Background:
Plagiarism is considered, especially in the academic field, as the cultural antithesis of intellectual engagement with ideas. Therefore, university policies treat plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct. Traditional Western notion viewed author as a creator of an original work, and insist that lack of attribution of authorship is the equivalent of plagiarism.

However, a number of cross-cultural research studies indicate that traditional Romantic views of plagiarism do not necessarily apply to ESL context. Sherman (1992) found that in her study the first year students in an Italian university gave verbatim answers without analysis or sourcing. She further highlighted the fact that strategies such as rote learning and recounting tracts of text from the original were not only perceived as acceptable, but demonstration of knowledge. Bloch and Chi’s (1995) also pointed out that cultural traditions greatly shape preferred writing style and affected the notion of plagiarism. Pennycooke (1996) concluded that in cultures where rote learning and huge feats of memory are considered as displaying intellectual superiority, concepts of Western citation styles are inapplicable. Additional problems arise when Internet provides rapid and easy copying of sections or whole works.

Purpose of the study:
The researcher investigates the notion of plagiarism and the internet from 11 ESL teachers and 186 ESL college students. The research purpose is to probe student understanding of plagiarism of Internet texts and their notions of authorship attribution when using Internet sources. The study also examined the different perspectives held by teachers and students concerning Internet plagiarism. The author intends to inform the teachers about the prevalent aspects of students’ views of internet plagiarism as well as their Internet citation practices.

Methodology:
Participants:
11 English as Second Language (ESL) teachers and 186 first-year ESL students at South-Coast University in Melbourne, Australia.
Data collection:
Data were collected in two stages: the administration of the questionnaire and follow-up semi-structured interviews. The 41 tapes (30 students and 11 teachers) were transcribed and analyzed using SPSS and N*Vivo software to ascertain trends in response.

Results:
This study explores the notion of plagiarism and the internet. Three main aspects examined in this present study were: students’ understanding of plagiarism, Internet plagiarism and students’ Internet citation practices. Questionnaire responses from 38 of the 54 students demonstrated they were unclear about attribution practices. For example,
some students considered that plagiarism was an acceptable form of attribution, alongside paraphrasing, summarizing and using direct quotations. Sixty two percent of the 186 students responding to the questionnaire indicated they had not been instructed about plagiarism in their home countries and did not know about plagiarism until enrolling in the college. Finally, 31.18 of students responding to the questionnaire indicate that they do not cite Internet information. At interview, 12 out of the 30 students interviewed justified not citing Internet sources because ‘information on the Web is readily, or commonly accessible to everyone. It’s the ‘common knowledge’ in the public domain. Therefore, these students believe for the purpose of academic writing, they do not need to acknowledge or cite Internet text sources.

The results suggest the conflicting views between teachers and students concerning the notions of authorship and attribution. The most significant difference in response related to the concept of the internet as copyrightable space. ESL teachers in this study regarded cyberspace as a limitless environment for "cut and paste" plagiarism in students' academic writing, whereas ESL students considered the Internet a "free zone" and not governed by legal proprietary rights. These conflicting views relate to differing notions of authorship and attribution: the Romantic notion protected by legal theory and sanctions vs. literary theory and techno-literacy notions of authorship.

**Discussion:**
The way in which many university policies define plagiarism follows the Western romantic notion of authorship, which is somewhat ethnocentric in approach. Matalene’s (1985) research in China found that because ‘ethnocentrism’ is a less and less appropriate response; we need to understand rhetorical systems that are different from our own. Furthermore, current plagiarism policies do not appear to cater to Internet textual space and the way in which our students perceive Web information.

**Usefulness of this study:**
This research gave the research evidence and thus highlighted the need to reformulate plagiarism policies in light of global and technological perspectives of authorship and attribution of text.