

Broadening the Sociocultural Context in Plagiarism
A Response to Sarah Benesch's "Feeling Rules and Emotion Labor:
Tools of English Language Teacher Engagement"
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By incorporating a sociocultural dimension into Hochschild's pivotal work on emotion labor (Hochschild, 1983), Sarah Benesch, in her article in the January 2018 *NYS TESOL Journal*, "Feeling Rules and Emotion Labor: Tools of English Language Teacher Engagement," provides an apt framework for examining the changing role of ESL teachers in today's ever-shifting landscape of higher education, and the entanglement of pedagogical practices, ideologies, and distribution of power manifested in the ESL field and beyond. Hochschild introduced the term "emotional labor" (p. 11)—the process of regulating or managing one's emotion in the public domain to fulfill a job demand—to shed new light on the exploitative and unfair labor practices upon which a market-oriented structure is built. In a similar vein, Benesch's leveraging emotional labor as a theoretical and methodological tool for examining plagiarism is pertinent at a time when emerging global forces such as commodification, internationalization, marketization, and digitalization of education have resulted in students' developing new ways of knowledge making and literacy practices. The ever-changing student literacy practices call for a paradigm shift in the ways we approach plagiarism. Tapping into this emotional labor of ESL teachers allows us to re-examine their roles in supporting English learners' academic success in global contexts.

Today's transcultural and transnational youth are developing new literacy practices in digital environments through multimedia and multimodal technologies. Mills (2010) wrote that the transcultural and translanguingual practice of international students not only allows them to navigate information and texts in a much more fluid way, but also has ushered in a new era of meaning-making and knowledge production that continues to challenge our concept of genres and boundaries of authorship.

In light of contemporary technology-embedded learning, as well as emerging ways of reading, viewing, responding to, and producing multimodal and digital texts, authorship is becoming increasingly difficult to define in unambiguous terms. For example, in a college-level Intensive English program (IEP) in which the authors teach as ESL instructors, we find that students' practice of using online translators to convert a text from one's (own) language into a target language has challenged our understanding of plagiarism and made it difficult to determine whether plagiarism has taken place in some cases—for instance, when students use translation software to craft his or her sentences with well-formed words or for text production, are they still entitled to claim the work as their own?

As the boundaries of authorship and ownership continue to blur as a result of digital technologies, there has been a heightened outcry for ESL teachers to be more vigilant about plagiarism and take proactive steps to prevent it. Park (2003) reported that in response to the perception of cheating and

plagiarism being on the rise, colleges since the 1990s have reacted by adopting a less tolerant stance toward plagiarism. This trend has made it even more important for teachers to advocate for students' due process rights to fair investigation and hearing. Part of the dilemma facing teachers in enforcing heightened college plagiarism policies is the awareness that plagiarism is a multifaceted issue and requires doing justice to all the relevant contextual factors while determining outcomes in cases of possible plagiarism.

One of the contextual variables that further complicate our perspectives on practices of plagiarism is the recent trend of internationalization and commodification of education. As claimed by the *Open Doors 2011* report (Bhandari, 2011), a record number of 690,923 international students were enrolled in the United States in 2009/2010. While universities across the country have been pursuing an aggressive strategy of recruiting and courting international students, many have not made it a priority to meet the needs of such students (Bartell, 2003). Instead of adopting a shared approach to integrate international students, colleges tend to relegate the responsibilities of orienting international students about American academic practices to ESL teachers. According to our experience as ESL instructors, while most content-area professors welcome the diverse perspectives that international students bring to the classroom, some may still see international students' multilingual backgrounds as a liability rather than an asset, let alone actively tapping into their transcultural knowledge as a source of learning for all students.

The disciplinary division of labor between ESL and mainstream, content-based disciplines has enforced the status of English as the lingua franca—the notion that proficiency in English holds the key to the magic palace of knowledge that is crucial to students' educational and career success. ESL teachers are expected to play the role of gatekeeper to the ever-expanding globalized enterprise of U.S. higher education. Against this expectation, ESL professors have been asked to take on the responsibility of raising international students' English proficiency to university level in an unrealistic time frame so that such students can continue to provide an ever-increasing pipeline of international students for the host universities.

As a result of these shifting dynamics within the school community across institutions of higher education, ESL teachers have been pressured to take a defensive approach to preventing plagiarism, rather than tackling its root cause. Students are often drilled on how to accurately quote, paraphrase, and summarize source material, but defensive strategies often do not include methods of extending authorship and self-confidence—and, just as important, address the "role, function and power of referencing within a privileged academic discourse" (Stockall & Cole, 2016, p. 344) that underlie plagiarism. Without considering plagiarism in a wider sociocultural context, we might miss the opportunity to encourage students to engage in a more active dialogue with text. For example, the practice of paraphrasing might result in the mechanical substitution of words for other words to avoid producing similarities to the original text. Thus, instead of aiming for cultivating student voice through interacting and synthesizing others' work, the desire to avoid plagiarism might have skewed ESL instruction to a one-dimensional, rote-based literacy practice.

As the number of international students increases on campus, inviting the transcultural experience of international students into the broader school community needs to be a campus-wide initiative. Benesch's paper is a somber reminder of the web of power relations that she terms "the emotion labor" of ESL teachers is called upon to serve requires a concerted, sociocultural approach to disentangle. ESL teachers' work is a call to action for *all* teachers to take into account social and cultural variables that shape students' literacy practices, while they actively engage the power of school community resources to help students navigate academic discourse practices, ideologies, and identities so that diversity and inclusion can become an integral part of campus life.

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