Assessing the value of a holistic use of Turnitin to promote academic integrity

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The Institutional Context

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Welcome

The Integrity website hosts resources aimed at helping students understand what academic integrity is and how to gain the skills needed to reference and approach your assignments with confidence. It is part of a package of resources to help you develop the skills you need to study successfully.

Academic Skills Tutorials

A suite of online tutorials has been developed by staff at the Academic Support Office and involving staff and students from across campus. The tutorials cover critical thinking, managing your reading, referencing the discussion and academic writing. The referencing tutorial explores the reasons why we reference and how we can reference with confidence using different referencing styles. It has videos, activities, quizzes and downloads. The four aims of the tutorial are to help you to understand why, when and how to reference your assignments, and also to do so with style. The tutorials can be accessed by all students and academic staff from their Yorkshire (VLE) home page.

Mandatory Academic Integrity tutorial

All students are required to successfully complete the online academic integrity tutorial, held in Yorkshire VLE. You should complete the tutorial as early into your studies as possible. Please login to your Yorkshire account Yorkshire account where you will see a link to the tutorial in the left hand navigation.

Turnitin Workshops

All students have access to Turnitin text matching software to help develop writing skills and the integration of source material into assignments. Some departments will organise workshops for their students or you can sign up to attend one of the weekly open workshops in which you will learn what Turnitin is and how it can be used. It is best to attend a workshop once you have an assignment to write and have begun drafting your paper. To sign up for a workshop please login to your Yorkshire account where you will see a box detailing forthcoming workshops that you can sign up to.

http://www.york.ac.uk/integrity
Methods and Participants

Staff survey (using Google forms):
- 90 academic
- 22 admin/support
- 18 postgrad tutors.

Semi-structured interviews:
- 17 academics
- 2 admin/support.

Student survey (345):
- 43% Undergraduate
- 42% PG taught
- 14% PG research.

Semi-structured interviews:
- 11 undergraduate
- 5 PG taught.

Turnitin use analysis and reports assessment.
“To improve academic writing right from the start, as early as possible, and because these first [Masters] essays they’re pretty hard to read. Not all of them, but usually they are... And of course it’s just simple plagiarism detection. And possibly compiling the evidence in a very effective efficient way” (Participant 7, Science).
Why not use Turnitin?

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<th>Table 3. Reasons why participants did not currently use Turnitin</th>
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<td>A Assessments in my modules do not necessitate using Turnitin</td>
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The main perceived reasons for student workshops were:

- To raise awareness about plagiarism 84%
- To develop academic writing skills 65%
- To allow formative checking before marking 57%
- To develop referencing skills 55%
Speculative: “The conversations you have with students when you’re in the workshop with them… where they see actually, although they might have got A’s in their A level results and their A level work, and they put that through Turnitin and they realise ‘oh actually, hang on a minute, there’s a problem here. Now we’re on a different level’. That light bulb moment is the impact I see” (Participant 3, Social Science).

Qualified: “We had tutorials [workshops]… for this Masters module, where students were shown how Turnitin works… And I could see the difference in the submitted coursework, just by reading it… I looked through the material without using Turnitin, marked it, and I could already see that this was much smoother at least” (Participant 7, Science).
Key Emerging Messages

Awareness:
- A need to address a lack of information/mis-information

Perceptions:
- Can positively influence student awareness/improve their work
- Opinions differ about the value of detecting/investigating misconduct
- Of limited value to checking non-traditional essay type assignments

Use:
- Cluster and department variation
- Some willingness to use Turnitin – with caveats
- Build on the staff training if it affects take-up and confidence

Feedback:
- Get the message to students right
- Consider broader contexts of (online) marking and feedback...
- ...Linked to the desirability (or not) of University-wide Turnitin policy...
- ...And robust, balanced misconduct policies and procedures.