

INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC WRITING

Michael D. Knapp

When a university issues a degree, whether undergraduate or graduate, it should be an indication that the student has attained a certain level of knowledge, and is therefore qualified to take on a career related to their field of study. However, a student who takes credit for a piece of writing that he or she did not actually write demonstrates a high degree of incompetence or unwillingness, and thus proves to be untrustworthy and unemployable. No company wants to hire people they cannot trust.

The person who plagiarizes is guilty of the “crime” of plagiarism. *Plagiarize*, as a transitive verb, means “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (another's production) without crediting the source” and as an intransitive verb, *plagiarize* is defined as, “to commit literary theft : present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source” (Merriam-Webster, 2017). If a person copies anything with the intention of making others believe it is their own writing, they have committed plagiarism. The person who does this is a plagiarist.

Committing plagiarism has serious consequences. At the very least, the student will receive a zero for the paper or for the class. Schools may also expel plagiarists. When a student commits plagiarism, it is recorded in his or her permanent transcripts. Today, many employers look at applicants' university transcripts before hiring. Regardless of how tempting it may be, plagiarism is never worth the consequences.

Dishonesty, a trait that should be avoided in academic writing, often starts with little “white lies,” and gradually snowballs into deeper levels of deception. Most people consider honesty to be an important value, but they find that maintaining such a precious value can be challenging. After a person tells a lie, it becomes easier to tell bigger lies. Research confirms that when we say or write something that is not true, it actually becomes easier to do it again. “It appears that doing so leads to changes in blood flow to a specific area of the brain, which makes it easier to tell the next lie...telling small lies may desensitize your brain to the accompanying adverse emotions and may invite you to tell bigger lies in the future” (Glatter, 2016, p. 1). Cheating on one exam question, or copying just a few words from another person's work, may not seem like such a big deal, and we may believe we have enough self-control to make it a one-time thing, but this is rarely the case. Once the habit of dishonesty starts, it is very difficult to stop.

Copying information from another source is not always an act of plagiarism, as long as we give credit where it is due. One cannot adequately conduct research for a paper without “borrowing” information from other writers. However, plagiarizing and properly using references are not the same.

Giving Credit

The popular idiom, *Give credit (honor) where credit is due*, which originated in the Bible (Romans 13:7, NIV), is an essential concept for writing papers with integrity. While it is not acceptable to copy another person's work and take credit for it, academic writing requires research and research findings include quotes from other writers. Whenever we refer to another person's work, whether by using direct quotations or by paraphrasing, we must give proper recognition of the original writer. Academic writing styles require this do be done in two places on the paper, normally referred to as in-text citations (or, with some styles, footnotes) and a reference or bibliography page, which is placed at

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the end of the paper, usually as a separate page. Academic papers must always include information about the original source of information.

When we directly quote or paraphrase something from another person's writing, we make a note of where we "borrowed" the information from. This note, which usually includes the author's name, the year it was published and the page number, is called an in-text citation. Different writing styles require different ways to list these citations. For example, Chicago style uses footnotes at the bottom of the page. APA style places this information in the text, next to the quote. Citation information must be provided for any material we quote or paraphrase from another source.

Below is a sample of an in-text citation, APA style, in a paper I wrote when I was a graduate student.

Schools may need to look to the internet for help. "School administrators and teachers should work to identify the languages used by their students at home and look for search engines in these languages" (Garrett & Morgan, 2003, p 274).

I directly quoted from a book written by Garret and Morgan. My in-text citation is provided directly after the quote. The citation source is: (Garrett & Morgan, 2003, p 274). The title and other information will be provided later, in the reference section of the paper.

In-text citations may also be listed just before the quote, with the page number at the end, as in the APA sample below.

However, defining school culture is complex, as Hoy (1990) agrees: "No intact definition of culture from anthropology or sociology readily lends itself for use as an organizational construct. It should not be surprising, therefore, that there are a variety of definitions" (p. 156). Together, climate and culture constitute the school's learning and social environment.

The publication year (1990) is placed immediately after the author's name, and the page number (p. 156) is provided after the quote.

Universities and professors have different requirements for how citations are to be listed. Before writing a paper, be sure you know what is required. Regardless of the method of using citations, it is vitally important that you give credit to the original writer for anything you use that is not your original creation.

Reference or bibliography page

Academic papers should also have a section at the end known as either the bibliography or reference section. Academic presentations, which usually incorporate PPT slides, also require a reference page, which is printed on the last slide of the presentation. Whether giving a speech or writing a paper, integrity must be maintained by giving credit where credit is due.

The academic writer provides more complete information about the source in this latter section than in the in-text citations. Each of the various academic writing styles, discussed below, have their own formatting requirements for the reference section and they all have one thing in common:

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They require adequate enough information that the reader can access the quote or paraphrase that the writer “borrows.”

Most academic writing styles require information about the source to be provided in two places; the in-text citation (or footnote), as previously discussed, and again, with more details, in the reference or bibliography section at the end of the paper. My in-text sample (Garrett & Morgan, 2003, p 274) is listed again in the reference section APA style:

Garrett, J. & Morgan, D. (2003). *Celebrating diversity by educating all students: elementary teacher and principal collaboration*. Ipswich, MA: EBSCO

Below is another sample from a reference page of one of my graduate papers. Notice that in both samples, the last piece of information listed is the publisher. Listing the publisher is essential because it makes it easier for your reader to find the source of the information you have cited.

Samuels, S. Jay, Farstrup, Alan E. (2011). *What research has to say about reading instruction* (4th ed.). Newark, DE, International Reading Association

Academic writing styles

There are many ways to give credit where credit is due. The method you use will depend on which writing style your institution or professor requires. Below is a list of a few of the most commonly used styles:

1. APA (American Psychological Association): This is the most used style in social science classes, but is also widely used in other courses and many universities. APA style uses in-text citations and a reference page at the end of the paper. You can visit APA's official site at <http://www.apastyle.org/> or read more about this style on Purdue University's Purdue Owl Site <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
2. Chicago Style: This style is commonly used with humanities and arts departments, but is also popular in many other departments and institutions. The referencing style for Chicago does not use in-text citations. Instead, the writer gives credit where credit is due through the use of footnotes or endnotes. Footnotes are used at the bottom of each page and endnotes are placed at the end of the paper. This style allows writers the freedom to choose between footnotes and endnotes. However, before writing a paper, it is advisable to ask the professor if he or she has a preference. The last page of a Chicago style paper is called the bibliography, rather than the reference page, as it is called in APA style, but provides essentially the same information, with its own unique formatting and information requirements. You can learn more about Chicago style at these sites: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/> and you can look at an excellent Chicago style sample (which also explains this style) at: http://gcd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Chicago_Style_Example_Paper_Footnotes.pdf

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3. Harvard Style: This style is quite different from the Chicago style, but similar to APA. Like APA, Harvard style uses in-text citations and has a reference page at the end. There are some differences in formatting requirements. You can read about Harvard style at the following website: <http://www00.unibg.it/dati/corsi/8916/37567-Harvard%20Style%20of%20Writing%20Format.pdf>, and you can see how referencing Harvard style is different from the Chicago style referencing requirements at: <http://www.sooperarticles.com/writing-articles/differences-between-harvard-chicago-referencing-897348.html>
4. MLA (Modern Language Association): In-text citations are also used, but the only information provided in the body of the text is the author's surname and the page number, whereas, APA style also includes the publication year (2017). The page at the end of the MLA paper is called a bibliography, where more details are listed about the original source. Complete MLA writing and formatting information is provided at the following websites:
<https://www.mla.org/MLA-Style>
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

With all of these styles to choose from, now all you have to do is ask your professor which style is required for your course or institution, and start writing. To improve your English writing, you need to first simply improve your English language skills. To do that, look at the other resources here at Lovin' English www.nochinglish.org and then go to work on your paper. Remember to prove yourself to be a person of integrity, one who is trustworthy, by always giving credit where credit is due.

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