

Larbi Ben M'hidi University- Oum El Bouaghi

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

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Lecture 02: Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Lesson Description

The second lecture aims to raise awareness about the negative impact of plagiarism on academic integrity and students' performance. The lecture accentuates the importance of using the tools of in-text citation and formatting in order to set the seeds of academic authorship.

Learning Objectives

The main objectives of this lecture are as follows:

- Students will recognize the negative impact of plagiarism on their academic progress
- Students will identify the importance of relying on documentation styles and formats in order to overcome the burden of academic dishonesty.

1. Why should we document sources?

As stated before, documenting sources is a crucial factor in academic writing. Whether in social sciences or humanities, authors should rely on specific techniques and standards to give credit to the previous studies and works that influenced their research or papers. Since academic writing is a form of scholarly conversation among scholars and researchers about a particular research focus or topic, giving credit to previous research is so important. It locates the study in an academic setting and reveals the accumulative nature of research and exploration. It promotes research and innovation as researchers learn to give credit to previous research and allow future researchers to rely on the relevant arguments, findings and material

to contribute to the academic community. This is why we need source documentation to format references in a way that can be understandable for everybody. In this way, source documentation formats and styles appear as a common language that every scholar should master and understand.

More importantly, students should learn these documentation styles and be familiar with their conventions because they are highly needed in every professional or academic field as they promote academic integrity, creativity, originality and innovation. Additionally, these styles help students avoid the bad practice of plagiarism.

2. Definition of Plagiarism

According to Cambridge online dictionary, plagiarism is defined as "the process or practice of using another person's ideas or work and pretending that it is your own". Similarly, Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines the verb "to plagiarize" as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source [... or] to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source". It means that plagiarism is engaging in dishonest conduct that may lead to an ethical offense that may cause a copyright infringement and hence requires a legal influence.

Plagiarism is, then, considered a serious offense because it shows how plagiarists are not only dishonest, but they are also incompetent and not fit to do research and generate original contributions to the academic as well as the professional community. Also, plagiarism fosters suspicions as it diminishes trust and credibility among the academic community members. As stated in the overview of MLA 8th edition, "teachers" turn "**into detectives** instead of mentors", which may hinder progress and influence learning negatively (6). Worse is that plagiarism may even diminish public trust in universities if students are allowed to receive diplomas without doing what should be done properly.

3- Forms of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism has different forms but the same result. It might be intentional to copy the whole papers from the internet or buy them, pick passages from published or online sources, or even reuse works or projects done by other students and present them in the class as yours. Unnational copying or paraphrasing passages without giving credit to the original source is considered a form of plagiarism.

Let us refer to the examples discussed in the MLA overview in order to have a well-defined picture of these forms:

Original Source: Language Shock

Type of Source: Book

Author: Michael Agar

Passage:

Everyone uses the word *language* and everybody these days talks about *culture* "Languaculture is a reminder, I hope, of the *necessary* connection between its two parts

Paraphrased attempt 1:

At the intersection of language and culture lies a concept that we might call "languaculture."

Paraphrased attempt 2:

At the intersection of language and culture lies a concept that Michael Agar has called "languaculture" (60).

Which passage do you think is a form of plagiarism?

The first one constitutes plagiarism because the student simply borrowed the concept from Agar without giving credit to the author. In the second attempt, however, the student gave credit to Agar as the concept is borrowed and the location has precisely been provided. In this regard, giving credit to the source, using in-text citation properly and putting the reference entry in your list may give sufficient information for your readers.

4- Avoiding Plagiarism:

To avoid plagiarism, students should follow these tips:

- Reading the information in the source carefully.
- Note-taking of the information and its location in the source.
- Ensuring to distinguish between the quotes and the paraphrased ideas and the student's original ideas.
- Learning to document the sources properly using parenthetical/narrative in-text citation formats.
- Learning to give credit to the sources by introducing the writers in your text via reporting sentences. For instance, students can use: **according to the author, the author argues, the author points out, as stated by the author, etc.**

It is important to know that the absence of documentation is not always considered an act of plagiarism. Any information or idea that can be categorized as **common knowledge** is not necessarily required to be documented. For instance, dates of significant historical events such as the First World War, The Second World War, the day of independence or revolution, or basic information about prominent figures such as famous writers, scientists or philosophers are widely available. Having said that, if any piece of information is regarded as debatable, documentation is highly required in this context.

References

MLA, 8th Edition: An Introduction & Overview, 2016.

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