by Deborah Bowman, PhD

Intentional and Unintentional Plagiarism: Unintentional plagiarism is simply forgetting to cite a source or seriously not knowing what constitutes plagiarism (McGowen, 2005). All UOR learners have been informed on what constitutes plagiarism via the university catalog, in each course room (re Copyright Information, Plagiarism Policy, Academic Research Policy, and Intellectual Property in the left side toolbar) and always in the AFE's. Here is a list of generic fallacies.

♦ Fallacy #1: Some learners think that by rewording something, the new sentence is now their words and citation is not necessary.

♦ Fallacy #2: Existing plagiarism tools cannot possibly detect a match if I do a, b, c, and d. Never Say Never! There are many ways to detect plagiarism no matter the form. The more experienced the Professor is with writing or teaching, the better their detection skills (Barrett & Malcolm, 2006).

♦ The first line of defense is to always build the Reference section first. Do this before creating the outline so you can give credit easily. I immediately include the source and then go back when I am done writing to delete the references I did not need after all.

♦ The reader should never be confused on where you got your information. Citations should occur often and especially when a source has changed. If I see an entire paragraph or two or more sentences without a citation, confusion begins to set in. Check out how and when the scholars are citing. You will note that it's almost annoying, but a necessary habit.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Paraphrasing: MacGowan suggested that paraphrasing is a valuable skill to have and a legitimate way to borrow from a source (2006). "Unacceptable" paraphrasing is when minor changes to the original sentence(s) are made, such as adding or deleting a word or two or by simply changing the order of the sentence (MCGowen, 2006).

♦ If you struggle with paraphrasing, then check out our Writing Center, Chapter six in the APA manual, and Purdue University's Owl Online Writing Lab for what is considered acceptable ways to paraphrase.

Appropriate Ways to Quote: The only time you should be directly quoting is when you absolutely cannot say it any better than the author(s). Be very selective with using direct quotes (Barrett & Malcom, 2006). With a little effort, there is always a different way to transcribe source material.

- In addition to the authors' names, there should "always" be a page number or paragraph number (if source came from a web page) in parenthesis immediately following the direct quote.

Expected Citation Style: There are many ways to use APA's citation guidelines.

- Basic citation styles are found in Table 6.1 of the APA manual.
- With more practice, the more creative you will become and the easier it gets.

Literature Review vs. Opinion Paper: At this level of the academe, our learners are not writing "opinion" papers. Most assignments are literature reviews that require an analysis of the research found in our e-library or a text.

- It is very rare to find an assignment that the learner already has extensive knowledge of. Even when this rare situation occurs, that learner is still expected to advance their mental model by seeking additional research to back up their written statements.
- The synthesis portions of an assignment are when the arguments are tied together using higher order thinking. This is generally the only section of a document (i.e., the conclusion, summation in abstract, at major transitions) where it is acceptable to interject a scholarly opinion. The other occasions are when asked specifically to share a personal experience or thought.

Writing Styles: Over the years, I have noticed a huge difference between the writing styles of a graduate student, as compared to a professional journalist and experienced scientists.

- Hayes and Introna (2005) reiterated that most graduate students are still trying to find their scholarly voice. This is achieved over time and through continuous practice and is an exercise in advanced critical thinking.
- This is precisely why most professors will only accept references from library databases that are peer reviewed and scholarly. Be sure you are checking those boxes BEFORE you enter your search terms.
- Be sure to pay attention to the instructor's feedback on the Assignments.

References

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