

## Giving Credit Where Credit's Due: What You Should Know about Plagiarism

You probably hear the word “plagiarism” thrown around, but you may not know what exactly it means. The Student Code of the University of Utah (n.d.)<sup>1</sup> defines plagiarism in this way: “‘Plagiarism’ means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in, or as a basis for, one's own work offered for academic consideration or credit or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any other individual's words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression.”

More fundamentally, plagiarism is the failure to credit other people for the ideas, words, and so forth that you got from them. The solution is simple: credit people for the ideas, etc. that you get from them. You have two options in terms of crediting others:

1. You can quote a source verbatim (that is, use their exact words). If you go with this option, you must use quotation marks and you must indicate your source including a page number (unless you are citing a website, which in most cases should be avoided). Note that ellipses (that is, ...) represent words in the original text that are omitted from your quote. You will see this rule applied in an example below. Also, within double quotes (that is, “ ”) use single quotes (that is, ‘ ’) for any text presented in double quotes in the original text. I applied this quotation mark rule to the above quote from the Student Code (University of Utah, n.d.).<sup>2</sup>
2. You can put their ideas or information in your own words (that is, paraphrase). If you go with this option, you must sufficiently alter the original text and you must indicate your source. For excellent advice about paraphrasing successfully, see the The Writing Center of the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill's (n.d.) handout on plagiarism. As stated in their handout: “Paraphrasing does NOT mean changing a word or two in someone else's sentence, changing the sentence structure while maintaining the original words, or changing a few words to synonyms. If you are tempted to rearrange a sentence in any of these ways, you are writing too close to the original. That's plagiarizing, not paraphrasing.”

Note that you do not need to attribute what is common knowledge to other people. The Writing Center of UNC at Chapel Hill (n.d.) has suggested that you can judge whether or not something is common knowledge by asking yourself two questions:

1. “Did I know this information before I took this course?”
2. “Did this information/idea come from my own brain?”

If the answers to either of these two questions is no, then you must include a citation. If you are unsure about whether something is common knowledge, include a citation.

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<sup>1</sup> The citation style use herein is APA style (American Psychological Association, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> For information on punctuation, grammar, etc., consult a writing handbook or style manual. Presented here are only a very few of the rules you should know and apply to your writing.

Now you know the rules, but how can you apply them to your writing? I will give you an example. First, here's original text written by Arlie Hochschild (2003, p. 7).

"I use the term *emotional labor* to mean the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange value*. I use the synonymous terms *emotion work* or *emotion management* to refer to these same acts done in a private context where they have *use value*."

Now here's a quote of the original text (option #1 from above).

Emotional labor is "...the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display..." (Hochschild, 2003, p. 7).

Here's a second example of a quote of the original text (option #1 from above).

Hochschild (2003, p. 7) distinguished between what she called "emotional labor" and "emotion work"; she defined the former as "...the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display..." and the latter as "...these same acts done in a private context...."

Finally, here's a paraphrased sentence based on the original text (option #2 from above).

Emotional labor refers to the idea that some workers get paid to express certain emotions (Hochschild, 2003).

In addition, for excellent advice about avoiding plagiarism, see The Writing Center of UNC at Chapel Hill's (n.d.) handout on plagiarism.

Now you know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, but why should you care? Here are three reasons. First, the sources you have tracked down represent the hard work and research of someone else, so give credit where credit's due. Second, whatever you go on to do, be it additional education or work, you will find yourself wanting to impress or persuade someone. By citing your sources, you will signal that you are professional and well-informed, and that your points are well-supported and well-argued. Third, as a student at the University of Utah, you are bound by the Student Code (University of Utah, n.d.) which prohibits academic misconduct including plagiarism (the penalties of violating the Student Code include failing assignments, failing courses, and worse).

It is your responsibility to know what entails academic misconduct at the University of Utah; plagiarism is but one example. Be informed; read the Student Code (University of Utah, n.d.): <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>. In addition, I strongly suggest that you read the entirety of The Writing Center of UNC at Chapel Hill's (n.d.) handout on plagiarism, which is very thorough and informative: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>. If you have any questions, please ask me.

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2003). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- University of Utah. (n.d.). *Policy 6-400: Code of student rights and responsibilities ("student code")*. Retrieved from <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>.
- The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (n.d.). *Plagiarism*. Retrieved from <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>.