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A READING-TO-WRITE PERSPECTIVE
OF JAPANESE AND AUSTRALIAN
STUDENTS’ SOURCE TEXT INTEGRATION
IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Keywords
Reading-to-write; student writing practices; citation practices; intertextuality; source text integration

Introduction
For at least two decades, Western scholars have acknowledged and accepted the notion that the language authors use in any text to express their original ideas can be traced to other sources, or the voice(s) of previous speakers and writers. In all spheres of communication, the use of supporting information is, inter alia, essential to a writer establishing credibility. While in the majority of texts these intertextual traces are often not marked and are thus generally not noted, in the academic realm, writing is characterized by a highly developed set of conventions for marking intertextuality. Explicit reference to prior literature through appropriate textual practices, or citation, is crucial to the acceptance of new ideas put forward by writers. This is because writing is essentially a social process. Hyland further claims that all “statements are invariably a response to previous statements and are them-


4. Swales, Genre Analysis: English in academic and research settings.
selves available for further statements by others.\textsuperscript{5} Citation is thus a persuasive tool in determining whether beliefs become accepted knowledge within a particular disciplinary community by providing justification for arguments, highlighting the novelty of a position and situating new ideas within the existing body of knowledge.\textsuperscript{6}

The ways of understanding and seeing the world specific to a discipline are represented to students through the assigned reading texts that have been produced by members of that same community.\textsuperscript{7} Although students are required to undertake a variety of tasks throughout the course of their degrees, the overwhelming majority of tasks involve the writing of texts, particularly in Arts/humanities subjects. As part of students’ communicating their understanding of disciplinary or subject knowledge and hence their socialization into the academic community, appropriate textual practice and the ability to use the information presented in source texts is crucial to the completion of an academic writing task if it is to be evaluated highly. Effective academic writing therefore involves the ability to incorporate into one’s own text the facts, ideas, thoughts, opinions, concepts and theories of other writers.\textsuperscript{8}

Yet, while the reading and use of source material is fundamental to the writing of an academic task, it seems that reproducing source text information for their own purposes poses great difficulty for student writers.\textsuperscript{9} This is hardly surprising given the range of processes involved in synthesising one’s own ideas with the ideas of others elicited from source texts (including reading, planning, monitoring, writing, revising and editing). Furthermore, students may lack familiarity with academic writing conventions. Unfortunately, however, such difficulties are often automatically labelled as acts of plagiarism, even though the research in this area is yet too scant to substantiate such claims. No more is this so than with respect to international students, whose

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\textsuperscript{5} Hyland, Disciplinary Discourses: Social interactions in academic writing, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
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