

Discourses of plagiarism in the teaching and learning space

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The University of Otago has a transparent and clearly available policy on plagiarism to which students and staff are expected to adhere. This policy positions plagiarism as ‘dishonest practice’, and the official information disseminated to students via the University website presents a strong message about the consequences of plagiarism. Although the information provided to students distinguishes between intentional and unintentional plagiarism, and highlights intentional plagiarism as a more serious offence, a clear distinction is not made in terms of plagiarism consequences. In recent plagiarism research, Kaposi and Dell (2012) identified four discourses of plagiarism: moralism, proceduralism, development, and writing/inter-textuality. This paper draws on Kaposi and Dell’s work to report on a discourse analysis of the University’s plagiarism policy in relation to students’ discourses of plagiarism. The paper is based on my in-progress doctoral study involving interviews with 21 undergraduate university students regarding their understandings of plagiarism. In this paper, I identify the plagiarism discourses present in both the University policy and website (the teaching space), and in students’ understandings of plagiarism (the learning space). I consider whether and in what ways the institutional discourses may impact on those of the students, and suggest some implications for teaching and learning.