course to ensure consistency and provide students with an in-depth understanding of plagiarism and adequate practice time to enhance learning.

In addition to offering academic integrity courses, Artyukhov (2024), East and Donnelly (2012), and Eaton (2025) have maintained that academic integrity requires the cooperation and contributions of all stakeholders, including instructors, administrators, academic support staff, students, and the broader community. Institutions of higher education should consider all relevant factors and employ various methods to meet students' needs, ensuring that students understand the institution's expectations regarding academic integrity. For example, multiple factors led to cases of plagiarism in this project. Depending on the academic issue, the school may organize workshops to help teachers enhance academic integrity education. Regarding social, cultural, and mental health issues, the school can provide relevant resources to help students. For example, TRU offers a peer tutor service for students in need. TRU also organizes "I Days" every year to provide international students with opportunities to showcase their home country's culture and help them find a sense of belonging. Additionally, TRU offers a wellness centre where students can seek assistance for mental health issues. All these resources help new students adapt to their new environment, which in turn can reduce plagiarism.

EAP programs, especially their high-level writing courses, as offered by TRU and other Canadian post-secondary institutions, are another important measure to help EAL students learn to use sources properly and avoid plagiarism. Studies of EAP programs at Canadian post-secondary institutions (e.g., Douglas et al., 2022; Johnny et al., 2026; Tweedie & Kim, 2015; Windle et al., 2024) have revealed that the EAP program experience was effective in helping EAL students develop writing and research skills and foster confidence and empowerment in relation to their disciplinary studies.

Furthermore, Kier and Ives (2022) suggested that teachers are essential players in preventing plagiarism among students, as they serve as role models. Teachers must follow academic integrity policies, educate students on how to avoid plagiarism, and provide support. All in all, reducing academic dishonesty requires the concerted efforts of everyone in the community. Schools should prioritize prevention for first-year students by providing them with a solid foundation for their future studies. Mandatory prevention measures are necessary to give students a practical understanding of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Limitations and Further Research

One issue with this project was the limitation of data. We only analyzed plagiarism cases among first-year students at one university from 2021 to 2023. Therefore, in future studies, more cases of plagiarism among first-year students over multiple school years, and possibly involving other Canadian and foreign universities, should be analyzed. More qualitative data should be collected to learn more about students' responses to plagiarism allegations and teachers' perceptions and practices for plagiarism prevention. In addition, if the recommended preventative measures are implemented, further research should be conducted to examine their effectiveness. Moreover, AI tools were not explored in depth as the cases in this project rarely involved them. However, with the increasing prevalence of GenAI tools such as ChatGPT, there should be more relevant research to explore its impact on academic writing and its potential pros and cons, including its effectiveness in providing help and support and any issues related to academic integrity and plagiarism that may arise (see Balalle & Pannilage, 2025; Du & Tate, 2024). Particularly, urgent research is needed to explore measures to prevent AI-related plagiarism (Drisko, 2025; Hu & Dai, 2025).

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Thompson Rivers University (TRU) for funding support, the Academic Integrity Committee where this study took place for access to the plagiarism cases, the research assistants for help with the project, and the editors and anonymous reviewers for constructive feedback.

References

- Academic Integrity Committee (AIC). (2023). *Academic Integrity Committee report to the meeting of the Senate*. Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, BC.
- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Artyukhov, A. (2024). University system for ensuring academic integrity structure and role of stakeholders. *Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences*, 1, 261–267. <https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2024-1-32>
- Biggs, J. (1998). Learning from the Confucian heritage: So size doesn't matter? *International Journal of Educational Research*, 29(8), 723–738. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355\(98\)00060-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355(98)00060-3)
- Blau, I., Goldberg, S., Friedman, A., & Eshet-Alkalai, Y. (2021). Violation of digital and analog academic integrity through the eyes of faculty members and students: Do institutional role and technology change ethical perspectives? *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 33, 157–187. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-020-09260-0>
- Balalle, H., & Pannilage, S. (2025). Reassessing academic integrity in the age of AI: A systematic literature review on AI and academic integrity. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 11, 101299. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101299>
- Chang, D. H. (2018). Academic dishonesty in a post-secondary multilingual institution. *BC TEAL Journal*, 3(1), 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.14288/bctj.v3i1.287>
- Christensen Hughes, J., & Eaton, S.E. (2022). Student integrity violations in the academy: More than a decade of growing complexity and concern. In S. E. Eaton and J. Christensen Hughes (Eds.), *Academic integrity in Canada: An enduring and essential challenge* (pp. 61–80). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83255-1_3

- Comas-Forgas, R., & Sureda-Negre, J. (2010). Academic plagiarism: Explanatory factors from students' perspective. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 8(3), 217–232. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-010-9121-0>
- Cumming, A., Lai, C., & Cho, H. (2016). Students' writing from sources for academic purposes: A synthesis of recent research. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 23, 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2016.06.002>
- Darab, S. (2006). A preventative approach to plagiarism: An empirical study of a first-year unit for undergraduates. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 2(2), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.21913/IJEI.v2i2.87>
- Devlin, M., & Gray, K. (2007). In their own words: A qualitative study of the reasons Australian university students plagiarize. *High Education Research & Development*, 26(2), 181–198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360701310805>
- Douglas College (2020, August 27). *Strong start academic integrity workshop*. <https://www.douglascollege.ca/sites/default/files/docs/Strong%20Start%20Academic%20Integrity%20Workshop%20August%2027.pdf>
- Douglas, S. R., Landry, M. H., Doe, C., & Cheng, L. (2022). English for academic purposes student reflections: Factors related to their additional language socialization at a Canadian university. *TESL Canada Journal*, 39(1), 21–43. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v39i1/1373>
- Drisko, J. W. (2025). AIgiarism: Computer generated text, plagiarism, and how to address it in teaching. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 45(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2024.2433795>
- Du, Q., & Tate, T. (2024). ChatGPT, plagiarism, and multilingual students' learning to write. *The CATESOL Journal*, 35(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.5070/B5.34831>
- East, J., & Donnelly, L. (2012). Taking responsibility for academic integrity: Collaborative teaching and learning design. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 9(3), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.53761/1.9.3.2>
- Eaton, S. E. (2025). A wraparound approach to academic integrity: Centering students in the postplagiarism era. SSRN. <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5223911>
- Eaton, S. E., & Christensen Hughes, J. (Eds.). (2022). *Academic integrity in Canada: An enduring and essential challenge*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83255-1>
- Eret, E., & Ok, A. (2014). Internet plagiarism in higher education: Tendencies, triggering factors and reasons among teacher candidates. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(8), 1002–1016. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2014.880776>
- Eshet, Y. (2024). The plagiarism pandemic: Inspection of academic dishonesty during the COVID-19 outbreak using originality software. *Education and Information Technologies*, 29, 3279–3299. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11967-3>
- Evering, L. C., & Moorman, G. (2012). Rethinking plagiarism in the digital age. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(1), 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.1002/JAAL.00100>
- Ferro, M.J., & Martins, H.F. (2016). Academic plagiarism: Yielding to temptation. *British Journal of Education, Society, and Behavioural Sciences*, 13(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.9734/BJESBS/2016/20535>
- Fu, K. W., & Tremayne, K. S. (2022). Self-efficacy and self-control mediate the relationship between negative emotions and attitudes toward plagiarism. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 20(4), 457–477. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-021-09415-3>
- Graham, S. (2020). An attributional theory of motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101861>

- Gullifer, J., & Tyson, G. A. (2010). Exploring university students' perceptions of plagiarism: A focus group study. *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(4), 463–481.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070903096508>
- Gustilo, L., Ong, E. & Lapinid, M.R. (2024). Algorithmically-driven writing and academic integrity: Exploring educators' practices, perceptions, and policies in AI era. *International Journal on Educational Integrity*, 20(3), 1–43.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-024-00153-8>
- Hu, J., & Dai, J. (2025, November 22). *Preventing plagiarism in the GenAI era: Strategies for university instructors* [Paper presentation]. The International TESOL 2025 Virtual Convention. <https://www.tesol.org/virtual/programs/>
- Hu, J., & Porco, E. (2023, February 21). *Plagiarism in theory and practice and what to do about it* [Paper presentation]. Teaching Practice Colloquium, Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, BC.
- Hu, J., & Yu, W. (2023). What are ESL students' academic integrity challenges and how can universities help? *International Journal of TESOL Studies*, 5(3), 107–125.
<https://doi.org/10.58304/ijts.20230309>
- Johnny, L., Smith, V., & Windle, S. (2026). Aligning English for academic purposes with college writing expectations: Insights from one Canadian college. *BC TEAL Journal*, 11(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.14288/bctj.v11i1.652>
- Karim, N. S. A., Zamzuri, N. H. A., & Nor, Y. M. (2009). Exploring the relationship between Internet ethics in university students and the big five model of personality. *Computers & Education*, 53(1), 86–93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.01.001>
- Khalaf, M.A. (2025). Does attitude towards plagiarism predict AIgiarism using ChatGPT? *AI Ethics*, 5, 677–688. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-024-00426-5>
- Kier, C. A., & Ives, C. (2022). Recommendations for a balanced approach to supporting academic integrity: Perspectives from a survey of students, faculty, and tutors. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 18(22).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-022-00116-x>
- Lege, R. P. (2021). Decreasing plagiarism in ESL college student writing with corrective software programs. *Academia Letters*, Article 2108, 1–4.
<https://doi.org/10.20935/AL2108>
- Leki, I. (1992). *Understanding ESL writers: A guide for teachers*. Boynton/Cook.
- Leung, F. K. (1998). The implications of Confucianism for education today. *Journal of Thought*, 33(2), 25–36. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42590239>
- Li, Y., & Casanave, C. P. (2012). Two first-year students' strategies for writing from sources: Patchwriting or plagiarism? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21(2), 165–180.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2012.03.002>
- Maxwell, A., Curtis, G. J., & Vardanega, L. (2008). Does culture influence understanding and perceived seriousness of plagiarism? *The International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 4(2), 25–40. <https://doi.org/10.21913/IJEI.v4i2.412>
- Ndebele, H. (2020). Demystifying student plagiarism in academic writing: Towards an 'educational' solution. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, 8(2), 39–54.
<https://journals.co.za/doi/10.14426/cristal.v8i2.284>
- Nguyen, Q. H. (2023). AI and plagiarism: Opinion from teachers, administrators and policymakers. *Proceedings of the AsiaCALL International Conference*, 4, 75–85.
<https://doi.org/10.54855/paic.2346>
- Owens, C., & White, F. A. (2013). A 5-year systematic strategy to reduce plagiarism among first-year psychology university students. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 65(1), 14–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajpy.12005>

- Packalen, K.A., & Rowbotham, K. (2022). Student insight on academic integrity. In S. E. Eaton and J. Christensen Hughes (Eds.), *Academic integrity in Canada: An enduring and essential challenge* (pp. 353–376). Springer.
- Palmer, A. (2021). Investigating staff views on plagiarism in transnational higher education. *Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching*, 4(2), 13–27. <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2021.4.2.6>
- Pecorari, D. (2015). Plagiarism in second language writing: Is it time to close the case? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 30, 94–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2015.08.003>
- Pecorari, D. (2016). Plagiarism, international students, and the second-language writer. In T. Bretag (Ed.), *Handbook of academic integrity* (pp. 537–550). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-079-7_69-2
- Pecorari, D., & Petrić, B. (2014). Plagiarism in second-language writing. *Language Teaching*, 47(3), 269–302. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444814000056>
- Peters, M. (2023). Note éditoriale: Intelligence artificielle et intégrité académique peuvent-elles faire bon ménage? [Editorial note: Can artificial intelligence and academic integrity coexist?] *Revue des sciences de l'éducation*, 49(1). <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/rse/2023-v49-n1-rse08930/1107846ar/>
- Ponce, O. A., & Pagán-Maldonado, N. (2015). Mixed methods research in education: Capturing the complexity of the profession. *International Journal of Educational Excellence*, 1(1), 111–135. <https://doi.org/10.18562/IJEE.2015.0005>
- Power, H. (2025). *Academic integrity tutorial*. Simon Fraser University. <https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-tutorial>
- Selemani, A., Chawinga, W. D., & Dube, G. (2018). Why do postgraduate students commit plagiarism? An empirical study. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 14(7), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-018-0029-6>
- Singh, M. K. M., & Ganapathy, M. (2018). Understanding plagiarism from the lens of first year tertiary level students. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 26, 159–177. <http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/>
- Snead, K. C., Magal, S. R., Christensen, L. F., & Ndede-Amadi, A. A. (2015). Attribution theory: A theoretical framework for understanding information systems success. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 28, 273–288. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11213-014-9328-x>
- Tang, B. L. (2025). AIgiarism is plagiarism: Artificial intelligence can (be perceived to) plagiarize and can also be plagiarized. *Science Editing*, 12(1), 81–83. <https://doi.org/10.6087/kcse.346>
- The University of British Columbia. (n.d.). *Academic integrity: Learning modules*. <https://academicintegrity.ubc.ca/modules/>
- Thomas, A., & Van Zyl, A. (2012). Understanding of and attitudes to academic ethics among first year university students. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 6(2), 143–155. <https://doi.org/10.15249/6-2-27>
- Thompson Rivers University. (n.d.). *Courses*. <https://www.tru.ca/programs/courses.html?letter=S>
- Thompson Rivers University. (2025a). *Policy number ED 05-0: Academic integrity*. https://ED_05-01_Academic_Integrity_2025-08-11.pdf
- Thompson Rivers University. (2025b). *Academic integrity departures: Reporting form*. https://www.tru.ca/_shared/assets/campus-students-case-report-form58029.pdf
- Tindall, I. K., Fu, K. W., Tremayne, K., & Curtis, G. J. (2021). Can negative emotions increase students' plagiarism and cheating? *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 17(25), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-021-00093-7>

- Tweedie, M. G., & Kim, M. (2015). EAP curriculum alignment and social acculturation: Student perceptions. *TESL Canada Journal*, 33(1), 41–57.
<https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v33i1.1226>
- Windle, S., Johnny, L., & Smith, V. (2024). The impact of a college EAP writing program: Former students' perspectives. *TESL Canada Journal*, 41(2), 59–79.
<https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v41i2/1411>
- Yeo, M. A. (2023). Academic integrity in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) authoring apps. *TESOL Journal*, 14, e716. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.716>
- Zheng, Q. (2021). Chinese university students' perceptions of the use and effectiveness of Turnitin in EAP writing. *International Journal of TESOL Studies*, 3(2), 40–54.
<https://doi.org/10.46451/ijts.2021.06.04>

Appendix A

The University of British Columbia Academic Integrity: Learning Modules

<https://academicintegrity.ubc.ca/modules/>

Access our selection of academic integrity learning modules. These modules can be accessed and used by instructors to help promote academic integrity in their courses or can be accessed directly by students to learn about the various aspects of academic integrity in courses and beyond.

A. Vancouver Campus Modules

1. Academic Integrity Foundations
2. Cheating and Collaboration
3. Writing and Plagiarism
4. Introduction to Academic Integrity

B. Okanagan Campus Modules

1. Cheating and Collaboration
2. Writing and Plagiarism
3. Academic Integrity in the Visual Arts

Appendix B

Simon Fraser University Student Academic Integrity Tutorial 2025

<https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/91454>

Overview/ Introduction

What is Academic Integrity? Why Does it Matter?

What is Plagiarism?

How Can I Avoid Plagiarism?

What is Patchwriting?

Why Do I have to Cite My Sources?

Do I Have to Cite Everything?

Can I reuse a paper by submitting it to multiple courses?

I am Taking a Computer Science Course. Can I Share Computer Code?

Are there risks to using Artificial Intelligence?

Am I Allowed to Use Generative AI in my Coursework?

Resources to Cite Generative Artificial Intelligence

Misrepresenting your identity
Misrepresenting Your Circumstances to Request a Concession
Cheating on an exam
Altering an Exam Mark
Assisting Others to Cheat
Self-Check 01
What is Contract Cheating?
Sharing Instructional Material is Prohibited
Academic Disciplinary Process
Penalties
Appeals
Office Hours: An effective but underused resource
Library and Student Learning Commons
Free tutoring and peer support through your department
Study Groups
Self - Check 02
Congratulations!

Appendix C

Douglas College Information about DCUE 0100: Academic Integrity

https://www.douglascollege.ca/sites/default/files/docs/student-life/fall2025_nsu3.pdf

Understanding academic integrity

Douglas College expects students to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. To help you understand what academic integrity means at Douglas, all new students will be automatically enrolled into DCUE 0100 – Academic Integrity, an online course that lives on Blackboard. This course is mandatory. Students are expected to complete the course before your first semester begins. Students who do not complete the course with a passing grade will not be allowed to register for future semesters until it is completed. To access, please find “Academic Integrity” under “Courses” on Blackboard.

More about DCUE 0100: Academic Integrity

<https://www.douglascollege.ca/sites/default/files/docs/Strong%20Start%20Academic%20Integrity%20Workshop%20August%202027.pdf>

Course Information

- Should take about **30 minutes**
- At end of course is a **short test**.
 - Pass = 80%
 - Three attempts to pass.



Having trouble with content?

You can complete the module with Learning Centre tutors.

Appendix D

Thompson Rivers University
Course Description for STSS 1070: Performing to Academic Standards
<https://www.tru.ca/programs/courses.html?letter=S>

Performing to Academic Standards (1,0,0). 1 credit

Students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and information fluency. Students practice and improve fundamental skills in research and writing, and utilizing library resources, that are required in post-secondary education and beyond, and gain a solid understanding of academic integrity. Topics include the issues of plagiarism, responsible research and citation (e.g., integrating quotations, paraphrasing, style and format for referencing), and developing solid arguments.



The *BC TEAL Journal* is licensed under a
[Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).
Copyright rests with the author(s).