

Avoiding Plagiarism

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using the work of other people without acknowledgement. Rules about plagiarism apply to using text, tables and figures from all sources, e.g., books, journal articles, the Internet and magazines. Plagiarism can also apply to spoken words; for instance, a radio broadcast or a lecture.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic values, with potentially serious consequences, which are outlined in the UNE Policy *Avoiding Plagiarism: Information for Students*.

To avoid inadvertently plagiarising you must always:

- 1: Cite your source, and
- 2: Either paraphrase or use a direct quote

1. Citing your source

Regardless of whether you have used direct or indirect quotations, you need to **acknowledge the source of the ideas** you are using in your writing. This is called in-text referencing. There are two main methods used for in-text referencing used at UNE: the author-date system and the footnoting system. See the ASO referencing handouts, and the *UNE Referencing Guide*.

2. Paraphrasing or using direct quotes

Paraphrasing means putting ideas and information from other sources into your own words when writing an assignment. Clearly there may often be technical or discipline-specific words that you cannot replace; however, the sentence and paragraph structure must be your own. This is called paraphrasing, and the resulting piece of text is an **indirect quote**. Paraphrasing is easiest if you refer to a number of sources and try to draw out the main concepts or information. These then may be compressed, reorganised and words/word order changed so that the resulting text is in YOUR voice. Try to avoid reliance on word-for-word paraphrasing involving frequent resort to a Thesaurus; the resulting writing will probably sound stilted and will not flow easily. See the “Paraphrasing and Summarising” ASO factsheet.

Paraphrasing is essential in academic writing, but may be supplemented by **occasional** use of the **exact words** from a source such as a book, journal article, web-site and so forth. This is called a **direct quote**, and you need to indicate that these are not your words. You do this by enclosing the quote (if short) in single inverted commas, or by indenting it and reducing line spacing if it is longer than about 30 words. See the “Using Quotes” ASO handout.

Check your understanding of plagiarism

The following sentence is taken directly from Newble & Cannon (1989: 2).

‘Motivation is such a key factor that it appears to be more important in learning than intelligence’.

Six possible ways to present this idea are given below. Try to work out which are plagiarised, and which are acceptable. The answers are on the bottom of this page.

- 1 Motivation is such a key factor that it appears to be more important in learning than intelligence.
- 2 ‘Motivation is such a key factor that it appears to be more important in learning than intelligence.’
- 3 ‘Motivation is such a key factor that it appears to be more important in learning than intelligence’ (Newble & Cannon 1989:2).
- 4 According to Newble and Cannon (1989:2), ‘motivation is such a key factor that it appears to be more important in learning than intelligence’.
- 5 A key factor in learning is motivation, which appears to be more important than intelligence (Newble & Cannon 1989:2).
- 6 Motivation may be more critical than intelligence in learning (Newble & Cannon 1989:2).
- 7 Newble and Cannon (1989:2) suggest that motivation may be more critical than intelligence in learning.

References

Newble, D. & Cannon, R. 1989, *A Handbook for Teachers in Universities and Colleges*, Kogan Page, London.

University of New England, Office of the Secretariat 2002, ‘Avoiding Plagiarism: Information for Students’. Retrieved 18 Nov. 2002 from http://www.une.edu.au/offsect/plagiarism_avoidance.htm

Answers

- 1 *Not acceptable*: Needs inverted commas to indicate direct quote, and source needs to be cited
- 2 *Not acceptable*: Although direct quote is indicated, the source needs to be cited
- 3 *Acceptable*: Direct quote indicated and source cited.
- 4 *Acceptable*: Direct quote indicated and source cited.
- 5 *Not acceptable*: An attempt has been made to alter the words of the original, but it is still too close to the source text.
- 6 *Acceptable*: Indirect quote with source cited
- 7 *Acceptable*: Indirect quote with source cited

More information:

The full text of the ‘University Policy on Plagiarism and Improper Conduct’ can be found at: <http://www.une.edu.au/offsect/policies.htm>