Plagiarism

What it is & How to avoid it
About Us

- Michelle Zafron, PHHP liaison
- Sharon Murphy, Nursing liaison

Health Sciences Library
University at Buffalo
Defining plagiarism according to UB

- “Plagiarism is the act of using the words or ideas of other people and representing them as one’s own. It can consist of the large-scale copying of paragraphs and pages of text from other sources, or it can consist of the unwitting failure to credit sources of ideas and words.”

- “Copying: Closely related to plagiarism is the copying (any portion) of another’s work (exams, homework assignments, research).”

http://academicintegrity.buffalo.edu/integrity/violations.php
Defining plagiarism according to UB

- **“Purchased or recycled work:** The purchase of written materials from someone else or from so-called term-paper mills constitutes a serious breach of academic integrity.”

- **“Self-plagiarism:** Students should recognize that reusing their own work for multiple assignments, either in a single course or in multiple courses, is generally inappropriate.”

http://academicintegrity.buffalo.edu/integrity/violations.php
Is this plagiarism?

- If the source reads:
  
  *People who frequently use a cell phone while driving perceive themselves to be skilled at compensating for driving distractions, regardless of whether they actually have this skill.*

- And you write:
  
  *Even if they don’t possess this skill, drivers who use cell phones a lot see themselves as skillful at compensating for driving distractions.*
Is this plagiarism?

- If the source reads:
  
  *Each year talking on a cell phone while driving causes an estimated 2600 motor vehicle-related deaths, 330,000 moderate to critical injuries, and 1.5 million instances of property damage in the United States.*

- And you write:
  
  *Annually, drivers using cell phones cause approximately 2600 deaths related to motor vehicles, close to a third of a million injuries that are significant or critical, and a million and one half instances of damage to property in America.*
Is it plagiarism?

- If you follow a source article sentence-by-sentence or paragraph-by-paragraph, even though none of your sentences are exactly the same, or even in the same order, as the source article?
All of these constitute plagiarism, when you:

- Copy and paste
- Switch words
- Follow the “style” or word flow of another author
- Use another author’s metaphors
- Use another author’s ideas
Copy and Paste

- Any time you lift a sentence or significant phrase intact from a source, you must use quotations marks and reference the source.

- Example:
  "Talking on a cell phone is more dangerous than talking to an in-car passenger because while in-car passengers regulate their conversations according to driving conditions and warn drivers of impending road hazards, cell phone conversants cannot." (Crundall et al., 2005; Charlton, 2008).
  (this is an in-text citation with full elements in the Reference list)
Word Switching

- If you take a sentence from a source and change around a few words, it is still plagiarism.

- Quote a sentence by putting it in quotation marks and citing the author, and source. But use a quote only when it is particularly useful in underscoring the point you are trying to make.
Style Plagiarism

- When you follow a source article sentence-by-sentence or paragraph-by-paragraph, it is plagiarism. This is true even though none of your sentences are exactly like those in the source article or even in the same order. What you are copying in this case is the author's reasoning style.
Metaphor Plagiarism

- Metaphors are used either to make an idea clearer or give the reader an analogy that touches the senses or emotions better than a plain description of the object or process.

- Metaphors are an important part of an author's creative style. If you cannot come up with your own metaphor to illustrate an important idea, then use the metaphor in the source article, but give the author credit for it.
Idea Plagiarism:

- If the author of the source article expresses a creative idea or suggests a solution to a problem, the idea or solution must be clearly attributed to the author.
“Paper Mills”

- If you purchase a paper from anyone and turn it in as your own, published or not, it’s plagiarism.

- UB faculty may use plagiarism detection services such as SafeAssign and TurnItIn to determine originality.
Real Life Examples

- Punishment: A Story for Medical Educators
- Fending Off a Plagiarist
UB Academic Policies

- Plagiarism is defined by UB as a form of academic dishonesty.
- Offenses may result in a grade reduction or course failure ("F").
- Sanctions may include a notation on the transcript or suspension or expulsion from UB, mandated community service, or restitution. Formal civil or criminal ramifications may extend beyond UB’s internal procedures.

http://academicintegrity.buffalo.edu/faq/index.php
Avoid plagiarism by citing properly

Many different citation styles exist:

- APA
- MLA
- Chicago
- Vancouver

Find examples and help at:
http://tinyurl.com/UBCiting-Writing
An example of referencing in the text

- Two decades of research supports that 70-90% of drivers perceive that they are both more skillful and safer than the average driver (Svenson, 1981; McCormick et al., 1986; McKenna et al., 1991; Walton and Bathurst, 1998).

[Provide the full citations in your Reference list].
EndNote is a software program you can use to collect your references and cite them correctly in your papers.

It is available for free download from http://library.buffalo.edu/help/endnote/
So then, what’s OK not to cite?

- Generally accepted facts
- Folklore and myths
- Historical events
Generally accepted facts are those that are readily available and abundantly available from many sources. They are public knowledge.

- Consider your audience
● Not sure if something is a fact?
  – Ask or cite just in case.
Some advice....

- If you are unsure if you are plagiarizing, credit the source!
- When researching, keep all of the source information.
- Avoid just copying information. Strive to process and synthesize the information. Ask “what can this information add to my paper or argument?”
More thoughts…

- Can you restate the idea in your own words without looking at the original text?
- Don’t wait too long to get started researching, writing, and refining. Give yourself the gift of having enough time to do a good job.

Assignment Calculator
http://libweb.lib.buffalo.edu/ac/index.php
Suggestion

- Develop a notation system, such as highlighting, or post-it notes to mark quotes, so you don’t lift word for word by mistake.
- Convert statistics to be uniform when you take notes (percentages, ratios).
- Summarize material you read in your own words – capture the message not the specific original words.
An excellent site to bookmark

Purdue’s OWL: Safe Practices

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/03/
And of course...

- We’re here if you need help
  - Your instructors
  - Your librarians
  - Your mentors
Have a great year and thanks for viewing!