

Plagiarism: what's really going on?

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This paper describes preliminary research into what motivates students to plagiarise. Its hypothesis is that most cases of what is identified as plagiarism - faulty referencing, poor paraphrasing, and excessive cut-and-pasting - are symptoms of students' difficulty in engaging with academic discourse and finding an authentic scholarly voice. The paper presents an analysis and discussion of data from a survey and focus groups. On the basis of this preliminary research, it suggests that what is needed to address plagiarism is not better detection and punishment but teaching that stimulates engagement and helps students develop an appropriate scholarly voice.