

**English Department Guidelines on Plagiarism
Universidad de Murcia**

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English Department Guidelines on Plagiarism

Introduction

As a student at UMU, you should be well aware of the fact that our institution expects appropriate academic behaviour from you. This includes a correct approach to paper or essay writing and, in particular, the observation of a very simple code on information/ source handling.

This document will help you go deeper into the notion of plagiarism and correct academic practice.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism can be defined as using other people's ideas and not acknowledging that you have done so. Simply put, when you plagiarise you steal somebody else's work, that is, you become a cheater.

You must understand that there is nothing wrong in using somebody else's opinions or stands on a particular issue, whether this is a linguistic theory or a critical appraisal of a piece of fiction.

It can be stated that this acknowledgement has allowed science to evolve for centuries. Scientific knowledge, and rigorous analysis, have both been founded on cumulative knowledge, which means that it is essential that those involved in scientific or analytical writing should be aware of the necessity to make it explicit where an idea comes from, that is, who was the person who originally produced an idea or a theory.



Copying information from a book is plagiarism
Copying information from the Internet is plagiarism
Copying information from a CD-ROM is plagiarism

if you do not acknowledge your source.

How to avoid plagiarism?

The answer is straightforward: acknowledge your sources. If you make use of a source, and you do not state so, you will be plagiarizing. The case is most flagrant when you copy and paste information, incorporate it into your essay or assignment and want your teacher to believe that your essay is truly "yours". This is simply not acceptable.

In plain English, the above is not appropriate academic behaviour. Do your best to avoid such behaviour by following the advice below.

When should I acknowledge my sources of information?

You are expected to acknowledge your sources of information in the following situations:

1. When you use other peoples' ideas, opinions or theories.
2. When you use facts, statistics, pics or graphs from a source.
3. When you quote other peoples' actual spoken or written words.
4. When you paraphrase other peoples' spoken or written words.

How do I acknowledge my sources?

There are different ways to avoid plagiarising. If you are interested in using the opinions, words or theories which belong to another person, you should do one of the following:

-Quote the exact words (Direct quotation), and state where exactly that information can be found, including the page number.

-Quote the words with minor variations which involve indirect speech (Indirect quotation), and state where exactly that information can be found.

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-Paraphrase the words by giving your own rendering of his/her ideas, and state where exactly that information can be found.

In case of doubt, ask your teacher for further information. He/She will be willing to offer guidance and focused advice on your essay or assignment.

What are the consequences of plagiarising?

Any student found guilty of plagiarism in his/her written work will be severely penalised.

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Where can I get more information?

You should visit the following to gain a better insight into plagiarism:



Dalhousie University: Interactive Workshop on plagiarism and its detection and prevention. [<http://plagiarism.dal.ca/faculty/plagiartalk/Index.html>]
You will need Real Player to watch this.



Purdue University Online Writing Lab: The basics of plagiarism avoidance [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html]



Purdue University Online Writing Lab: The basics of paraphrasing [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_paraphr.html]

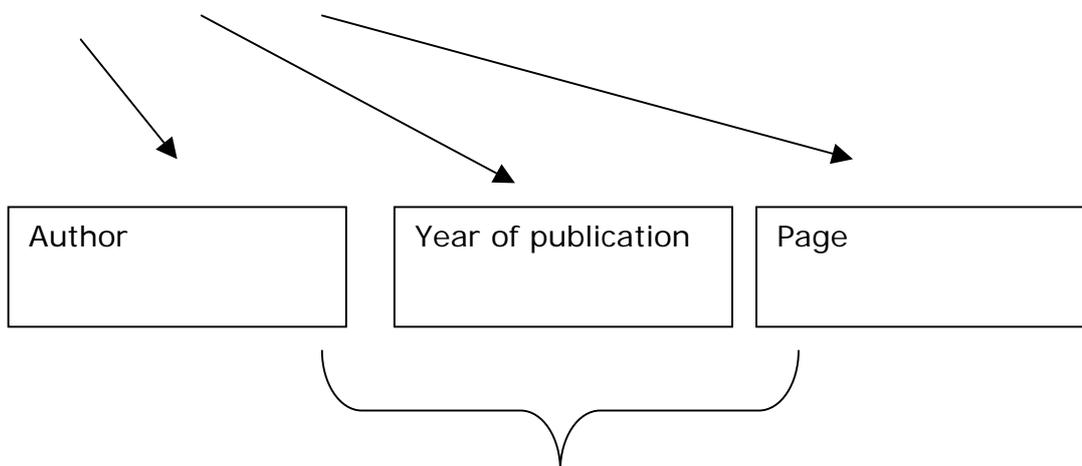


Ohio University : Citations--A Guide [<http://www.ohiou.edu/esl/help/citation.html>]

A sample of good practice

The following is a text contributed by a 4th year student during the academic course 2004-2005. In this text we can track down the ideas and theories that have been used to build up argumentation. Note that there are plenty of instances of cross-reference, which enables readers to identify the exact book, article or webpage where an idea or quotation has been taken:

(Tudor, 2003: 1)



Tudor, I. (2003). Learning to live with complexity: Towards an ecological perspective on language teaching. *System*, 31(1), 1-12.

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The ecological perspective is one of the latest trends in teaching. According to Ian Tudor, it *"focuses attention on the subjective reality which various aspects of the teaching learning process assume for participants, and on the dynamic interaction between methodology and context"* (Tudor, 2003: 1).

This conception of the teaching-learning process has been applied to different areas within the educational scope, teaching of writing in EFL contexts being among them. Hence, Ilona Leki's article dealing with the alleged issue is clearly influenced by an ecological perspective. So, she claims that given the variety of contexts and purposes in learning to write in English, teachers have to be sure that the consequences of the process will be positive and helpful, rather than mitigating or limiting. To do so, she distinguishes between two different sets of challenges, which should be faced: attested and ethical or ideological, the former being those that teachers face daily, and the latter being those more difficult to appreciate.

As for the attested challenges, she talks about the "logistic tensions" that may arise in everyday classrooms, when trying to apply certain L2 writing programs. That is, the attempt to carry out some programs can be more of a problem than a solution since, from an ecological perspective, classes are ecosystems with their inner logic, so that the application of certain programs might mismatch with the rules of a specific group of students. Some factors such as size and time may make the program impossible to be carried out. Moreover, she also focuses her attention on the local possibilities and how they condition teaching and learning. As she states, methods *"must be adapted to local possibilities"*. In fact, this is one of the main aspects of the ecological perspective. Tudor himself mentions the concept of "localness" in his article previously mentioned, which implies that *"language teaching and learning are always lived out locally, in the specifics of a given situation"* (Tudor, 2003: 8). Similarly, Leki highlights the importance of taking local factors into consideration because, as she states, *"No matter how persuasive recommendations for writing instruction methods and materials may be, they must be adapted to local possibilities"* (Leki, 2001: 200).

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Another important point within what Leki calls "attested challenges" involves the teachers and students' background. In her own words "*Not only the teachers' training but also the educational backgrounds of the students need to be considered and accommodated or built upon*" (Leki, 2001: 201). In other words, teachers' lack of training as well as students' lack of instruction in writing may become an additional problem in the teaching-learning process and should be solved. Again, this view links with the ecological perspective, which affirms that "*teachers are no more simply teachers than students are simply students*" (Tudor, 2003: 5). This means that teachers and students have their own ideas which, of course, influence the process. This last assertion gives way to the second set of challenges, to which such affirmation is closely related.

Thus, the second group of challenges is the ethical or ideological ones, which are far more complex than those previously treated. Teachers and institutions have to make important decisions that will eventually shape teaching and learning. That is why Leki calls for reflection about what the real purpose of EFL programs should be, since they imply social, individual and economical costs. Therefore, she thinks justification essential in order to engage students in the writing process. Together with that, Leki considers teachers' knowledge and interest in the students' culture a key element in the teaching-learning process. She expresses her opinion by writing "*Particularly for writing teachers who are not natives of the students' culture, it would seem imperative to learn about the context in which this teaching would take place*" (Leki, 2001: 204). We can taste again the ecological flavour in Leki's statement, because she indirectly supports what in the ecological perspective is known as the "ethnographical aspect". That is, the student's mode of learning is strongly shaped by his/her beliefs, attitudes and expectation, and teachers should be "*sensitive to their sociocultural identity*" (Tudor, 2003: 4).

In short, Leki presents what from an ecological perspective is known as "*the uniqueness of each teaching situation*" (Tudor, 2003: 10), in which, as Leki asserts, "*A careful analysis of local needs, goals and possibilities would seem reasonable*" (Leki, 2001: 205).