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FEATURE

**SYMPTOMOLOGY OF ACADEMIC THEFT:
DOES IT MATTER IF STUDENTS STEAL?**

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Abstract. *Many research studies report that plagiarism is exponentially increasing in academic institutions worldwide where schools play a critical role in addressing the phenomenon. This action research was conducted at a science high school in Cagayan de Oro City to investigate students' behavior on plagiarism and introduce an intervention strategy which was intended to curb, if not eradicate, academic plagiarism. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using a methodological triangulation technique. Data management and analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and NVivo. The findings of the pre-intervention survey reveal that the extent of academic plagiarism was very high. Thus, a behavior-modifying assignment template was introduced as an intervention strategy. The study found that the intervention gradually changed the behavior of academic plagiarism as evidenced in the students' assignment outputs. Ignorance of academic plagiarism and its consequence, time pressure and convenience had led the students to commit such act. Hence, the study recommends that the school in general, and the teachers and parents in particular, should promote academic integrity with a high level of tutelage and sincerity.*

Keywords: Education, academic plagiarism, intervention strategy, Asia science high school, students, action research, Philippines

Introduction

Plagiarism, also called academic theft, has been viewed as an issue of moral and ethical offense which occurs mostly in academic institutions worldwide. It is an act of presenting other people's ideas or entire work as one's own (Martin, 2008). Reingold and Baratz (2011) argued that "academic plagiarism (also called academic theft) is considered a major issue as it strikes at the heart of academic and social values such as honesty, trust, and integrity" (p. 590). Plagiarism becomes very easy to do because of the new possibilities provided by the Internet (Ross, 2005; Scrinber, 2003; Underwood & Szabo, 2003). Apart from electronic sources, students copy texts, photos, and other ideas from various reading materials such as books, journals, newspapers, and magazines.

To address the phenomenon, a number of academic institutions (public and private) have imposed policies on plagiarism and its corresponding sanctions. Marshall and Garry (2006) believed that understanding the nature and sanctions of plagiarism on the part of the students is integral to mitigating symptomology—the existence of plagiarism in the students' assignment outputs.

At a regional science high school in Cagayan de Oro City, Region 10 where I work as a teacher, I have observed that academic plagiarism has been recurring in students' work. Despite the symptomology, teachers did not require their students to provide citations and reference list each time the students submit an output. They did not integrate in their Daily Learning Log (DLL), particularly in their lessons, the importance of crediting the work of others. In addition, the school does not have any existing policy on academic plagiarism. According to some fellow teachers I interviewed, the students were not even oriented on certain cases of plagiarism. Consequently, plagiarism becomes widespread in the campus. The study, therefore, surmised that this phenomenon would linger until an informed policy on plagiarism and its corresponding sanctions are put in place.

The chief purpose of the study was to explore the students' behavior on plagiarism and introduce an intervention strategy to change the behavior. Specifically, it helped determine common reasons why students plagiarized as well as the extent of academic plagiarism practices. It also proposed a continuous action plan to promote and sustain academic integrity.

Review of the Literature

This section reviewed the related literature to provide a clear depiction of the phenomenon which becomes "widespread within secondary and higher education" (Giluk, 2015, p. 1). A review of scientific and conceptual literature such as proliferation of plagiarism in the academe, common reasons of plagiarism, and deterrent measures of breaking the symptomology of academic plagiarism was achieved.

Proliferation of Plagiarism in the Academe

Issues pertaining to plagiarism have been explored by many research scientists all over the world: Australia (Devlin & Gray, 2007); Europe (Glendinning, 2012); Africa (Olotola, 2016), South America (Heitman & Litewka, 2011); Asia (Martin, 2012); North America (Shi, 2012). Tayan (2017) reported that in higher education, “the proliferation of the Internet and the ownership of mobile and electronic devices have in part witnessed rates of cheating, plagiarism and academic misconduct cases” (p.1). As a result, plagiarism has become prevalent among students who have various reasons for plagiarizing other people’s work.

Ahmad, Mansourizadeh, and Ai (2012) found that, “students had misconceptions about different aspects of plagiarism including citation conventions, collusion, using another writer's idea, and style of writing” (p.1). These misconceptions may cause greater increase of plagiarism cases or may pose certain problems along the way, given that schools have defined plagiarism and the corresponding consequences in various ways, although the different definitions provide one commonality. This is one important issue that the teachers, and the school in general, should address considering a high level of immediacy, tutelage, and sincerity.

Defining plagiarism as copying or reproducing someone else’s work without acknowledging the source is already established in large volumes of published studies on research misconduct such as those by Perry (2010), Hard, Conway, and Moran (2006), Ercegovac (2004), Macfarlane (2014), and Lopez Puga (2014). As an infringement of ethics, plagiarism can be curbed, if not eradicated, when looking at the various aspects of the phenomenon. The technical aspect of attributing the borrowed work to the source may be learned and mastered by the student.

Common Reasons of Plagiarism

Eaton, Guglielmin, and Otoo (2017) categorized common reasons students engage in academic theft. These are *individual factors*, which pertain to plagiarizing other people’s work due to “low performance, time management, and laziness”, and *contextual factors*, which include “peer pressure, the perception that the consequences will be minimal, and the perception that the instructors do not care, will not notice, or will not report it” (p.1). On the other hand, Anney and Mosha (2015) identified four common factors that lead them to academic plagiarism. These are “access to Internet, shortage of books, students’ laziness and poor academic writing skills” (p.1).

Kokkinaki, Demoliou, and Iakovidou (2015) reported that students lack clear understanding of “plagiarism”—one factor that causes them to commit such offense. This finding should challenge stakeholders to resolve the problem. This may be initiated by teachers who enlighten the students on plagiarism and its corresponding sanctions, and how to avoid it.

Deterrent Measures of Breaking the Symptomology of Academic Theft

A large and growing body of literature has revealed that schools around the world find solutions to counteract plagiarism at all levels. One of these solutions is about crafting and implementing policies that detail the notion of plagiarism as well as its consequences. For instance, Williamson and McGregor (2011) reported two pedagogical approaches that an academic institution applied in counteracting such practice. These include “instructional practice” and “inquiry learning” that were proved useful to students in avoiding plagiarism. These approaches include “student and teacher predictions about changes in future practice, the importance of student engagement with topics, and assessment issues” (p. 1). Awareness of best practices (Kokkinaki et al., 2015) and engaging students in the process are usually a good resort. This should be done in an interactive teaching using teaching materials which focus on the process of using secondary sources than simply focusing on the definitions of concepts and the conventions of academic writing (Emerson, Rees, & MacKay, 2005). In addition, Ercegovic and Richardson (2004) recommended other prevention techniques which include “discussing the issues in the classroom, establishing campus honor codes, and allowing students to rewrite paper (p. 1)” without succumbing to unethical practices. These practices are intervention strategies that the study explore.

While policies on plagiarism emphasize counteraction, the school leaders should also consider its wide spectrum. They should not only focus on the technical aspects of plagiarism, but also underpin the ethical and moral aspects of academic dishonesty. Brooks, Marini, and Radue (2011) suggested a certain initiative to minimize, if not, eradicate plagiarism such as “providing a consistent institutional response to breaches of academic integrity policy; auditing the institutions’ policies and procedures for the prevention of and the employment of sanctions against plagiarism,” (Kokkinaki, et al., 2015, p. 1). Also, sharing the institutional meaning of academic integrity and placing the focus on prevention by providing and promoting programs designed to help students achieve academic success, such as time management, essay writing laboratories, and student counselling would help.

Meanwhile, a study by Wang (2008) reported cases on online plagiarism involving students. To curb plagiarism, he proposed an approach called enculturation which is “a process to induct students into the scholarly community in which students learn norms, values, and skills to grow from peripheral

participation to central participation in the scholarly community” (p. 1). He explained that the “induction process includes: a) developing student shared understanding of norms in the disciplinary scholarly community; b) teaching students scholarly skills; and c) establishing teaching and learning as a process of enculturation” (p. 1). Wang (2008) pointed out that one way to curb plagiarism is “to design learning that discourages plagiarism wherein instructors can design assignments that are relevant to student individual and collective experiences” (p. 1). It may be safe to hypothesize that students may be motivated to perform their tasks if they can relate to them. That if they work on something irrelevant, difficult, and out of their interest, they may be tempted to succumb to stealing other people’s work as a final resort.

Though cases of plagiarism have increased across levels in academic institutions, time-tested measures and other approaches can address the problem. This effort should be made collaborative as it entails reinforced teamwork among stakeholders. In the absence of a shared fulfillment of accountability, such cases of plagiarism would increase.

By and large, a considerable amount of literature has been published on academic plagiarism such as those by Sousa-Silva (2014), Sutton (2014), and Tripathi (2015). Few studies using action research as an approach that is practical—characterized “as a natural part of life aimed at improving our condition by adaptation accommodations in the world” (Cronen, 2001, p. 20) and participatory in nature have been conducted to address classroom-based issues on plagiarism.

Methodology

This section provides the research methodology that the study used. This includes explication of the research design, research setting, sampling, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations. Each sub-part was written clearly to allow replication of the study.

Research Design

The study utilized a mixed-methods design. Creswell (2003) states that this design is preferred in a situation where the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (e.g. consequence-oriented, problem-centered, and pluralistic basis). It employs strategies that involve collecting data, either simultaneously or sequentially, to best understand research problems. Data gathering involves both numeric information (e.g. surveys) as well as text information (e.g. interviews) so that the final data represents different typical scenarios of research.

Claims concerning alleged improvement in the students' behavior on academic plagiarism were analyzed using methodological triangulation. Creswell (2003) labels it *sequential explanatory*, where the inquiry utilizes qualitative results to help explain and interpret quantitative findings. The technique was used because the study explored academic theft as a phenomenon and compared data from one source with another; hence, a convincing conclusion was derived (Chebbi, 1988).

Research Setting

The inquiry was conducted at a regional science high school in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. It is one of the 17 recognized regional science high schools in the Philippines. It admits students from the seventh to twelfth grade in accordance with the K-12 curriculum of the Philippines. In that school, research is offered in the curriculum as a separate course where the conduct and completion of applied research forms part of the academic requirements for graduation.

Sampling

Using purposive sampling technique, I recruited 39 seventh grade students: 15 males and 24 females. Two major selection criteria were considered in the sampling. Students were included in the study if they were officially enrolled in Research 1—*Fundamentals of Research Writing*, and had never incurred more than three absences in that research class.

Data Collection

This study followed the cyclical model with the following phases: reflect, act, and evaluate.

Reflect. I taught Research 1—*Practical Research*—to seventh grade students in School Year 2014-2015. I observed my students from June to September. The main observation point was to find out their behavior on academic plagiarism. In June 2014, I noticed that not one of them provided citations and reference list on their assignment outputs that consisted of borrowed ideas. I corroborated my observation by conducting an informal interview with a few selected students. They admitted that they were unaware of the acts of plagiarism as these were not discussed nor mentioned by their teachers in elementary school. Having known this phenomenon, I then designed a pre-intervention survey. The survey was conducted to the students after it was subjected to a thorough review by research experts.

To validate the participants' responses to the pre-intervention survey and observations, I arranged and facilitated a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with 10

participants. I used an interview schedule which enabled me to establish a smooth flow of the discussion. Using a digital audio-recorder, the entire discussion was chronicled. The FGD was conducted in the classroom for two separate sessions. It focused on asking the students about their knowledge about plagiarism and their reasons for committing such acts. Considering the data generated from FGD, I reflected on an intervention strategy which was aimed at changing their behavior towards handling the work of others. The qualitative data obtained from the FGD were then organized and transcribed. The printed transcription was coded and analyzed to determine the discussion.

Act. The entire process started with an observation of my students' behavior towards submitting assignment outputs since June 2014 (the opening of classes for School Year 2014-2015) to September 2014. At this phase, I gave students weekly assignments that required them to browse the Internet. For instance, each was assigned to do intercontinental web search for related studies on googlescholar.com and submit at least two research abstracts from each continent. I discussed with the class how to handle citations and quotations using the American Psychological Association (APA) style. The discussion was supplemented with a series of group workshops to ascertain mastery and retention of the lessons.

Then, I devised a customized assignment template for my students. It consisted of inputs (the instructions or questions I asked them to answer), outputs (which refer to their responses to the inputs), and references (lists of the sources of the data or information they used).

Evaluate. At this stage, I collected the students' outputs that they submitted to me through email. Each assignment output was subjected to quality assurance test using an automated proofreader and plagiarism checker. The test results were recorded in the observation log. These include plagiarized passages on the web and other sections or parts of a text such as research studies, and other work that are accessible online. Using an audio-recorder, I also interviewed the selected participants.

Instrumentation

The study used three instruments in collecting the data: observation log, self-made survey instrument and interview guide. The observation log was readied all the time in which the textual observations on students' manifestations or acts of plagiarism were recorded. The survey questionnaire consists of two parts: students' profile and questions on plagiarism. It was validated by four experts who ascertained content validity of each statement as well as the face validity of the entire instrument. The interview guide used during the FGD includes certain questions that were asked to validate the students' survey responses.

Researcher's Reflexivity

All sources of data from the pre-study survey, observation, and FGD indicate that the students have developed the behavior of listing references in their assignment sheet. But I sensed the assignment outputs did not demonstrate quality. Hence, I went back to the first phase of the entire action research process which is “reflecting”. I realized that even if appropriate citation and reference list are in place, the assignment outputs do not make sense if the students do not read their outputs. By reading, it means comprehending the text. Comprehension is defined as “intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 1). Hence, I chose to enhance the template by adding another component called “Lessons learned” to encourage my students to state or express their own significant learning points from the assignment outputs.

Data Analysis

From the mixed methods used in the study, I derived quantitative and qualitative data. I processed qualitative data using the qualitative research tradition; that is, from coding to determining overarching themes. To avoid unwarranted biases, *bracketing*—a method used in qualitative research to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2013)—was observed during this process. I analyzed and described the quantitative data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This descriptive statistical analysis includes frequency and percentage distribution.

Ethical Considerations

I sought two consents—the informed assent and informed consent from the students and their parents, who were directly and indirectly involved in the study respectively. The forms indicated key items such as purpose of joining the study, participant's rights and benefits, procedures, duration, privacy, and respondent agreement.

Results

This section discusses the findings of the study underscoring the salient results. Data presentation is supported with related literature (most of them research studies published in reputable, indexed journals).

Reasons for Committing Plagiarism

The symptomology of academic theft is prevalent among students for various reasons. From the focus group, the study identified three emerging themes: ignorance, time pressure, and convenience.

Ignorance. One interesting disclosure from the FGD participants is that they do not know the concept and cases of academic plagiarism. Admittedly, one said, “No one of my teachers in elementary mentioned that to us. *Wala jud ko kabalo ana, sir. Cge lang ko pangopya maski gani pics sa Google Images. Dili man sad mi badlungon sa amo teacher.*” (I did not really know about plagiarism, sir. I always copy other people’s work; I have even used photos from Google Images. Despite all these, our teacher did not advise us to avoid such practice). This supports the study of Starovoytova (2017) who found that, the “majority (60%) of the respondents in her study alleged that plagiarism was never mentioned or explained to them at ‘any’ level”. Therefore, she recommended that a policy on plagiarism should be established apart from publishing such on the university’s website.

Time pressure. The majority of the FGD participants confessed that one of the common reasons why they plagiarize the work of others is the difficulty to balance priorities or little time to do several tasks (assignments, homework, projects, and other school-related tasks).

“Kapoy na kayo, sir pag abut sa balay, katulgon na ko, so magdownload na lang answer sa Internet. Dili man sad masapnan ni ma’am. Hehe!... Ako pud mama busy. Wala syay time magcheck sa ako answers,” one participant confessed. (Usually, I get tired when I arrive home. I am sleepy. All I can think of is to download answers of my homework. My teacher did not sense I copied the text from the web. My mother is usually busy. She has no time to correct my work).

Convenience. Given the accessibility of online content, students generally confessed that the kind of convenience they have from the Internet is what keeps them hooked to plagiarism. One of them said, “*Naa na man jud halos tanan sa Internet, sir. Plastar na... di na jud ka mag think. Copy and paste na lang.*” (Almost everything you need is available online, sir. It is all in there—ready. You do not need to think. You just have to copy and paste). This revelation conforms to a similar study of Anney and Mosha (2015) who found that apart from “shortage of books, student’s laziness, and poor academic writing, easy access of Internet is one of the factors that play a key role in students’ plagiarism.”

Extent of Academic Plagiarism

The extent of plagiarism among the participants was very high based on the technology-based quality assurance test results. One hundred percent (100%) of the student-participants admitted that they did not have an idea of academic plagiarism. This is consistent with my own observation log for the month of June (Fig. 1).

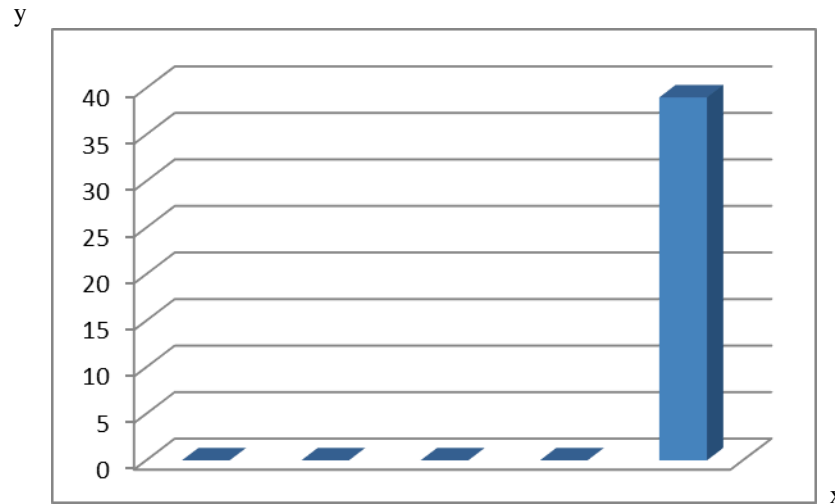


Figure 1. Extent of plagiarism

My observation log indicated that all of them did not provide citations of the sources of data and list references they used in response to their assignment questions. This observation is also consistent with the participants' disclosure during the FGD. The majority of them admitted that they did not have any idea of plagiarism. One participant stated, "I have no idea sir because... *wala man gud na gitudlu sa amu sa elementary*. (... it was never discussed with us when we were in elementary.) "I only knew plagiarism when you discussed it."

Intervention Strategy

To address the phenomenon, I designed a behavior-modifying assignment template to address academic theft among the students (see Figure 2). In four months' time, I observed that the assignment template reduced the symptomology of academic plagiarism as shown in my log. Occurrences of plagiarism in my students' assignment outputs gradually decreased. One hundred percent of the participants gradually shifted behavior on plagiarism by the fourth month.

Research I – *Fundamentals of Research Writing*
Assignment in Research

Name: _____ Score: _____
Section: _____ Date: _____

Inputs
(Teacher’s directions on assignment)

Outputs
(Students’ answers)

Observe

- academic writing conventions
- citation/attribution formats
- paraphrasing

Evaluate sources of information

- productivity of sources (Harzing)
- credibility of sources (Author intimacy)

Lessons learned

References
Follow any prescribed format
Use citation generators (citefast.com; citethisforme.com)

Figure 2. Behavior-modifying assignment template

The intervention strategy that I taught my students was effective. This conforms to my expectation that they would avoid plagiarism if I discussed with them the nature and menace of plagiarism, and the importance of providing proper citations in a work that uses borrowed ideas, texts, and the like. Though other students struggled at the beginning, they were able to grapple with the challenges after I thoroughly coached them during the workshops.

From my observation log, I found that the students increasingly improved in terms of their handling of citations and quotations (see Figure 3). This finding suggests that the students developed a positive behavior about addressing the symptomology of plagiarism, and that their awareness of plagiarism practices and sanctions preclude them from stealing other people’s work.

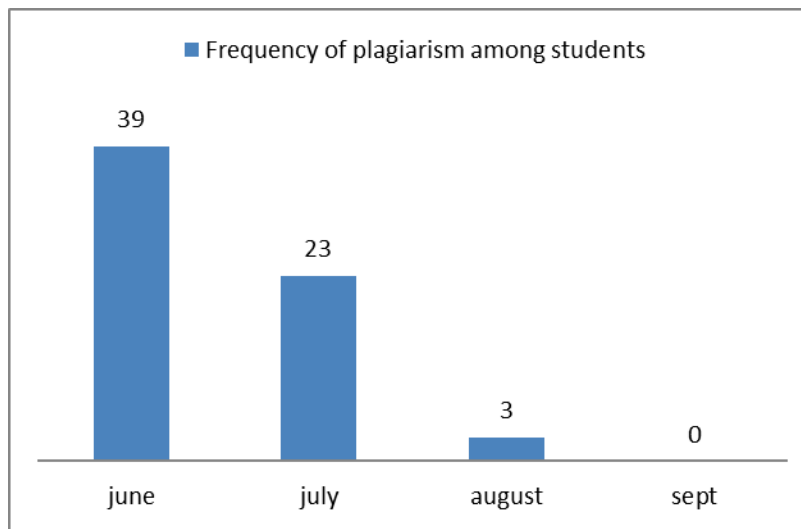


Figure 3. Monthly plagiarism monitor

Interestingly, one theme common for all FGD participants was that they ended up completely avoiding the acts of plagiarism. One participant exclaimed during the FGD: “*Dili na jud ku mahimung plagiarist sir* (I will never be a plagiarist again, sir.) I now have in mind the value of citing the source every time I borrow an idea.”

My observation log shows that all the students observed academic integrity in the fourth month, contrary to their performance in the first month. Given the results of this study, it is safe to state that the objective was achieved because of the intervention introduced, such as lectures on synthesizing information, note-taking and paraphrasing, attribution of sources of information (citation and referencing method), and the workshops (individual or group) that I held in class. Above all was the requirement of using the reference-driven assignment template every time they submitted an assignment output.

Advantages of the Intervention Strategy

Interestingly, the (manipulative) use of the assignment template changed the students’ behavior about observing academic integrity. The knowledge of handling citations, quotations, and referencing style that they gained from the class discussion and workshops enabled them to practice academic honesty every time they used other people’s work (idea, text, photo, etc.). These observations support the notion that when students have a clear idea and understanding of academic integrity, they choose to put it into practice.

Conclusion

In this study, students gradually shifted their behavior on plagiarism. They continually developed the practice of citing sources of information every time they submitted their assignments. They have used their knowledge as a guide to choose and observe integrity in utilizing other people's work or ideas. The intervention strategy warrants a marked improvement in their perspective on academic plagiarism and makes a difference in their behavior by respecting someone else's work through the habit of using proper citation and references. Taken together, having awareness on academic plagiarism and its corresponding consequences deterred the students from committing such acts.

Recommendations for Future Direction

Addressing symptomology of academic plagiarism does not happen overnight. It takes so much time and a well-planned intervention strategy to motivate stakeholders to shift practices on academic plagiarism. Hence, I recommend the school administration to craft, review, and implement policies on plagiarism; and institute the corresponding sanctions on the violations or acts of plagiarism. These policies should translate into rules that require teachers to integrate in their respective classes (irrespective of the subjects taught) the value of observing academic integrity as an academic accountability. The school should also allocate funds for buying a plagiarism detection software. In this way, the symptomology of academic theft will be decreased, if not, eradicated. On the whole, they should promote rightful practices of handling borrowed work or ideas and assure high-level of tutelage in modelling honesty and responsibility and in properly handling the other people's. The entire academic community should realize, address, and address the undesirable practices of plagiarism that deviate so much from the norms of academic integrity. The last step of the study is to craft and implement a continuous action plan to ensure dynamics and progression of the action taken.

Continuous Improvement Plan

To satisfy the cyclical nature of an action research, I crafted a continuous improvement plan which is premised on DepEd Continuous Improvement (CI) methodology designed to continually assess, analyze, and act on the performance improvement of key processes focusing on both customer needs and the desired performance (DepEd Continuous Improvement Trainer's Guide, n.d.). It consists of three fundamental stages: assess, analyze, and act.

The first stage is about understanding the nature of the problem. It includes getting the plan organized, talking with customers, walking the process,

and identifying the priority improvement process. The second stage pertains to looking at the root cause(s) of the problem, developing solutions, and finalizing the improvement plan. The third stage constitutes three steps such as piloting the solution(s), rolling out the solution(s), and checking progress.

Under the CI Plan, I indicate some changes in the implementation of the action research design such as making it a school-wide action research which involves the stakeholders of the school (administrator and staff, teachers, parents and students). If this project succeeds, I will design a bigger action research on the problem investigated making it a district-wide endeavor. Activities may include school-to-school visit, conduct of campus symposium on plagiarism awareness, and packaging a primer on academic plagiarism and its corresponding sanctions.

Assessment Stage

Step 1: Getting the plan organized. At this stage, the school principal calls for a meeting for the CI working team. By virtue of the action research task assigned to me as CI team leader, I will delineate to the team the new process and main objective of the action research vis-à-vis the School-based Management (SBM) principles, particularly Accountability and Continuous Education from which the current action research is classified.

Step 2: Talking with customers. I will gather again the student-participants (primary customers), parents (secondary customers), school principal, teachers and staff (internal customers) to get their perspective on the problem or phenomenon (symptomology of plagiarism). This entails the use of an audio-recorder to chronicle the voice of the customers on plagiarism after the intervention strategy was introduced.

Step 3: Walking the process. At this stage, the selected school process (preventing plagiarism through effective and research-based pedagogy, fostering a serious campus dialogue on plagiarism) will be reviewed and process performance will be assessed. Walking the process allows the participants or customers to feel comfortable with the process because it gives them a clear idea of what roles to perform and outcomes to expect (DepEd Continuous Improvement Trainer's Guide, n.d).

Step 4: Identifying the priority improvement process. The CI team will identify improvement opportunities to ascertain successful implementation of the plan.

Table 1
Action Plan Teaching Process

Goal To educate the students on academic integrity			
Objective To improve the students' attitude on academic plagiarism (starting point) and to make a difference in their attitude (continuing starting point)			
Implementation Steps (What Will Be Done)	Responsibilities	Resources	Time-frame
1. Briefing the stakeholder (administrators, teachers, parents and students about the significance of observing academic integrity as social accountability)	CIP team leader teachers	Computer, LCD projector, 1 hr	yearly (iterative)
2. Discussing with them the intervention strategy (assignment sheet) and their individual role in the project	Teachers	Computer, LCD projector, 1 hr	
3. Discussing with them APA citation and referencing style	Teachers	Computer, LCD, projector, 1 hr, wireless broadband	
4. Collecting assignments from students	Teachers	Computer, LCD projector, 1 hr	
5. Monitoring occurrences of plagiarized text using plagiarism detection software	Teachers	Computer, LCD projector, 1 hr	
6. Evaluating performance and/or improvement	CI Team Teachers	Computer, LCD projector, 1 hr	
Expected Outcome Improved students' behavior on plagiarism (at least 95% of each class)			
Implications for Professional Development It allows the stakeholders to take a greater commitment to upholding academic integrity.			

Analysis Stage

Step 5: Doing root cause analysis. The CI team will analyze the root causes of performance gaps. This consists of critically analyzing the problem (i.e. discrepancies in the implementation of the action research).

Step 6: Developing solutions. The CI team will brainstorm on probable solutions to the problem. The group focuses on finding ways to effectively address the problem investigated. Table 1 shows the improved action plan.

This shall be fully implemented during the third and fourth quarter of School Year 2014-2015.

Step 7: Finalizing the improvement plan. The CI team will finalize the improvement plan. They work on the Supplier, Input, Process, Output and Customer (SIPOC) template—a scoping mechanism linking the school processes to the customers (see Table 2).

Table 2

The SIPOC Scoping Mechanism

Supplier	Input	Process	Output	Customer
CI Team with assistance of the secondary customers	Hold separate advocacy orientation meetings for customers (teachers, parents and students) emphasizing the improved intervention strategy, CI Plan, and their individual roles	Teaching-learning Process (delivery of instruction) Preparation of Student Manual indicating policy on plagiarism and its sanctions The CI team regularly monitors the progress of the project (to include the intervention strategy) ensuring proper implementation of the project activities and fulfillment of target outcomes	Increased awareness on the practices and menace of plagiarism At least 95% of each class improves or changes behavior on plagiarism Increased or enhanced ability to handle proper citation and referencing in assignment outputs and other writing activities	Primary customers: students in all classes across disciplines Secondary customers: Parents/Guardians Internal Customers: School administration, staff

Action Stage

Step 8: Piloting the solution(s). This is where the CI team tests the solution(s) to the problem explored in the action plan. Piloting the solutions enables the team to observe the pitfalls of the program.

Step 9: Rolling out the solution(s). The CI team implements the solution(s) recognizing challenges that they may encounter during the implementation phase.

Step 10: Checking progress. The CI team evaluates the effectiveness of the project and determines the progress. This gives the team the opportunity to enhance the strengths and overcome the weaknesses for the reimplementation of the school-wide action research project.

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