

# Being and Becoming: Addressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Issues in Learning Academic Writing through an Academic Integrity Socialisation Process

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## Abstract

Addressing issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in academic writing is vital in higher education, especially when considering the lived experiences and education of undergraduates from diverse backgrounds. This paper acknowledges the challenges faced by students unfamiliar with Western academic integrity standards, emphasising the disparities experienced by socioeconomically disadvantaged, racialised, and international students. The paper describes an innovative learner-agentive empowerment approach at a Canadian university designed to enable students from diverse backgrounds to gain the academic, cultural, disciplinary and linguistic capital required to practise academic integrity. Through a mixed-method analysis of 182 undergraduates in a writing support program, we found that students who responded to a reflective prompt on academic integrity at the start of the program wrote substantially more (mean 7050 words) than those who did not respond to the prompt (mean 1692 words) during the month-long program. Qualitative analyses revealed students' unfamiliarity with cultural differences, academic integrity practices, linguistic challenges, and penalty severity. This model suggests the importance of a proactive, learner-agentive approach to facilitate education about academic integrity and to address equity and inclusivity. The study underscores the importance of systemic pedagogical changes, furthering the dialogue on equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education.

## Introduction

With globalisation, massification, international mobility, and greater efforts to recruit students from under-represented communities, students who come to higher education differently prepared face inequitable learning conditions when trying to cope with academic expectations. For these students, the immeasurable challenges of having to write assignments in academic English and to meet the expectations of a "Eurocentric, middle-class view" (Eaton, & Burns, 2018, p. 345) of academic assignments are coupled with a lack of familiarity with Western academic genres. Stylistic differences and writing norms are particularly difficult for those students whose dominant language has very different grammar, sentence structures, and non-Romanised scripts. In addition, scholars have noted that cultural differences in the definition of knowledge, claims of ownership of knowledge, and what is considered plagiarism are each part of existing academic systems that Eaton (2022) argues "perpetuate the conditions that allow for overrepresentation of reporting among particular student groups including international students, students of colour, and those for whom English is an additional language". This paper contributes an anti-deficit, proactive academic integrity socialisation approach to the field in order to address this inequitable learning condition. It highlights the impact of innovatively encouraging learner agency and empowering learners to engage in *being* and *becoming* the

junior scholar they are expected to become, regardless of their respective levels of language proficiency. The findings contribute to understanding how changing conditions of voice and power enable learners to invest voluntarily in accruing their cultural capital for academic success following a learner-driven, instructor-facilitated framework (Khoo & Huo, 2022).

## **Literature Review**

Scholars have increasingly drawn attention to the vulnerability of students from diverse backgrounds being over-represented among those reported for or charged with academic misconduct. In an Australian study, L2 speakers of English are more likely to be reported for academic misconduct (Bretag, 2016); in a UK study, racialised minorities from Asia and Africa are disproportionately reported (Eaton, 2023); and in a US study, international students are five times more likely to be reported for academic misconduct (Beasley, 2016). If unfamiliar with the Eurocentric construct of academic integrity, students from different cultural, linguistic, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds have to grapple with the general lack of empathetic support needed to help them transition from their very different lived experiences to a Western context with its own expectations and notions of academic integrity. Scholars have also noted that institutions should not assume that students from different backgrounds will arrive at university knowing what is meant by academic integrity (East, 2016; McNeill, 2022). For example, a Canadian study showed that faculty expect their students to arrive with the knowledge and skills to practise academic integrity, but students arrive expecting to be given training to do so (Peters & Cadieux, 2019).

One inequity faced by students from diverse backgrounds is that their writing is assessed through “writing assessment ecologies” (Inoue, 2021, p. 22) that do not take into account marginalised groups. There is a long history of perpetuating negative deficit stereotypes about racial inferiority which now need to be actively disrupted through positive action, such as implementation of justice-oriented assessments that “actively seek to remove these barriers and also make amends for the damage these barriers have already created” (Randall et al., 2023, p. 4). We also need to address inequity by empowering equity-deserving students to be “languaging” (Swain, 2006) in supportive conditions so that they can move from feeling like outsiders to feeling able to express their voice and develop competence and confidence in their academic writing skills.

### ***Academic writing challenges faced by English language learners and other equity-deserving students***

In traditional writing assessment ecologies, students need to demonstrate skills for sentence constructions that utilise vocabulary and grammar precisely (Chan, 2010), as well as evaluate key information in source texts that needs to be summarised and paraphrased (Shi, 2004; Wette, 2010). Quoting from a text is even more linguistically challenging since it requires incorporating “someone else’s wording into one’s own text in such a way that the interface is coherent and fluent” (Pecorari, 2016, p. 543). The linguistic dexterity needed to be able to quote, paraphrase and summarise unsurprisingly result in English Language Learners (ELLs) incorporating longer chunks of source texts into their writing compared to those more fluent in English (Keck, 2006, 2014). Thus, it is important for ELLs to have the opportunities to develop these skills through risk-free writing opportunities where these skills are naturally practised in meaningful communication with a supportive interlocutor.

Many ELLs have had no opportunity to practise articulating their perspectives or making an argument, and yet they are penalised when they are not able to express themselves adequately in graded assignments. Since traditionally almost all written work in a course is graded, students have insufficient opportunities for practice that develops their academic writing skills (Graves et al., 2010), to take risks, or to be explorers of their thinking when writing (Blum, 2020). Without opportunities to develop their academic writing skills, ELLs have been negatively stereotyped as more likely to plagiarise (Heng, 2018; Moosavi, 2021).

### ***Addressing the inequitable precarity related to academic integrity***

Source-based writing is challenging for students who come from education systems that are exam-based. Thus, they are not prepared for university-level source-based writing assignments, particularly if they have limited academic English proficiency. Without getting the support they need to develop the necessary writing skills, these students' strategies to cope with academic demands may land them in trouble. Some students feel they do not have skills to do their own assignment and resort to contract cheating, which may lead to blackmail (Clarke & Lancaster, 2007; Draper et al., 2021; Sutherland-Smith & Dullaghan, 2019; Yorke et al., 2020). Some students resort to the use of paraphrasing tools on the internet in an attempt to rephrase text they want to use for their assignment submission (Perkins et al., 2018; Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017). When students resort to using strategies that result in being considered academic misconduct, facing a university's investigation process for academic integrity violations can be traumatic (Pitt et al., 2021), with negative changes in the interactions with peers and instructors (Pitt et al., 2021; Tindall et al., 2021), resulting in some cases where a student being investigated may threaten suicide and has to be put on 'suicide watch' (Openo & Robinson, 2021). For international students, being suspended for academic integrity issues may jeopardise their student visa. Thus, addressing this inequitable precarity faced by ELLs is essential. In calling for antiracist assessment ecologies, Inoue (2015) advocates for "revolutionary change, radically different methods, structures, and assumptions about the way things are now and how to distribute privileges" (p. 56). Institutions have a responsibility to their diverse student body to ensure that there is sufficient support.

### ***Academic integrity interventions***

Deficit thinking places the responsibility of fixing a lack of academic integrity knowledge on the shoulders of the students. Common faculty practice is one of "externalising" (Power, 2009, p. 655) the learning about academic integrity by directing students to read the university's plagiarism policy and, if they have questions, to ask the professor; or by merely briefing students in broad strokes about the plagiarism policies. This is not enough to prevent academic integrity violations (Wette, 2010).

Recognising that students come from a diversity of backgrounds and arrive differently prepared, scholars have advocated for proactive and systemic change that de-emphasises punishing for plagiarism (Arkoudis & Kelly, 2016) and instead develops the acquisition of scholarly writing skills (Khoo & Irwin, 2023; Sefcik et al., 2020); a system where "students are exposed to the principles of academic integrity that encompass the development of scholarship: learning about the principles of academic writing, the development of the authorial voice and, with it, the place of attribution" (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010, p. 473).

Proactive programming helps students gain familiarity with academic integrity practices. In a postgraduate program for Engineering students in an Australian university, a proactive, 6-week orientation and training to develop writing, research and citation skills resulted in plagiarism cases dropping from 50% to 5% over a three-year period (Duff et al., 2006). In a Canadian academic integrity socialisation study (Khoo & Kang, 2022), students in a 4-week program reported improved ability in several aspects of academic writing skills: paraphrasing and summarising skills (92%); organisation of ideas (92%); critical thinking about disciplinary topics (93%); logic and argument structure (92%); and awareness of academic audience (84%). These studies indicate the value of using a proactive approach in addressing areas of academic writing that students find challenging.

### **Teaching Context: Writing Support Program**

Given the necessity to support the diverse range of students enrolled at a large comprehensive Canadian university, an innovative reading and writing excellence (RWE) program was established at the university's Centre for Teaching and Learning which aimed to support students' academic language needs in a positive way. Originally set up in 2006 as an in-person co-curricular program over eight weeks, the program was pivoted to a 4-week online format during the COVID-19 pandemic. Open to all departments, the program pairs students with writing instructors for personalised support.

Recognising how culturally and linguistically challenging it is for equity-deserving students to perform in a new academic environment, the program's distinguishing feature is its empowering of students to be agentic in drawing on their diverse lived experiences when examining academic integrity practices and expectations of their host institution. In the process, the program simultaneously facilitates students in accruing linguistic experience and developing their identity as users of academic English under conditions that encourage daily usage. Usage-based theories posit that the frequency of target language expressions is better internalised by the student when frequency of encounters and usage increases: "each time we process one [expression] there is a reduction in processing time that marks this practice increment, and thus the perceptual and motor systems become tuned by the experience of a particular language" (Ellis, 2002, p. 152).

In the 4-week RWE program, students are matched to a writing instructor who facilitates each student's development according to individual needs. Students are expected to read their own chosen course material for 40 minutes and write a daily journal for about 20 minutes. They submit their journal electronically to their designated writing instructor in a confidential discussion thread on the Canvas learning management system (LMS). The writing instructors respond to students' ideas in ways that promote critical thinking, development of voice, and confidence to write. Since the journal is not graded, instructors do not give corrective written feedback in the way a composition teacher might provide to a student's essay. Since the goal is to build up positive usage experience with academic English, instructors respond in friendly ways that build relationships while developing critical thinking and writing competence.

A key feature of the RWE program is to empower students to understand institutional academic integrity expectations instead of feeling anxious and fearful from not knowing. As such, after the Journal Entry #1 (J1) of self-introduction, the prompt for Journal Entry #2 (J2) invites students to explore a set of three learner-friendly links about academic integrity:

- (a) A librarian-curated website hosted on the Canvas LMS that explains academic integrity in a positive, learner-friendly tone, featuring links to videos of two faculty members inspiring students to see the value of practising academic integrity in terms of their personal development;
- (b) *Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism* (University of Guelph McLaughlin Library, 2014);
- (c) *Avoiding Plagiarism* (Excelsior Online Writing Lab, n.d.).

When students respond to the J2 prompt, they get the opportunity to clarify misconceptions they may have about academic integrity, and aspire to proper academic integrity practice. For instance, some students have chosen to practise using in-text citations and the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition referencing style in subsequent journal entries, thus giving themselves the opportunity to internalise the APA style. As the J2 prompt for exploring academic integrity was introduced for the first time in the program, some students chose to ignore it, and proceeded to write journal entries about their own course readings. As such, the researcher became interested in studying whether responding to the J2 prompt had any impact compared to not doing so.

The research questions are:

RQ1: Do students who engage in doing J2 produce more writing (based on word count) compared to students who skipped J2?

RQ2: After risk-free exploration of web links provided as a J2 journal entry prompt about academic integrity, what do students reveal to be new to them?

RQ3: What do students perceive to be their investment in this ungraded writing opportunity with personalised feedback?

## **Methods**

### **Sources of data**

The data analysed came from two sources: (1) a subset of the downloaded objective measures of learner writing activity on the Canvas LMS that provided the word count of each journal entry; (2) Journal Entry #2 (J2), a journal entry in response to a prompt that invited students to explore various links about academic integrity and communicate their personal reasons for investment in the program. Word count had previously been established as a measure of fluency (Crossley et al., 2013; De Angelis & Jessner, 2012; González, 2017). In this study, where students were encouraged to be languaging, the word count for each journal entry represents the most direct and objective data collected about each student's language usage. Beyond the first self-introduction journal (J1) and the second journal focused on academic integrity (J2), students' subsequent journal entries communicate students' reflection of their daily choice of reading from their own course materials. What they write in these journal entries from the third journal entry (J3) onwards constitutes students' usage practice for communicating their thoughts about course topics in written academic English at their respective writing competence level.

### **Method of analysis**

After ethics board approval for a retrospective analysis of the program based on secondary use of data, all data were first anonymised, and a mixed-method of quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis was carried out.

The word count of journal entries was an objective measure of the learners' communication of their thoughts with their instructor under risk-free conditions. This data is downloaded from the LMS and is presented as an Excel table. After anonymising the data, the cases were divided into two groups: (a) students who responded to the J2 prompt, and (b) those who did not respond to the J2 prompt (called the non-J2 group). All students had the same access to the prompt in the Canvas LMS. After analysis for descriptive statistics, the data was found not to be normally distributed. So, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test, which, for comparing two independent groups, does not assume normality of the data, was used to test the difference in word counts between the two groups.

For students who had J2 journal entries, the journal entries (which totalled 36,920 words) were subjected to a manual six-phase reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023): (1) data familiarisation, where the researcher read through the entire compilation of J2 journal entries several times, making annotations; (2) data coding; (3) generating initial themes; (4) reviewing and developing the themes; (5) refining, defining and naming themes; and (6) working on reporting.

## **Results and Discussion**

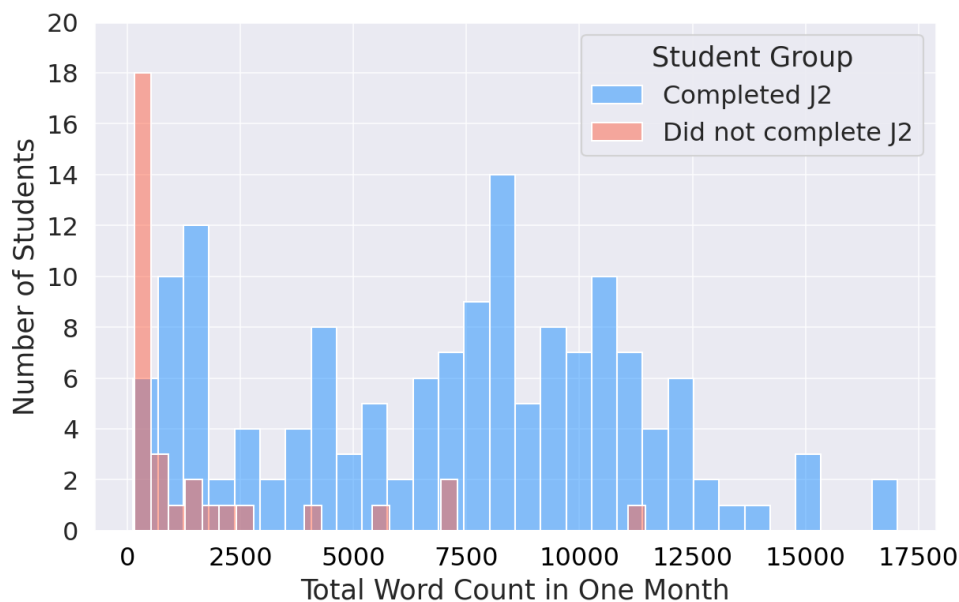
### **RQ1: Do students who engage in doing J2 produce more writing (based on word count) compared to students who skipped J2?**

Students in the J2 group wrote a median of 7,631 words, while students in the non-J2 group wrote a median of 503 words, in their journal entries over the course of a month (Table 1).

**Table 1. Comparison of J2 group versus non-J2 group descriptive statistics**

	J2 group (n=150)	Non-J2 group (n=32)
Mean word count	7050.3	1691.6
Standard deviation	4062.8	2641.8
Minimum word count	117.0	152.0
25 <sup>th</sup> percentile (Q1)	3799.3	293.0
Median (50 <sup>th</sup> percentile) (Q2)	7630.5	502.5
75 <sup>th</sup> percentile (Q3)	10064.8	1605.8
Maximum word count	17038.0	11452.0

The distribution of word counts across students was non-normal in both the J2 and non-J2 groups. This was confirmed by the Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p=2.84 \times 10^{-4}$  for the J2 group and  $7.16 \times 10^{-8}$  for the non-J2 group). Both distributions were right-skewed (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Distribution of Total Word Count Achieved in One Month by the J2 and Non-J2 Students**

The students in the J2 group produced significantly higher word counts than students in the non-J2 group (U-statistic: 4246.5, p-value:  $8.91 \times 10^{-12}$ ).

Using the rank-biserial correlation for the Mann-Whitney U test, the effect size is approximately -0.77. The negative sign indicates that the non-J2 group has lower ranks (i.e., lower word counts) compared to the J2 group. This large effect size provides strong statistical evidence that students who completed J2 wrote significantly more words than those who did not.

A further examination of the data related to the four non-J2 students who had a substantial word count despite not doing J2 showed that they had done this program in an earlier cycle and thus chose to skip doing J2. However, the other students in the non-J2 group were doing RWE for the first time.



## **RQ2: After risk-free exploration of web links provided as a J2 journal entry prompt about academic integrity, what do students reveal to be new to them?**

Through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023) of students' J2 journal entries and coding of what students said they found to be new when they were exploring the academic integrity resources introduced to them, the five dominant themes that emerged provide insights about the magnitude of cultural adjustments that some students faced:

- a. learning about the concept of academic integrity;
- b. seriousness with which the university deals with academic misconduct;
- c. confusion about ownership of writing and right of use;
- d. group activities that could become a problem for group members;
- e. specific citation conventions to be practised for academic integrity.

### ***Learning about the concept of academic integrity***

As academic integrity is a Western-defined construct, the act of incorporating the words of others in one's own speech or writing without attribution is considered plagiarism, which is at odds with some student's culture (Heng, 2017). As the following excerpt communicates, some students might encounter this academic integrity concept for the first time when they come to study in Canada: "As an [nationality] high school student, plagiarism was not considered to be a 'crime', hence it was only when I started my Fall Semester, when I truly understood the weightage and importance of citations, referencing, etc." The assumption that students coming to university know about academic integrity leads to a lack of attention on preparing those students from diverse backgrounds who are unaware of the specifics of the expected academic integrity practices.

It is ironic that a student noted the potency of communicating academic integrity negatively to students: "the way academic integrity is introduced, almost as a threat i.e., intending to create fear in students is not the right approach. However, it is an effective one." The observation that this fear-inducing approach is effective underscores their feelings of powerlessness. Students may also be unaware of the scope of what is considered academic misconduct, as expressed by another student:

Academic misconduct consist[s] of different issues, there are way more of them than I originally thought, including copying and submitting other's assignments and exams are under the category of academic misconduct. Before reading these sources, I did not know that submitting a fake medical notes [is] considered as one of the criteria [of] academic misconduct.

When students explore practices they need to follow, they are advised that common knowledge does not need to be cited. However, as an ELL pointed out, what is considered common knowledge may not be something an international student might know, and this can cause confusion:

I am a little confused about not having to cite "common knowledge". In one example online, it was stated that "Before Ronald Reagan was President of the United States, he worked as a Hollywood actor," and the description says this would not need to be cited as it is common knowledge. In my opinion, many people would not know this fact, I did not know this fact, and the author of this line could be getting away with not citing an original source. It assumes that most people reading this text are well-informed about American history which I question the correctness of.

By extension, what might be common knowledge for students who come from a different culture or part of the world, may not be common knowledge to the person grading their written assignment. As such, not citing the source for what is common knowledge in a different part of the world might cause a student to be penalised for lack of citation:

Something new that I learned about academic integrity was that common knowledge doesn't need to be cited. However, my only concern is what do you define as common knowledge? Being an international student something that is culturally common knowledge in Canada might not be the same for me.

The range of what students found to be new underscores what scholars emphasise about it not being right to simply assume that students should come knowing about academic integrity (e.g. East, 2016; Leask, 2006; McNeill, 2022). Without the opportunity to know the rules of the game, students who come differently prepared face inequitable learning conditions, resulting in their being over-represented in academic misconduct cases.

### ***Seriousness with which the university deals with academic misconduct***

Students were surprised by the seriousness with which academic misconduct is treated, as shown by the following three excerpts: "I had no idea that plagiarism could show up on my transcript, this truly shocked me because I thought that there will be no record of such a thing"; "I also did not know breach of academic integrity could be noted on the final transcript. I had not known that no more than 10% of my paper can be quoted or cited material"; "I could also see that the University is taking this seriously when I discovered the different stages of formal procedures like those in courts even with the right to appeal for students".

### ***Confusion about ownership of writing and right of use***

The concept of ownership of thoughts and ideas that need to be attributed to original owners of thoughts can confuse students as to what their rights are to use their own thoughts for different purposes:

I have always thought answers written by me belonged to me and I could use them wherever and whenever. It is my creativity and thought behind those answers that made them unique. However, I was not aware that we cannot use the same text or answer in two different places, despite being the sole creator of said answer.

Such comments underline the need to provide opportunities for students to express what confusion they have about various aspects of academic integrity that they had not encountered in their previous experiences.

### ***Specific citation conventions to be practised for academic integrity***

Writing an academic essay may be new for many students from diverse backgrounds, and what they have learned about including references can be insufficient at university level:

Academic essay is a new branch of academics for me. I have recently learnt the APA formatting system, and through that process I have come to realise that quotation marks are not enough to avoid plagiarism. The source has to be properly credited and the journal name, year and author's name has to be present in the citation. This is a completely new information for me, as in our high school we have been taught to just include references at the end of the page, rather than in between essays.

For students with limited language proficiency in English, they learn that paraphrasing and summarising by themselves may still constitute plagiarism:

What I was not aware of was that even when you summarise and/or paraphrase in your own words, you still have to provide in-text citations, simply putting the source in your bibliography was not enough. Thank goodness I had found out before having submitted any of my works because essays are a big part of university. Being informed by this actually made me even more cautious about my writing, really going over it to make sure I had added the correct citations to each idea or concept I was explaining.

Students also discovered that citations are needed for non-textual sources, 'Drawings, paintings, pictures and videos are also needed to be cited when we insert them into our paper'. They also demonstrated that they are not merely conforming but understand the underlying rationale for doing so.



### **RQ3: What do students perceive to be their investment in this ungraded writing opportunity with personalised feedback?**

Students articulated the connection between their development of a range of essential academic reading and writing skills with the lower likelihood of getting into trouble for academic offence. Major themes that emerged from reflexive thematic analysis were:

#### ***Opportunity to develop the range of essential academic writing skills***

Valuing the opportunity for reading and writing daily to improve familiarity with academic English and the ability to acquire the academic English vocabulary needed to cope with their academic needs with integrity is exemplified by:

Hopefully by the end of this program I will be much more confident with my writing skills through developing a higher vocabulary and become a stronger reader which will overall allow me to conduct myself professionally through my pieces of writing, which part of academic integrity. Through gaining confidence in my skills in writing will also ensure that I am able summarise and paraphrase effectively which would allow me to be an honest student.

#### ***Opportunity to engage in academic integrity practices***

Responding to the J2 prompt led students to appreciate the opportunity to engage in academic integrity practices in a safe and supportive space:

Investing myself in the RWE program means that I should follow academic integrity at all times. This means that my journal submissions should be my own work. Since the journal entries reflect on what I've read as well as the analysis, it gives an incentive to write honestly on what I have read and learned through my readings. In addition, I believe by writing daily based on my own words, phrases, and sentences will lead me to reaching my goal in becoming a proficient writer.

Students can also develop good habits such as noting source information at the point of use rather than trying to locate references just before submission deadlines:

I will make sure to write down all the source information I have included in the writing, to prevent using more time to find the original source before submission. I will be spending more time on improve my paraphrasing skills for academic essays, thus, I can improve my writing skills and prevent involving in academic integrity issue.

#### ***Development of ability to do citations***

Since writing in RWE is not graded, and students are encouraged to first summarise what they have read, followed by their reflections or analysis, many students chose to practise in-text citations for their various readings so that they could get feedback from their RWE instructors.

I hope my investment in this cycle of RWE can better prepare me to get comfortable with proper citations in academic writings by putting some effort to properly cite the sources in the summaries.

As there is a wide range of cultural, linguistic and educational differences in students' previous lived experiences, the implementation of J2 has shown to be necessary to initiate the academic integrity socialisation process that allows for exposure and opportunities to experience practising academic integrity in the new academic environment. Since the findings of this study show that those who learned about the rules of the game were motivated to invest in their own development, this proactive intervention could be integrated into the experience of all students in their first year of undergraduate and graduate study. Giving students the opportunity to gain familiarity with the rules of the game is necessary and ethical as it could save many students from inadvertently breaching academic integrity and facing traumatic university investigation

procedures (Pitt et al., 2021) that may result in suspension, deportation or having an academic misconduct notation on their transcript.

A possible explanation for the finding that students who completed J2 wrote far more than students who did not complete J2 is that students who understood the 'rules of the game' realise the value of developing their ability to develop their own writing skills. The more that they engage with the RWE process i.e. reading and writing daily, the more they are exposed to the natural frequency of words in academic language. Furthermore, the more they take up the opportunity to write a little about the topic that they had read, the more competent they would feel about expressing their thoughts about academic topics. This is especially so when students get to do so in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment as in the RWE program. This practice prepares students for assignments where they are expected to write in ways that conform to Western academic writing norms. The large effect size (0.77) between the J2 group and the non-J2 group, and the difference in the total word count of the two groups (Table 1) indicate that once the students understood what is meant by academic integrity at the university, they were motivated to work on their writing skills. Although we would be cautious about claiming that there is direct causality between doing J2 and total word count, the difference in volume of writing in the two groups is noteworthy in this non-credit co-curricular program.

Although students were told that they needed to write daily and have at least 250 words per journal entry with no binge writing permitted (i.e. students cannot submit several journal entries in one day while not writing on other days), the high total volume of word count from the daily journal entries for the J2 group (Table 1) suggests that when students are given the power to choose and express themselves, and are not forced into a powerless position of being judged by rules unfamiliar to them, they thrive in a space for risk-free interaction and discover that they have much to express about their course topics.

Given the evidence that RWE engaged students in writing so much about their course topics, usage-based theories of language acquisition (Ellis, 2019; Evers-Vermeu & Tribushinina, 2017) point to the importance of this kind of opportunity for 'being', where the interaction with the RWE instructor enables languaging practice that allows ELLs to develop the competence to use academic English. Although the students were told they only needed to write about 250 words per journal entry, students wrote far more, suggesting that the opportunity of 'being and becoming' resonates with them. In one month of the program, if a student wrote every day for 4 weeks ( $7 \times 4 = 28$  days), there would be at the minimum of 7000 words. However, as we can see in Table 1, for the J2 group, the median (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) is 7631 words in a month, and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile is 10,065 words. Given that students in the non-J2 group wrote substantially less, that is, at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile they had only 1606 words, this suggests that when students understood the value and impact of their efforts, they invested in the process of being and becoming a junior scholar by producing a high volume of writing within a month about their course readings.

As the program is non-credit bearing, and students were writing voluntarily, the large difference in writing output could be explained in terms of benefiting from the cultural capital of knowing academic integrity expectations, previously non-apparent rules of academic writing, clearer understanding of course content, and a relationship of trust developed with the RWE instructor in a safe space. Instead of operating in fear and anxiety about inadvertently committing academic misconduct due to a lack of knowledge, or intentionally seeking unauthorised services due to not having the language competence to do their own work, the high volume of written exchanges with the RWE instructor suggests that this positive proactive approach led to a positive feedback cycle for identity as the site of struggle. As defined by Norton (2013), identity is the "way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed over time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 4). Instead of being treated like a powerless Other, the opportunity to experience the contributing of one's thoughts in written conversation with a supportive RWE instructor sustained many students' persistence in the writing support program.

Positioning of students in an agentic and empowered capacity in an academic integrity socialisation process creates motivation and investment instead of fear of penalty for misconduct. Instead of assuming that students should come with knowledge of what we mean

by academic integrity, they are *invited* to explore and articulate what is new to them. Reading students' J2 journal entries allows instructors to understand their students' previous contexts and guide them better. RWE gives students the risk-free space to engage in usage of academic language so that they can gain competence and confidence in interacting meaningfully on course topics in risk-free ways.

### **Implications for Wider Adoption of AI Socialisation to Address Inequity**

Upfront, supportive, and risk-free exploration of what academic integrity means in the university, along with language development and empowerment of students could be implemented in courses and support programs, and perhaps introduced in freshman writing courses. In addition, providing co-curricular writing support that incorporates academic integrity socialisation similar to the program described in this study would enable students to learn the competencies they can use with all their courses. In very large classes, use of Mentimeter<sup>1</sup> and jamboards<sup>2</sup> could provide a chance for going over the important points of academic integrity after students have been invited to explore learner-friendly links about academic integrity.

### **Additional Recommendation for Practitioners**

Although many institutions might not have a similar approach to the proactive one in this study, insights from this study can be useful in many other teaching contexts that can help address equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education. Despite its high impact, the current model is labour-intensive, instructors need specialised training in relational pedagogy, and limited spots are available depending on funding. However, the following insights would be useful for practitioners in different teaching contexts:

- (a) Provide risk-free or low-risk opportunities for language usage practice. Given the wide range of disciplines in higher education, each student needs to acquire the vocabulary specific to their disciplinary needs as “means for communicating and thinking about disciplinary content” (Nagy & Townsend, 2012, p. 91). This would enable them to present their ideas adequately in their assignments with competence instead of resorting to measures that may land them in trouble.
- (b) Empower students to drive their own progress while instructors facilitate student development. By taking this asset-based approach, students take ownership in identifying the texts to read and reflect on that are most relevant to them. As topics they choose are of interest to them, it builds students' interest and commitment to understanding their topics and the language needed to discuss them when they need to write about these topics in their course assignment or exams.

### **Future Research**

Perhaps future research could attempt to measure the strength of conviction that students articulate in their J2 about the value they see in investing in their self-development through the RWE program and the volume of output, taking into consideration each student's level of starting proficiency based on diagnostic tests. Another area of research would be to interview students who write beyond the threshold of 7000 words during the month of the program to find out what sustained their motivation.

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<sup>1</sup> Mentimeter is an interactive presentation platform that allows users to create live polls, quizzes, word clouds, and surveys to engage audiences during meetings, lectures, or workshops (Mentimeter, n.d., <https://www.mentimeter.com>).

<sup>2</sup> Jamboard is a collaborative digital whiteboard tool developed by Google that enables real-time ideation and brainstorming, often used for education or team collaboration (Google, n.d., <https://workspace.google.com/products/jamboard>).

## **Conclusion**

In seeking to address the equity, diversity and inclusion issues faced by many students, this study has shown the possible high impact of proactive academic integrity socialisation that positions learners in agentic and empowered roles. By giving students the agency to explore Western academic integrity writing expectations in a risk-free manner (i.e. through the J2 prompts), 82.4% of the students in the program took up the opportunity to explore, and the group that responded to the J2 prompt articulated their discovery of aspects of academic integrity that they had been unaware of and their motivation in investing in their own academic writing development. Compared with the group of students who did not respond to the J2 prompt (i.e. the non-J2 group), the total word count of the J2 group was four times more within one month, suggesting that an understanding of the seriousness of academic integrity expectations of the university likely motivated students to sustain their languaging practice to improve their academic English competence needed for academic writing. These findings have implications for incorporating an academic integrity socialisation process across all courses and writing support programs for addressing equity, diversity and inclusion by respecting what students come to the academic community with, and allowing them to learn about academic integrity in non-threatening ways. It would be ethical to give students from diverse backgrounds a chance to learn without fear of being caught for academic misconduct.

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