

Excerpt from conversation with academic staff about academic honesty

**Central University of Finance and Economics (CUFE)
& Victoria University (VU)**

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VU: How do you approach teaching students concepts about academic honesty?

CUFE 1: You should always be honest; for example not cheating in an exam, same with giving references and using bibliographies. So we can check if it's correct or not and so other students can follow your references if they want to. Tell them what academic honesty is and get them to discuss. In every class, not just VU but CET [College English] as well. Quite important concept if they want to be successful learners after they graduate—to be a citizen in society.

CUFE 2: Get them to read academic articles, look at references at end and follow up. Show it's very important, show them how to write it and what they should do. Tells them importance and purpose of doing it.

CUFE 3: Not all teachers in China teach academic literacy. As teachers honesty is everything. Not to copy others, you must write out [in own words] not copy. When I mark their papers I distinguish if they copy others or not, if they do, I would not give a pass.

VU: How do you know if they copy others?

CUFE 3: If they copy others their paper will be too good!

VU: Can they resubmit?

CUFE 1: Sometimes yes, if they cheat, they must fail; for example in a final exam. Twenty-five students failed last exam, day before yesterday. Students complained but the ruling stayed. One student didn't cheat so he passed.

CUFE 2: Particularly in writing we want the students to use own words.

VU: What's the difference between cheating and memorizing?

CUFE 1: For memorizing we don't give a high mark—it's not cheating but...

CUFE 2: but some teachers do.

CUFE 1: There are 2 kinds of exams. Open book: you can copy and then cheating is copying from another student. In a Closed exam, teachers often give lot of questions, exam questions will be from these. Students prepare answers → you have to memorize.

CUFE 3: For example definitions or technical explanation of opinion. For example, what is the reason for RMB to rise? We would expect many different students' words. These sort of questions might be about 15% of exam.

VU: Are your explanations in Chinese or English?

CUFE 4: My students are English majors so I try to use English in my explanations. I use lots of models, for example 1st years writing may be shown a paragraph of writing that contains one reference. Second years might be required to use more references. If the purpose is to demonstrate research, then we'd ask for references.

CUFE 1: We give good models, analyse why this is good. After they [the students] write, we might show a poor example [from one of the students], and use with whole class. Students don't mind: they see it as getting teachers' attention paid to them. We might do the same with a good example. We ask permission of students first but they never refuse.

CUFE 3: Sometimes gives examples in Chinese, such as how to look for references, give websites, books, journals ie to explain how to find appropriate material.

VU: It seems that the students are well informed. Do they obey?

CUFE 3: Students have no sense it's shameful; they don't feel guilty. Westerners think they shouldn't do certain things according to their own laws. Chinese don't have such self control; for example highway doesn't have a fence between lanes on highway but in China we have a fence to stop pedestrians crossing anywhere but at zebra crossing. If they think they'll get away with it, they'll do it. "If I will not be caught and exposed publicly I'll do it." What's the difference between creativity and shamelessness?

CUFE 1: Most of students are honest, but "naughty".

VU: Is it that students don't really believe it's important?

CUFE 1+4: Young people are "contrary"!

VU: Have you ever been shown the VU Academic Honesty policy?

CUFE 1: Not until now.

VU: Does CUFE have a policy?

CUFE 2: Students sign to say they'll be honest in exam etc. but they can still do the wrong thing! I am not aware of any CUFE document except rules for final thesis are explained in a document. There are rules for dealing with students who copy in exam. All these things are in the Student Orientation booklet. There is a document for teachers as well.

CUFE 1: VU's is quite comprehensive. It gives more education about it.