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Attribution of Authorship for Collaboratively Created Materials

Saturday 17 May 2025 15:45 (25 minutes)

TITLE

Attribution of Authorship for Collaboratively Created Materials

RELEVANT SIG

Materials Writers

FORMAT

Research-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation (25 minutes, including Q&A)

Short English description

KEYWORDS

Materials writing
Authorship
Textbook
Ethics

First-time presenter?

ABSTRACT

Teaching materials created for standardized university courses are often the result of collaboration among the educators who work within a language center. This collaboration can take place iteratively and over many years, meaning that material creators may not work together directly, but are connected as links within a common chain.

In such a context, establishing the provenance of a set of materials becomes a challenge, but one that is typically unnecessary. However, when the materials are formalized in a published textbook, the institution where they were created, which usually, and understandably, holds the legal authorship rights, has the option

to formally acknowledge those who were responsible for their creation. This is not a legal necessity, but rather an ethical matter; omitting recognition of individuals who made significant contributions is known as ghost authorship, which is considered a form of plagiarism and therefore a breach of academic integrity. In this presentation, an actual (anonymized) case of ghost authorship will be detailed, followed by a set of recommendations for how to appropriately track and acknowledge those responsible for the creation of a set of teaching materials. The aim is to promote academically sound procedures regarding attribution of authorship in teacher-created textbooks.

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