GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING PLAGIARISM

I found your essay to be good and original.

However, the part that was original was not good

and the part that was good was not original.

Samuel Johnson

Students are expected to acquire a number of skills at university. In order to assess the level of learning, educational institutions have put in place a system of measures, which include oral and written forms of assessment (tests, seminar works, presentations, etc.). A fair and honest conduct of such evaluations forms the basis for a properly functional system. Hence, any type of academic dishonesty, i.e. any attempt by students to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment, will be punished by the university following normal academic standards.

Academic dishonesty takes various forms. Pavela (1978) distinguishes:

- Cheating (using or attempting to use unauthorized materials or other aids)
- Fabrication (falsifying or inventing information or citations)
- Facilitation of academic dishonesty (helping or attempting to help others violate the code of academic integrity) and
- Plagiarism (adoption or reproduction of ideas/words of another person as one's own without acknowledgement).

Further types include copying from others or communicating information during an examination; arranging or attempting to arrange for another person to take one's place in an examination; letting others do one's assignment or parts of it; buying/downloading/copying papers or presentations; resubmitting materials that were previously submitted for another assessment at university or elsewhere; bribing, altering or forging documents (e.g. exam answers, grade records); and providing false information in order to receive special consideration (Aluede et al. 2006).

While most of these offences are straightforward, students tend to have problems grasping the concept of plagiarism. Plagiarism may be defined as a combination of intellectual theft and lying. On the one hand, plagiarizers steal the ideas or words of someone else, and on the other hand, they claim that these ideas or words are their own (What is Plagiarism? n.d.). The former indicates that plagiarism is a copyright issue, which is regulated by law. This means that not only plagiarizers but also students, who assist or condone plagiarism by allowing their work to be copied, will be subject to severe disciplinary

action. In addition to plagiarism being illegal, such behavior is also unethical, as it portrays disrespect for the lecturer, the other students and the educational system in general (Aluede et al. 2006).

In order to avoid plagiarism, MU Vienna insists on appropriate referencing. Such a conduct does not only indicate the student's respect for others and their works but actually enhances the credibility of a student's work. Any arguments provided in a written or oral assignment are strengthened by citing experts in the field and supports the defense of one's position against the examiners (ibid.).

In line with the current academic standard, MODUL University Vienna stipulates strict measures against plagiarism and will apply them. Plagiarism, in whichever form it manifests, is clearly out of the range of tolerable behavior, not just a matter of gambling or tactic trade-offs but a severe violation of the student's contract with the university, with all its consequences. Moreover, being able to reference and quote properly and to deliver academic work without plagiarizing is a fundamental, indispensible skill for any future university graduate. Therefore, ignorance can and will not be taken as an excuse, not in general and, in particular, not in view of the student's signature guaranteeing acknowledgment of MODUL's plagiarism rules.

The following sections will provide students with a comprehensive insight into the topic by offering examples of the various types of plagiarism and guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism.

Types of Plagiarism

Plagiarism by pretending someone else's work or ideas are your own:

Ghost writer: Submitting the work that someone else wrote and claiming it is your own

Patchwork: Putting together a patchwork of other texts and submitting it as your own

Example

Original texts:

Chang, K.-C. & Tarn, D. (2008): Does Service Tangibilization Work in the Hotel Industry? *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research,* 13(4), 411-434.

Hence, the encounter performance can be seen as "the hob of managers and support staff to support and help front-line staff in their mission to please the end user, the customer" (Frost and Kumar, 2000, p. 359), which means that **consumer/employee interaction is very critical to the success of the service experience** (Devlin and Dong, 1994; Fortini-Campbell, 2003).

Pearce, P.L. (2005): The Role of Relationships in the Tourist Experience. *In:* Theobald, W.R. (ed.), *Global Tourism.* 3. Edition, Burlington: Elsevier, 103-122.

Armstrong (2003) observes that **in time of emotional and physical stress, individuals are particularly appreciative of small acts of kindness and tenderness from others**.

Student's text:

The consumer-employee interaction is very critical to the success of the service experience. Individuals are particularly appreciative of small acts of kindness from others in times of emotional and physical stress.

Summary: Summarizing or repeating the content of someone else's work without reference to the original text

Stolen ideas: Using someone else's ideas or arguments without referring to the original source so that the reader will think these are your own ideas or arguments

Statistics: Mentioning figures without reference to the source

Simply forgotten: Forgetting about the reference

Cheating: Copying from classmates

Plagiarism, even if the reference is included:

Copy & Paste: Using text passages from other sources word by word without using quotation marks

Example

Original text:

Plog, S.C. (2005): Targeting segments: more important than ever in the travel industry. *In:* Theobald, W.R. (ed.), *Global Tourism.* 3. Edition, Burlington: Elsevier, 271-293.

Most **travel providers and destinations should focus on the soft adventure market** for several reasons.

Student's text:

Plog argues that travel providers and destinations should focus on the soft adventure market.

Smart Copy & Paste: Copying text passages from other sources making minor changes to the text

Example

Original text:

Quan, S. & Wang, N. (2004): Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: an illustration from food experiences in tourism. *Tourism Management,* 25, 297-305.

The experience of food consumption in tourism can be analyzed from two perspectives. One is from its relationship to the peak touristic **experience. The other is from** its **relationship to the daily experience**. As discussed above, **food consumption**, as **part of tourist experiences, has two relationships to the peak** touristic **experience.** On the one hand, **it is** differentiated **from the latter**. On the other hand, **it can become, under a certain condition, one of the ingredients of the peak** touristic **experience.**

Student's text:

S. Quan & N. Wang (2003) found out that **the experience of food consumption in tourism can be analyzed from two** different **perspectives. One is from the relationship to the** tourist **experience. The other is from** the **relationship to the daily experience** or routines. The **food consumption,** which as an important **part of tourist experiences, has two relationships to the peak** tourist **experience**: First, **it is** distinguished **from the latter**. Second, **it can become, under a certain condition, one of the ingredients of the peak** tourist **experience.**

Bad summary: Summarizing or repeating passages from other sources mainly using the same words and expressions so that there are significant overlaps with the original text

Example

Original text:

Mossberg, L. (2007): A Marketing Approach to the Tourist Experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism,* 7(1), 59-74.

According to Gilmore and Pine (2002) a **service turns into an experience automatically** when using a theme. In their view, **a theme is the underlying concept for everything staged in a particular place.** Many approaches can be found in building new concepts, but **it seems that a theme or story, for specific hotels, restaurants,** or **even whole destinations, can be a successful way to** connect **various services and products**.

Bitner (1992) argues that perceptions of the physical environment **can lead to positive (or negative) beliefs and attributions associated with the organization, its people, and its products.** Many organizations working with tourism do not know in what way the physical environment affect visitors' behaviour and oftentimes the physical environments are developed without professional expertise.

Later on Bitner did her work on servicescapes, which is one of the most referred to studies (1992). She identified three main dimensions of the servicescape, which influence the holistic perception of the consumers' and employees' perceptions. First, the ambient conditions that affects the consumers' behaviour**, i.e. music, colour, lightning, and scent**. Second, **the spatial layout and functionality,** which refer to how equipment and furnishing are arranged but also to how these items are able to **facilitate** the **social interaction of customers and employees**. Third, **signs, symbols, and artefacts,** which **include labels** for directional purposes, and also communicate behaviour and rules.

Student's text :

When using a theme or story, Gilmore and Pine (2002) argue that **service turns into an experience automatically**. However they view **a theme** as **the underlying concept for everything staged in a place. It seems that a theme or story, specific hotels, restaurants** and **even the whole destination, can be a successful way to** link **various services and products**.

The effects of physical environment on tourist experience **can lead to positive or negative beliefs and attribution associated with organization, its people and its product** argues Bitner (1992). The atmosphere and the ambience influencing tourist behavior, **i.e. music, color, lightning and scent, the spatial lay out and functionality** and how it **facilitates social interaction of customers and employees,** and **sign, symbols and artifacts including labels** are dimensions of servicescapes.

Translations: Translating text from other sources into English without quoting

Self-Plagiarism

Double: Re-submitting work that you wrote yourself previously for another course

Undercover: Recycling texts that you wrote yourself without applying the citation rules

Plagiarism in group works

Fake group work: Not contributing to group work or submitting something as group work although not all group members participated

Fake individual work: Pretending that a piece of work was done all by yourself, although it was done as a group work

Detection of Plagiarism and its Consequences

Academic integrity through reason…

Although copying might have been considered an integral part of scholarships in medieval times, when monks copied books by hand, common sense tells one that after the invention of the printing press and digital reproduction techniques this is no longer the case.

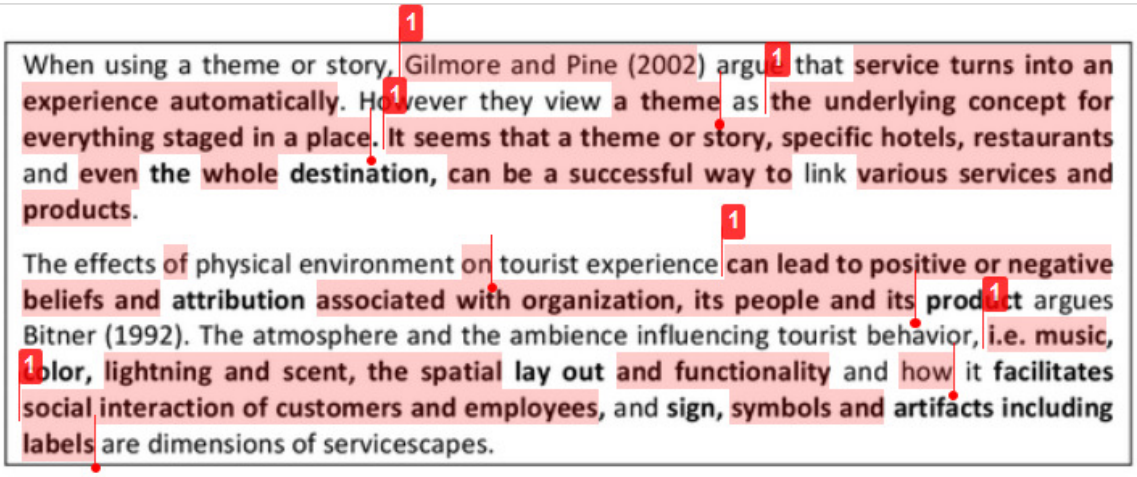
On the contrary, since the rise of enlightenment, the use one's own reason and independent thought has been considered more and more important. As Kant (1784) put it, who castigated laziness as one of the main obstacles to enlightenment: "If I have a book to have understanding in place of me, a spiritual advisor to have a conscience for me, a doctor to judge my diet for me, and so on, I need not make any efforts at all. I need not think, so long as I can pay; other will soon enough take the tiresome job over for me".

Apart from the fact that plagiarism is shunned by the academic world and should be detested by the self-esteem of every student who wants to "use one's understanding without the guidance of another" (ibid.), it is also easily detected, especially in the most common cases when copy and paste is used in order to save time and work. Sudden changes in style or in reasoning arouse the lecturer's suspicion, or they already know the respective entries in Wikipedia by heart. But trying to avoid these traces by e.g. smoothing the style, changing the reasoning or looking for less known sources to copy, nullifies the intent of saving time, and as well leads to the absurd situation to put energy and effort into plagiarizing, energy and effort that could be used more wisely and more rewarding invested in independent work and original thought, showing again that plagiarism does not really pay off.

… and through superior firepower

Furthermore, in order to compete with the vast and rising number of sources in the internet, software solutions have been developed which scan the submitted assignments for passages that can be found in the internet or in databases of assignments that have been already handed in. At MODUL University Vienna, all assignments and final theses are checked using the "turnitin" software (www.turnitin.com), which crawls over 12 billion web pages, 12,000 major newspapers and over 90 million student papers for matching passages, making it quite improbable for copied parts be undetected.

As an example, the turnitin output for the *bad summary* example would look as follows:


When using a theme or story, Gilmore and Pine (2002) argue that service turns into an experience automatically. However they view a theme as the underlying concept for everything staged in a place. It seems that a theme or story, specific hotels, restaurants and even the whole destination, can be a successful way to link various services and products.

The effects of physical environment on tourist experience can lead to positive or negative beliefs and attribution associated with organization, its people and its product argues Bitner (1992). The atmosphere and the ambience influencing tourist behavior, i.e. music, color, lightning and scent, the spatial lay out and functionality and how it facilitates social interaction of customers and employees, and sign, symbols and artifacts including labels are dimensions of servicescapes.

The procedure in cases of plagiarism

If an assignment is considered plagiarism by the lecturer, the following procedure will be enforced, as is laid down in the Examination Regulations § 9 (see https://www.modul.ac.at/student-life/student-services/academic-services/rules-and-regulations/):

1. The lecturer submits a notification and the assignment to the Academic Office, which files the case and informs the student and the Studies and Examinations Committee.
2. If the student feels wrongfully accused, he or she has the possibility to appeal to the Studies and Examinations Committee within two weeks. If this does not happen, or the Committee finds the reasons put forward by the student unfounded, the Committee assesses the act of plagiarism as minor or major. Only in minor cases and dependent on the lecturer's decision, the respective course is not automatically assessed negatively. If the student's reasons are considered sound, the Committee, together with the lecturer, will find an amicable arrangement.
3. In repeated cases, the student will be put on Academic Probation or expelled from the university, as outlined in detail in the Examination Regulations. Before this, the Committee has to give the student the chance to plead his or her case in person.

How to avoid plagiarism?

Students can avoid plagiarism by acknowledging authorship whenever they use:

- **another person's idea, opinion, or theory;**

  Throughout their work, students must properly document the sources they are borrowing, using *Footnotes*, *Endnotes*, or *Parenthetical References*. In addition, students must write a *Bibliography* which is sometimes also referred to as *References* or *Works Cited*. This bibliography section should be placed at the end of the research paper to list all the sources that the students have used.

  Guidelines for referencing can be found in the Bachelor Theses Manual on the MODUL website.

  The following two examples show how the parenthetical style (or "author-date" style), by which references to sources are made in the body of the work itself through parentheses, can be used:

  > Organisations substantially influence public opinion on environmental issues and behaviour (Hill and Thompson, 2006).
  >
  > More than 720 million tourists spend $480 billion (US) annually in places outside their own countries (World Tourism Organization, 2004).

- **any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings or any pieces of information that are not common knowledge;**

  Common knowledge refers to facts that can be found in numerous places and are likely to be known by many people. An example would be: *John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States in 1960*.

  The *World Wide Web* is full of information that students frequently use. Copying visual information or graphics from an internet site (or from a printed source) is very similar to quoting information, and the source of the visual information or graphic must be cited. These rules also apply to other uses of textual or visual information from websites.

- **quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words;**

  Students should always keep in mind that using another person's exact words or sentences without using quotation marks is considered plagiarism **EVEN IF** students cite in their own work the source of the sentences they have quoted. Therefore, students must put in **quotations** everything that comes directly from a text. The following example indicates how quotation marks should be used:

  > "Almost all the academic literature on tourism impacts has focused on the consequences of tourism for the destination and its residents. Very little attention has been paid to the impacts of tourism on tourists" (Moscardo 2008).

- **paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.**

  Writers should make sure that they are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. It is very tempting to copy the original author's words as his or her idea(s) might appear to be wonderfully formulated. Paraphrasing is not an easy task, especially for novice writers, but students should not give up after a few attempts. Remember, the more you try to paraphrase, the easier it gets after a while. If you get stuck with the first sentence, try to paraphrase another and possibly easier sentence. You can come back to the first sentence later. If paraphrasing is too much of a struggle, then you probably need additional training. But keep in mind: If one is struggling very hard with reformulating sentences from the literature, this may be taken as an indicator that the level of examination of a topic *in regards to content* is insufficient, yet. Maybe one has no own formulation because one has no own thoughts on the topic. Only what you can phrase clearly, you've thought clearly.

Students should carefully read over what they want to paraphrase; cover up the text so they are not tempted to use the text as a "guide"; and write out the idea in their own words without sneaking a look at the original text. Finally, writers should compare their own text to the original one to make sure they have not accidentally used the same sentences or words and that the information is accurate.

Finally, **EVEN IF** credit is given to original authors, students must not change the sense of a sentence or of the text they are paraphrasing. Substantially altering the original author's ideas represents untruthfulness as well. Finally, it has to be noted that you are not only expected to find texts and put them together but to elaborate for yourself what you found. A text which mainly consists of literal copies, albeit quoted according to all rules, will be graded negatively as well – not for the sake of plagiarism but for a lack of contribution by you.

Writing academic texts is not simply copying of other people's achievements. Having read and thought over literature, and bearing the recommendations above in mind, you may take the chance not only to avoid plagiarism, but to feel the pleasure of producing wise texts full of your own creative intelligence.

Practical Tips to Avoid Plagiarism

- **JUST DO NOT COPY TEXT PASSAGES** by other authors into your growing manuscript file. In particular, never create text by writing over copy-pasted passages. If you simply leave this undone, there will be no plagiarism problem. It is as easy as that.
- In case that you really want to show the original formulation of another author, then use an exact, literal quote, **but then immediately put it between quotation marks ("…") and add the**

proper reference (author's name, year, pages). This is so essential, so easy and so quickly done that we really can expect you to do so.

- There may be many reasons for taking over other person's text passages or formulations and including them in your work. **BUT THERE IS SIMPLY NOT ANY JUSTIFICATION FOR OMITTING THE QUOTATION MARKS ("…") WHICH ARE NECESSARY.**
- Do not start to include copied text passages and believe you would take care for the proper citation at a later stage. This would be extremely dangerous (if you forget to cite one single source, you have plagiarized and risk failing the course, or even something worse) – and multiply your work, similar to throwing feathers from a high tower *first* and trying to put them into a bag *afterwards*. In other words, it would be so stupid that you could not make anyone believe that you proceeded like that in good faith. (Would anybody assume you honestly wanted to collect the feathers in your bag, if you dropped them first?)
- Some students adopt foreign text, feeling they cannot formulate better. If indicated, this is merely an issue of performance. If not indicated, it is an issue of fraud.
- Note that the **standard requirement for a student paper** is not only collecting the required information, but also **to write independently** about it. The lecturers expect you to write in your own words, and by submitting a text passage without quotation marks you implicitly claim that you formulated everything for yourself.
- **Patch-writing** using parts of sentences which stem from other sources is detectable by the anti-plagiarism software and **considered misconduct as well, even if you give a reference with author and year**. (The quotation marks are still missing, then, which you would have to set per "patch" making everything illegible – so just do not patch-write at all!) In particular, replacing parts of sentences, modifying or rearranging them in order to create your "own" text is an absurd, dull and meaningless exercise and definitely not what a mature person should do. By the way, the lecturers (and you) will live much better with-less-than perfect English than with less-than-perfect authorship.
- Most plagiarism cases at MODUL University do not refer to the classic scientific topic of stealing others ideas, in order to improve one's own reputation at the cost of others, but rather to the effort connected with *formulating* for oneself. So student plagiarism is hardly about scientific priority, but mostly about the plain lack of fulfilling writing duties properly.
- Some students consider it weird that perfect, readily available texts about the desired subject cannot be used as they are. Well, they can, in an adequate way, and if pointed out by proper citation (again, use quotation marks!). But to indicate what is not your own merit is in no way a strange convention, rather a matter of course in everyday life: Who would send a romantic poem to his or her beloved, making heavy use of the lines of other poets, "because what I want to say cannot be formulated better than in these already written, easily accessible sentences" – but not tell the target person that parts of the wonderful ode are just copied? What would be the likely reaction of the receiver if he or she finds out? In a sense, your lecturers as well as your trueloves expect the same thing – that you have your own thoughts and feelings, and that you undertake to express them on your very own.

- If a student paper is sent to a lecturer, it is automatically assumed that it is plagiarism-free, **unless the student declares it to be a preliminary draft *beforehand***. *After* plagiarism has been detected, we do not accept hindsight intentions to add proper citations at a time point after submission. (Who would, in case the plagiarized paper has been graded positively, really go to the lecturer and show him or her which sentences had been copied from other sources?)
- Any collaboration with other students has to be noted together with the declaration of authorship.
- All these statements apply independently of whether an anti-plagiarism declaration was handed out by the lecturer and signed by the student or not.
- Since the rules are not difficult to obey, and since you have been made aware of, pleading ignorance, lack of understanding or technical mistake will be futile.
- MODUL University takes plagiarism issues very seriously and punishes severely. The range of likely options covers failing the course as well as terminating the study contract.

Sources

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