

Turnitin: A formative feedback tool not a plagiarism tool

Turnitin is probably erroneously best known as a plagiarism detection tool and arguably less well known as formative feedback tool to enable students improve academic writing skills. Here at Edge Hill University, we want to ensure Turnitin is used to develop information and referencing literacy which is of paramount importance to all students. Studies are emerging to inform us that when Turnitin is used as a formative feedback tool the incidence of plagiarism reduces as students are alerted of poor practice which they can easily correct (Rolfe, 2010).

To avoid what McGowan (2005) describes as “Cart before the Horse” by using Turnitin just for the detection of poor practice such as plagiarism and ensure that Turnitin is viewed positively by staff and students as primarily a formative feedback tool to achieve good academic practices it is important to know what plagiarism is and isn't. Therefore, this presentation will provide examples of academic practice in order to demonstrate the limitations of Turnitin as a plagiarism tool.

This presentation will be of interest to those who want to explore the challenges faced by institutions and departments when introducing Turnitin as a formative tool in order to develop a sustainable approach. As well as ensure that the formative feedback generated by Turnitin is used to aid academic writing.

References

McGowan, U. (2005). Plagiarism detection and prevention: are we putting the cart before the horse? In A.Brew & C.Asmar (Eds), Proceedings of the 2005 HERDSA Annual Conference (p. 28). Sydney: Research and Development in Higher Education.
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