

Excerpt from conversation about the existing academic literacy website

**Micah Tolman (China-based English language teacher) & Victoria
University (VU) staff**

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VU: How would you describe plagiarism in China?

Micah: I see two types. Involuntary [inadvertent] – when it is a new concept – but this can be taught and hence ‘solved’ and voluntary [deliberate]. To overcome this students need to be shown that it is not in their best interest to plagiarise. VU’s attitude is sometimes too gentle and sometimes too condescending.

From a language learning perspective, plagiarising is choosing not to participate; it is choosing not to develop language skills. We can appeal to the student’s goals.

VU: What is your overall assessment of our Academic Literacy website ?

Micah: It is well-organized, clear, and concise, the website introduces a rich body of information that is certain to be of value to our students.

The abstract concepts are illustrated through a variety of interesting examples, particularly those that took advantage of video and music. Website links are excellent, and sites contain a number of instructive tutorials.

Although a conscientious effort was clearly made to present key ideas in terms accessible to non-native speakers, concern remains that the language may still be too complex in places.

Quizzes were available at the end of some sections, but additional activities that allow students chances to put into practice the concepts introduced and engage with the information presented would make the website more user-friendly and lead to greater student-retention of the information presented.

VU: What are your recommendations for its use in China?

Micah: You may want to consider translating the document into Mandarin Chinese (I might be available to do that at some point).

If the video had Mandarin subtitles that could be turned on or off then students revisiting the site for a second or third time could engage without relying on subtitles.

There should be more activities that place the students in a more active relation to the material e.g. case studies as short role plays that pose ‘ethical’ questions.

I think you need to provide a teacher’s guide for the website that will offer ideas / lesson suggestions so that teachers can take advantage of the website in the classroom.