

# Addressing the Issue of Plagiarism

Members of the English Language Unit attending the half-day workshop on 21 January 2010 were in agreement that plagiarism is a serious issue both in the world of academia and in writing classes. The consensus was that greater emphasis needs to be placed on intellectual honesty, and that students need to realize the importance of using paraphrasing and citations in their academic writing.

The What-Why-How questions about plagiarism generated a lively and insightful discussion that led to drawing up of guidelines on the definition of plagiarism with specific descriptors as well as on ways to reduce and discourage plagiarism among students. It was generally agreed that more exercises relating to paraphrasing, citations and references are required.

A sliding scale (based on the proportion of plagiarism evident in written work) needs to be devised to ensure that students who plagiarise are penalized appropriately. Those found guilty of excessive plagiarism will be required to resubmit their papers.

Another solution discussed was the use of plagiarism detection software. In this respect UMS is taking the lead by making one such application (Turnitin) available to staff and students. It is hoped that through the use of this and similar software, the level of plagiarism can be significantly reduced.

The three-hour workshop was conducted by Mr. John Mark Storey, the Chair for UB00402 Academic Reading and Writing, at the main meeting room, PPIB.