TO BE OR NOT TO BE... A PLAGIARIST: TRAINING FOR THE ETHICAL USE OF INFORMATION IN ACADEMIA

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Abstract

In a world dominated by the digital paradigm, the ethical use of information is one of the Information Literacy (IL) skills which is important for the survival of individuals of the 21st century in various contexts, such as the professional. Also in academia, the widespread absence of this skill in students represents a complex problem, resulting in something undesirable: plagiarism.
Many authors have reflected and published on the subject, which has been the focus of our attention in the context of higher education. We are of the opinion that preventing plagiarism before it happens, should be better than having to fight it, once detected, with punitive measures. However, in addition to the imperative need for training, we argue that this must be precocious and take place before entering higher education.
This research starts with a real problem that the researcher has as a teacher of higher education, and that corresponds to the question: How to avoid plagiarism, as a trainer?
Thus, a review of the literature on the subject is made and an empirical study is presented. It took place in a Portuguese secondary school, with 10th graders, describing the way in which an IL training project took place, which involved the referred students, their Philosophy teachers, the School librarian and the researcher, in the role of the teacher librarian.
One of the main objectives of this pedagogical experience conceived and implemented by us in the school library was to provide the students with skills that would help them to do, in a correct way, the academic work requested by the teachers.
In order to reach this objective, the methodology we adopted was to provide a theoretical and practical training whose contents were: copyright, plagiarism and norms for the ethical use of information. To complement this information, we organized a conference on the theme "To plagiarize or not to plagiarize ... this is the question" given by a lawyer who addressed in a pedagogical way the issue of plagiarism and associated issues that will be described in this paper.
The technique of collecting data to know the target audience and structure the training session, so as to better match the needs of the students, was a questionnaire given to a sample of students before that session. Another questionnaire was applied in the practical part of the session, in the form of a worksheet, a strategy that allowed to evaluate the knowledge learned by the students in the first theoretical part of the session.
The results of the evaluation of the worksheet were quite good, which allows concluding that teaching to avoid plagiarism has positive practical effects.
In addition, it was concluded that collaborative work involving students, teachers, librarians, information law specialists and school boards in a formal context is critical to sensitize and train students to use information properly and ethically and not to commit plagiarism. This collaborative dynamic is essential to overcome the absence or insufficient formal training on the subject in academic curricula at various levels of education.
We believe that, in order to combat the scourge of plagiarism, there is no single solution but the adoption of several pedagogical strategies that lead to the training and awareness of those who are in a learning situation and that must deal ethically with information in various formats, with different objectives and public.

Keywords: plagiarism, ethics, students, trainers, formal training, collaborative work

1 INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism is a violation of an Information Literacy skill - the ethical use of information, corresponding to an intellectual robbery, not respecting the copyright and may have very serious consequences for those who practice it.

Unfortunately it is transversal to several areas, and there are many public figures from music, literature, politics, and education that, for many reasons, are tempted to the easy of copying (mainly) digital information, using parts of texts as their own, without recognizing their authorship and committing fraud.

Our focus will be on the field of Teaching, more specifically on teaching-learning strategies that contribute to make the educative community more aware of the plagiarism issue and adopting actions that are based more on prevention and training than on the punishment of students who commit this reproachable act and on which we should reflect to try to stop it.

It is no use pretending that the problem does not exist because, more or less frequently, it is part of the daily life of those who teach and learn and certainly can give a lot of work to those who teach to reverse this situation but we are convinced that it is worth changing and innovate, preferably by doing a collaborative work with various educational agents.

The aim of our empirical study are students from a Portuguese secondary school, where we carried out an Information Literacy (IL) Project, as a teacher librarian, in the context of a postgraduate degree in Information Science. Here we will emphasize the importance of the ethical use of information and its pedagogical approach, as one of the most adequate responses in the fight against plagiarism.

We are convinced that educating students to use information with ethic is critical for them, as students, and later, in a professional context. This training should be done early in formal education, before entering in a higher education, from a preventive perspective and in which training is a bet.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research is necessarily based on the literature review related to plagiarism in teaching, which will be followed by a description of an empirical study about a project that addresses the issue.

We will start by reviewing the literature, addressing the problem of plagiarism in secondary school, a teaching cycle in which this issue has been less addressed than in higher education, referring to an important official Portuguese document published by the Ministry of Education (2010), highlighting the Government's and Ministry's intention to ensure quality in public education and better school outcomes by enabling equal opportunities for all citizens. Integrated in the Global Strategy for the Development of the National Curriculum, the Framework for Learning Goals in the ICT area, (our translation) describes parameters that define, in a staggered way, the learning goals for each cycle of education and is based on national and international research results on effective curriculum development. In order to prove that the ethical use of information is (at least theoretically) acknowledged as important for students' development, since their entry into formal education, we have emphasized in the three cycles of education, pre-school, basic school and secondary school the need to obtain this same competence. It is about ethics, described in the following terms: “Ability to use digital resources to optimize learning, respecting standards of citizenship and ethics (respect for copyrights, conduct towards others, etc.) Ability to use digital resources to optimize learning, respecting standards of citizenship and ethics (respect for copyright, conduct towards others, etc). "(our translation).[1] [1]

Despite what is prescribed and because a significant number of students do not reveal an adequate and ethical use of information during their school year, we will mention some studies that analyze the issue in the context of secondary education, as there are many more studies about plagiarism in higher education.

Therefore, we will refer to two Master's dissertations on this reality in Portugal, such such as Valadar investigation [2], entitled *Plagiarism in School Context: a Case study in a Secondary School* (our translation), integrating 348 (10th to 12th grade), who attend the Secondary Education of a Grouping of Schools of the district of Bragança. We will also evoke Master's dissertation, by Joaquim Frias [3],, about the "unconscious use of plagiarism in the elaboration of scholarly works", a research carried out in Arganil Secondary schools, the sample consisting of 68 students, with 71% of secondary education

[1] This project has been widely disseminated in a paper entitled "In the wave of good information/training: the school library is not invisible and interacts with the students". In International Congress Literacies, Media and Information, May 24 and 25, 2018, Faculty of Coimbra (in press).

and the rest of the second and third cycles, from a total of 934 students. We will emphasize from these investigations some more illustrative aspects of a reality that still has much work to be done.

We begin by referring to Valadar's investigation [2], in which the author, after examining the internal regulations, of several groups of schools in the country, states that nothing is mentioned in writing, regarding the practice of plagiarism. Such a situation is, for us, a sign of institutional resignation on a matter of major importance which should be the subject of a regulation and there should be clarity and assertiveness with regard to the problem of plagiarism and its consequences.

From the questionnaire that the researcher gave to the students, 19% never heard of plagiarism and 30% found nothing or little informed about the subject, results that show a high index of ignorance, being important to reverse the situation.

About the frequency of practising plagiarism, a majority of 55% do it never or rarely and 33% sometimes, while the rest do it frequently and always, which for us are troubling results since only 16% affirm never do it. When asked differently, how often do students turn to the copy-paste process, we consider expressive the 20% who claim to do it frequently and always, adding up to 32% who do so sometimes, thus totalling a majority which has an illicit experience in the handling of information. In Frias's dissertation [3], only 25% of students say they never do plagiarism, and 40% say they do it infrequently, while 26% sometimes and 9% often, with a 65% majority with a low frequency of plagiarism but more than 1/3 with irregular practice in the matter.

In Valadar's study [2], about the causes of plagiarism, according to the students' perspective, one of them is the facility that the Internet offers to copy information. Considering the total of respondents, 69% consider this cause to be important (between levels somewhat, quite and very important), results that are in line with other studies that corroborate the practice of plagiarism, in part because of the ease of access to information in the format digital as well as due to the ease of its reproduction. Also the cause "everything that exists on the Internet can be copied freely" totals a 51% majority (between the levels something, quite and very important).

It is consensual and an inescapable reality that the Internet is the source of information predominantly used by students and in the investigation of Frias [3], when students are asked whether they "put the information where they were taken from the works", although a majority 60% say yes, there is a significant percentage (38%) that indicates that only sometimes indicates the source of their research, while 2% assume that they don’t do it.

However, in addition to these results, the majority of 86% indicated the "forgetfulness" option, while 7% reported ignoring it as necessary and 7% indicated other reasons. These data lead us to conclude that the overwhelming number of students will know how to avoid plagiarism and although there is a residual percentage that would not have been aware of these procedures, we believe that training on the selection of sources of reliable information, citations and bibliographic reference must be pedagogical practices, continuously applied, monitored and even evaluated.

According to Valadar [2], a cause widely reported by students about the practice of plagiarism is the lack of time, since 64% consider it important (between levels something, quite and very important). And another cause related to this and that we think corresponds to mismanagement of time is "Because the deadlines for doing the work are usually short", gathering 53% of answers (between levels something, quite and very important). On the reasons that lead students to do plagiarism, this issue of lack of time, also stands out in the investigation of Frias[3], with a majority referring to it - 29% claiming "lack of time for reading", 27% indicating the option "lack of time to carry out the research", and 41% indicating the option "lack of ideas to carry out the work". We believe that this alleged lack of time should be analyzed by the teachers, verifying that the work is feasible by the students, taking into account the curricular load and the existence of possible academic work from other assignments, which may require coordination between teachers to plan and schedule students assessment.

Returning to Valadar's research, another cause of plagiarism that is external to the students and which assumes responsibility for the institution is: "the school does not inform us of the consequences of plagiarism", with 57% of individuals demonstrating that the dissemination of this information on the subject is important (between levels somewhat, quite and very important).

Another cause related to the practice of plagiarism by the students, which has less expression than the others, but which should put the teachers on the alert and should have them confirm if the situation described corresponds to their performance,has to do with the fact that they do not guide the students in the performance of their work; despite a 45% minority of students, they evaluate this situation between the levels something, quite and very important, results that point to the importance of a support or tutoring, by those who teach and ask for academic work to the students.

And in the chapter on the subject that Valadar calls consequences of plagiarism, regarding whether or not teachers should teach students to consult and organize information from whatever source, 94% of students agree that this should be done (partially agree, I agree and fully agree). Unequivocally, these

results reinforce the need for the informative role of the teacher, who is often unresponsive and accommodated in this matter, assuming that students already know or should know how to perform this task of research and organization of information. Unfortunately, this reality is not at all true, because in the Portuguese education system, this function related to Information Literacy is markedly transversal, very diluted or almost non-existent in the curricula, and very little implemented in an effective way.

As far as the ways of combating plagiarism are concerned, we note that only 58% of the students are aware of the existence of software for the detection of plagiarism, which, in our opinion, should be widely disseminated as one of the deterrent forms of plagiarism. (However, we add that in the reality of Portuguese secondary education - and even in higher education - there is often no financial means for acquiring plagiarism detection software ...).

Considering a five-level scale that goes from totally disagreeing to fully agreeing, it is noteworthy that, of the total of respondents, and considering only the percentage of agreement, 72% of students agree that the plagiarized works should be annulled. This contrasts with a more severe punitive measure, the failure in the lecture in which the students plagiarized, with only a minority of 33% of the students questioned agreeing to the situation of disapproval, which allows us to conclude that the majority considers a lighter sanction more appropriate.

With the same scale of agreement already mentioned, we also underline, in Valadar's research, four proposals to combat plagiarism that have high levels of agreement among students (between 80% and 91%). The most expressive at the percentile level is the need for schools to raise the awareness of the whole school community about the plagiarism problem, while a large majority also believe that higher authorities such as the Ministry of Education also have responsibilities in this area, and "must take measures to have the subject debated in schools "(87% of agreement). Therefore, the conviction about the need for information, awareness and debate about plagiarism in academia is very expressive, attributing responsibilities and proactive institutional dynamics to bodies such as the School Directorates, as well as to the organization that supervises them - the Ministry.

Another two proposals to combat plagiarism regarding the role of teachers correspond to the need for teachers to provide clear rules for students to perform academic work (89% of agreement) and monitor their performance (80% of agreement). In our view, these results refer to important information and monitoring functions because students should not be evaluated only in the final part, ie, after completion of assessment activities, but should have guidance and feedback given by the teacher while work is being done.

The Portuguese reality does not deviate much from other international studies on the subject under analysis, presenting similarities with them. We refer to the paper "An empirical investigation of digital cheating and plagiarism among middle school students" in which it is mentioned that the Josephson Institute of Ethics in a questionnaire on ethics applied to 20,000 young American of middle school and high school, in 1998, found that 54% of middle school students plagiarized and that in higher education the plagiarism rate was 70%. In this investigation, some factors have been identified that contribute to this serious academic fraud, namely: "peer culture, Websites that facilitate plagiarism, pressure of achievement, few consequences or punishment, and lack of understanding of the concept of plagiarism" [4].

Also in the article of 2014, of Molina and Quesada [5], it is mentioned that in Spain, in 2006, with the publication of Organic Law 2/2006 of Education, the training is seen as a permanent process, according to the philosophy of lifelong learning, giving young people a complete education in order to respond to the challenges of society. As the authors state, there are great changes in education, some of them, not being liked by students accustomed to traditional teaching. Among them, we highlight self-responsibility, group work, autonomy in information research, an increase in the volume of work out of class and the adoption of continuous evaluation.

Such changes bring great challenges for students and teachers.

As for the students, according to Molina and Quesada [5], they reveal several difficulties, such as not knowing how to recognize the value of information, not knowing how to delimit their informational needs, not knowing how to carry out advanced research and ignoring the ethical and legal aspects of the use of information.

In education that must be governed by the training of competences, informational skills are considered as key and transversal skills that any student should master, and we share with the Spanish authors the opinion that training in this area can help to eradicate plagiarism.

By establishing a correspondence between the causes of plagiarism and the three types of response that teachers can give - punitive, economic and pedagogical, the authors mentioned above are adept at adopting the latter option, since giving priority to a pedagogical activity, to act on more than 50% of causes of plagiarism. For the researchers cited, punitive and economic measures are only effective in

the period in which they are applied, while pedagogical measures persist in time, facing the source of the problem, and it is much more rewarding to educate than to watch.
Thus, in relation to the training on information skills, which students must obtain (and necessarily, teachers), Molina and Quesada [5] highlight the following: research, evaluate, process/treat and communicate/disseminate information adequately.
We absolutely agree with the option of continuous training in information and computer skills when recommending a formal approach, with planning and contextualisation in practice, and the acquisition of these competencies must be visible in the student study plans.
The investigation of Babb, Yeworiew, & Sabbaghan [6], addresses how educators should be proactive, trying to prevent students from committing plagiarism, cultivating students' sense of honour and academic integrity, rather than mobilizing punitive efforts after plagiarism has occurred. Some initiatives are proposed that include changes in the structure of the evaluation, which go through to disinvest in the summative evaluation and bet more in the formative assessment. Also, formative feedback is a proposed strategy, emphasizing the corrective work that the trainer is doing and attaching more importance to the learning process than to the result, in which the deficiencies are identified in the completed work. Likewise, the commitment to the training of academic integrity aims to combat the plagiarism situation by students, so that they do not claim not to know how to avoid plagiarism.
Also regarding the ways of dealing with plagiarism, Cara Bradley [7], referring to the research of Tricia Gallant, points out two types of institutional response to the problem: compliance of rules / standards and integrity, and it should be noted that the first type implies the detection of violation of said rules and respective punishment by teachers. As for the punitive action, higher education institutions, not infrequently, strongly recommend to trainers that at the beginning of a course, warn students against plagiarism. However, students are not effectively deterred by the threat of consequences and may be punished with penalties ranging from the need to do again a plagiarized task, to assign them a lower final mark, or even expulsion from the institution. A very great disadvantage regarding punitive actions is that it is too late since transgression of the rules has already been made..
Regarding integrity, an alternative institutional approach to this allows an early role for new students, who are asked to subscribe to codes of honour or public promises about their moral character and intentions not to violate norms for plagiarism or other offences
Bradley also mentions a third approach to plagiarism that even though it exists, is not institutionally approved and consists of turning a blind eye. This is confessed by trainers who refuse to take on the plagiarism of their students because of the bureaucracy and the time they would lose if they did it.
Faced with these three situations, education against plagiarism will be the answer to increase student academic integrity, since the other options described above have not had the right impact in reducing transgressions. Even in training on academic integrity, focusing on a mechanical use of bibliographical reference styles, the emphasis should be placed on a broad and open debate on plagiarism, allowing students to develop critical thinking about plagiarism in their assignments and a new understanding of the importance attached to such issues must be fostered [7].
Bridging the gap between theory and practice, we will now describe the Project of IL “In the wave of good information/training” implemented by the researcher, performing the functions of a teacher librarian, at the Secondary School of Boa Nova, in the district of Porto, Portugal, with 10th graders of the Scientific-Humanistic Courses in the School, making a total of seven classes. In this Project, which took place in the 2017-18 academic year, partners such as the school librarian and the Philosophy disciplinary group were interacted with the effective collaboration of two 10th grade teachers who teach all classes of the mentioned courses in the School, a total of seven classes and, of course, the students of those classes.
Aware of a student's difficulty in school – to write adequate academic work - the objectives of the Project were to provide students with the acquisition of Information Literacy skills, so that they could: (*i*) recognize an informational need; (*ii*) search in reliable sources, *iii*) select appropriate information according to their informational needs, *iv*) evaluate the information from various credible sources, in paper and digital format, *v*) use information ethically.
On this IL project, which also had a marketing dimension, in order to give greater visibility to the library, we will only describe some aspects of this broader formative action, which are more directly related to the issue of the ethical use of information.
One of the most important actions of the Project was to carry out a theoretical-practical training session on IL, given by the researcher, lasting one hour and thirty minutes, in a Philosophy class, but in a context different from that of the Philosophy room, preferably in the library or in a computer room. Seven sessions were held, one for each class, being, in general, present the librarian and the professor of Philosophy who, at certain points in the practical component of the session, were also

able to intervene, providing support to the students, if necessary. The session consisted of two distinct parts: an expository one, with dialogue between the teacher and the students, and another practice, with exercises carried out by the students on the computers, with books and magazines from the library. In the theoretical component, where a dialogue was established with the students and in which we used a powerpoint, we addressed contents such as: informational needs of everyday life, sources of information useful in the academic field (google school, institutional repositories). As an introduction to the topic of plagiarism and copyright, we discussed the case of a media figure in Portuguese music who had committed plagiarism recently. This dialogue caused great enthusiasm in the students and served as a bridge to the approach of ways to avoid academic plagiarism: the need to use citations (literal, conceptual, short and long), bibliographical references and bibliographies. We mentioned the need to use a bibliographic reference style, and the APA - American Psychological Association- was chosen because it was adopted at the School. Concerning the application of APA style, we have selected situations that are more frequently used, such as cases of books and articles in the paper and digital format, demonstrating with practical examples of how they were referenced.

In the second part, in computers, in Moodle, the students did, in pairs work, a work sheet that implied research on the net of a Philosophy dictionary, consultation of a multidisciplinary journal and a book of Philosophy (previously selected, having as a requirement the subject be about Philosophy). The students had to use Moodle to access the work sheet and powerpoint of the expository session, which they had to consult in order to carry out the challenge successfully. In addition, there was a monitoring and orientation of the researcher and possible support from other teachers to the students. The tasks requested were similar to those of the session - practical exercises of quotations, bibliographic reference and compiling a bibliography.

Another important training activity that reinforced the pedagogical action on the issue of the ethical use of information was a conference given by a lawyer on the theme"To plagiarize or not to plagiarize ... that is the question". The way the session was structured was educational and appropriate to the age group of the audience, involving examples of areas such as music and fashion. The conference began in a motivating way, with the speaker mentioning the media case of Shakira who was condemned for plagiarism, because of her famous song “Loca” (2010), plagiarized from another of the 90's. Musical excerpts of both were compared. Then there was another media case of Donald Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, accused of plagiarism by Aquazzura, a brand of luxury shoes, because of some very similar models of sandals, comparing, in the session, photos of the original footwear and the plagiarized.

These cases served as an introduction to the topic that was most approached - copyright - in which, with regard to the right of paternity of the work, the lecturer gave several examples of works, of which we highlight some: books, newspapers, musical compositions; cinematographic, television, radio, works of drawing, painting, architecture, photographic works; translations, dramatizations, among others.

As for the use of quotations, which is more appropriate for the student public concerned, and regarding the violation of rights, three situations were mentioned: criminal liability (which constitutes a crime and can lead to imprisonment), civil liability and disciplinary responsibility. In the context of this latter responsibility, the lawyer stated that the student has a duty to respect copyright and intellectual property rights and, if he or she violates this duty, commits a disciplinary infraction subject to the application of disciplinary measures.

The session ended humorously with two excerpts from comic strips, of which we cite the one that has to do with plagiarism and internet use: a teacher confronts a student, saying that he has blatantly copied all his academic work from the internet, using the keys Ctrl + c and Ctrl + v and so that would have zero. The student, "innocent", responds to the teacher who had been the teacher herself who had said that one could do "this" because she had said: "The technology is there to be used, enjoy it!"

In a serious and also playful way, this session served to inform about plagiarism, its consequences and ways of avoiding it.

This research had as instruments of data collection two surveys given to students.

One of them was prior to the session on IL and was designed with the objective to know the target audience, functioning as a users study, a useful strategy to structure the said session, more appropriately, taking into account the informational needs of the students and their weaknesses. It was given to a sample, ie, four of the seven classes, out of a total of 86 respondents. It contained 19 questions, with two distinct groups, one on the sociocultural characteristics of the students and their respective households and another group related to the school context, focusing on questions about the frequency and habits of consumption of the library, research on the information to perform academic work and knowledge about IL.

The second survey corresponded to the work sheet in the practical part of the training session, which was designed with the support of the school librarian, and as already mentioned, was administered online. It acted as a test that allowed to evaluate the knowledge and skills of the students in relation to the content taught in the first part of the IL session and contained questions related to quotations, bibliographical references and bibliography.
After the implementation of the Project, an interview was given to the school librarian, who was well acquainted with the real conditions and difficulties of the academic reality, assuming a fundamental role in the formation for IL and, consequently, in the training of ethical conduct, regarding information. Thus, this other technique of data collection provided more information for a more comprehensive understanding of the reality under study, confirmed some data collected in the first survey given to students, allowing the conclusion of the research with greater robustness.

3 RESULTS

As mentioned, and because the IL Project had a broader scope than the ethical use of information versus plagiarism, we will only highlight the more pertinent and more specifically related results to the theme of this paper, which deserved a greater focus and deepening, thanks to its timeliness and pertinence for reflection.[2]
We selected some results of the first questionnaire, which were determinant to know the profile of the students and to design the IL session in the most appropriate and useful way.
For example, the question "Where do you look for the information to do the academic work?" has an overwhelming majority of respondents who have chosen the "internet" option, with 82 occurrences out of a total of 116 responses and the second most chosen option is "books", with 41 answers. This clear preference of young people for the digital format is aligned with results from multiple studies.
As for prior knowledge of questions about Information Literacy, the results point to a very significant majority that does not know bibliographic reference styles (71%) and specifically in the case of APA style the percentage increases to 90%, adding that 8% does not answer this question, probably because it does not know these rules effectively.
We also highlight the results of two open questions. One of them concerns the definition of copyright, with 51% of correct answers, a very small majority and revealing a need for information on the subject. In the other issue where a definition of plagiarism was requested, although 77% of students respond correctly, the rest need more clarification.
Also expressive is the percentage of 47% of students who state they have never been taught in advance to make quotations.
Regarding the second questionnaire, first of all, a quantitative reference to the success of the training course on IL. The results of the work sheet - in the form of test and object of evaluation by the researcher - allow verifying that the knowledge of the session on IL was quite well assimilated by students, by a significant majority of 81% of positive marks..
According to a global analysis, of the five questions addressed to students, only one of them presented a majority of 52% of negative results. This is the last question, concerning the preparation of a bibliography, from the bibliographical references previously produced (in the previous questions). Perhaps these results are due to lack of time or because it is a task of greater complexity and requiring the use of previous answers, possibly with errors or incomplete, which may have inhibited the students from completing, for they are aware that the answer would not be completely correct.
In contrast to question number 1, the request for a short literal quotation had an excellent rate of correct answers - 97%, perhaps because it was more easily or because the students were more accustomed to doing it. The correct answers regarding the preparation of a bibliographical reference of a printed book totalize the majority of 86%; while bibliographic reference of an ebook totals 80%. Even with a majority of 74% correct answers, the bibliographical reference of an article in a printed magazine leads us to believe that it is a task of greater complexity than a book, probably because it has more bibliographic elements such as volume and year or because it is an example usually less used in the performance of school work.

[2] For more details, consult our above-mentioned paper entitled "In the wave of good information/training: the school library is not invisible and interacts with the students". In International Congress Literacies, Media and Information, May 24 and 25, 2018, Faculty of Coimbra (in press).

3 CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that the project carried out was successful, as demonstrated by the overall result of the evaluation tests.
Although not all actions could have been measured with regard to observable student outcomes, such as behavioural change of eventual offenders of ethical use of information, following the conference on plagiarism, the informative, objective, clear and legal message transmitted by the speaker - a lawyer, has certainly had an impact, by the authority it represents in the matter. We think that it has had all the more effect because it is part of a larger project, with support and institutional visibility.
Of particular note is the importance of sensitizing the school community to the theme, with the dissemination of the various actions carried out, namely the training carried out in a spirit of interdisciplinarity, with the motivating and collaborative work of librarians and teachers. Of course, as protagonists of their learning, students interested in learning, always learning, knowing more about something that can be useful in their academic path and in other spheres of life.
We think that we have done something different in the dynamics of the school, putting the finger in the wound, having the courage not to turn a blind eye to the scourge of plagiarism, having contributed to the desired training, in preventive action, preferable to punitive measures that have momentary effects but do not last in time.
We are convinced that this educational philosophy has many more benefits for all educational actors and many more practical actions on the ground must be carried out ... in the wave of good information/ training.
The trainers have the role of informing, but in this very sensitive matter, which deals with ethical and moral issues, there is no guarantee that informed students will not fall into the easy temptation to plagiarize... Therefore, students also have their crucial role to decide, properly informed, in liberty and full awareness: to be or not to be ... a plagiarist ...

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