Understanding Plagiarism & Referencing
Learner Development Unit
Outline

- Plagiarism
  - What it is
  - Why it matters
- Avoiding plagiarism
  - Paraphrasing
  - Summarising
  - Reporting
  - Referencing
- Turnitin
  - What it is
  - What it does
  - What the scores mean
• “Why does everyone keep telling me about this plagiarism thing? I still don’t get what they mean!”

• “I hate the way people just go on and on about it but they don’t tell me how to do it properly!”
“I’m scared. It’s easier just to avoid using any sources at all. That’s what I did at school anyway, and it was fine there – I got good grades!”

“If I give references for every single thing I read and write, will there be any room for me and my own ideas? Where am "I" in all this?”
• “Why do I need to use all these sources and references anyway?! They don’t use them in some of the magazines I read! Why aren’t they accused of “plagiarising”?!
  This isn’t fair!”
Thoughts & Feelings

• “Why bother? It just makes things even more difficult! Writing’s already difficult and boring as it is!”

• “Why does Turnitin give me a score for plagiarism even when I’ve referenced properly?!”
What is Plagiarism 1?

- Using language exactly as it is used by someone else in books, articles etc?
- Using other people’s ideas or theories or “facts” or “knowledge” without referencing?
- Paraphrasing / summarising what you read without stating the source?
- ‘Close’ paraphrasing?
What is Plagiarism 2?

- Buying an essay from an essay-writing service?
- Using a friend’s essay with his/her permission?
- Writing an assignment in collaboration with a friend/s?
- Submitting writing from a previous assignment for a new assignment?
Grey areas ...

• “Patchwriting”, i.e. joining together sentences from various different sources to form a paragraph

• This will be understood as plagiarism unless detailed references are provided at every stage and for each sentence / extract
Sources inside Sources

• How will you deal with these?

  – Honestly (i.e. indicate the genuine origin of your material (e.g. Smith 2003 in Johnson 2005)?)
  
  – Or strategically (i.e. just cite the secondary source (e.g. Smith 2003))? (Dishonest – but it looks as if you’ve read the original secondary source = ethos)
Complicating Issues ...

- **Authority of texts**
- **Fields** (cf. e.g. Academia / Journalism / Literature)
- **Genre** (cf. e.g. Journal Article / Textbook / Encyclopaedia / School Essay / HE Essay)
- **Contexts** (e.g. in the eyes of the law / at university / at work)
- **Purposes** of writer
Why does it Matter?

• Intellectual property
• Culture of HE in The UK
• Theories of learning
• Individuality of thinking, writing, assignments
• It is **illegal**!
• It matters in many areas of life
How we Learn at University

Your own [unique?] understanding of the topic
Writing as “Entering a Conversation”

- Intellectual [logos]
  - Location of your question / problem within its wider social / academic context
  - Positioning of your research within the discipline
    ⇒ meaning; significance; relevance; purpose

- Social [ethos]
  - Establishing “the right to speak”
  - Establishing why someone should read your work

- Rhetorical
  - General → Specific pattern for information [typically]
  - Creation of “the thread”
What to Reference?

- Distinctive ideas ‘belonging’ to someone who originally proposed the idea as ‘fact’ / ‘knowledge’
- Information/data from a particular source [e.g. statistical info, case studies, reports]
- Verbatim phrases / chunks [i.e. quotes / quotations]
- Non-common knowledge [? issue – what qualifies as “common” / “non-common” knowledge ...?]
Why Reference?

• To give yourself **credibility** [i.e. to establish your right to participate] [**ethos**]

• To make yourself **persuasive** – giving **evidence** in your **arguments** [**logos**]

• To give **credit to the original author** for the original ideas [i.e. respect; face]

• To give your readers clear and sufficient detail for them to locate idea/s for themselves
Why Reference?

- What is “knowledge”?  
- What are “facts”?  
  - Temporary ≠ permanent?  
  - In-flux ≠ stable?  
  - Knowledge as a ‘knowledge-claim’?  
- Objectivity ≠ Inter-subjective belief?  

⇒ Beware simple thinking!  
⇒ Beware dogma!
Why Reference?

• To deflect criticism of the idea/s from you on to your source/s
• To avoid seeming to plagiarise
  ⇒ [avoiding] plagiarism is actually an issue of face, credibility, persuasion, understanding, interpretation & "ownership"
• And ... it’s difficult ... so ...
Mechanics of Paraphrasing ...

• Change the **syntax** [i.e. the word order]
• Change the **word class** [i.e. verb ⇒ adjective; verb ⇒ noun; noun ⇒ verb etc]
• Use **synonyms**
• “I really like you, and I think you’re a great friend. But ...”
• “I think we’re going to have to let you go”
Paraphrasing & Summarising

- Really therefore, it’s all about **deep understanding**
- **Understanding** Vs remembering & repeating
  - ? What
  - ? Why
  - ? How
  - ? Connections between ideas / authors
  - ? Similarities ≠ differences
  - ? Underpinnings
The Realities of Paraphrasing/Summarising ...

- Genuine understanding of the material = biting; chewing; ruminating; digesting
- Blood; sweat; toil; more bloody sweat & toil; repeat ad nauseam
- In essence, if you can’t understand the original material, it’s impossible? to paraphrase?
- In essence, cf. what someone says ≠ what someone is saying ⇒ aim for the latter
Interactive Nature of Reading

You

texts

responses

writing ↔ thinking
Or put in another way...

• “To be accurate, write; to remember, write; to know thine own mind, write”


• I would add...

• “to know thine own mind and other people’s minds, write”
Thinking ...

- Finding things out
- Working things out
- Deciding
- Solving
- Justifying
- Remembering
- Planning
- Arguing
- Identifying
- Speculating
- Calculating
- Comparing
- Deducing
- Realising
- Implications
- Analysing
- Summarising
- Hypothesising
- Evaluating
- Sequencing
- Ordering
- Sorting
- Classifying
- Grouping
- Predicting
- Concluding
- Distinguishing
- Noticing exceptions
- Noticing connections
- Realising underpinnings
- Noticing assumptions
- Testing

(Adapted from McGuinness, 1999)

The Pursuit of Happiness

“Happiness does not depend upon what we have, but rather on how we feel towards what we have.” - W. D. Hoard
Reading technique - SQ3R

1. SURVEY
- Prime your brain
- Get an overview
- Look at:
  - Title
  - Blurb (back cover)
  - Contents and index
  - Introduction and summary
  - Headings
- Pictures
- Diagrams
- Graphics
- Charts and graphs
- Tables
- Bold and italics
- Boxed text
- Bullets
- Questions
- First lines of paragraphs

2. QUESTION
- Know what to look for
  - Why?
- Do I need to read this?
- What do I know about this subject already?
  - (The more you know, the easier the text will be to understand)
- What is the purpose of this text?
- What is the format of this text and what does that tell me?
- Is the writer biased?
- Do I agree with this?

3. READ
- Use any or all of the following:
  - Skim: Quick read for gist (overall sense)
  - Scan: Quick read to find specific pieces of information
  - Detailed: Careful reading to really understand (usually after skimming or scanning)
- Step by step: For following detailed instructions

4. RECITE
- Actively process:
  - What are you learning from this?
  - Is it answering your questions?
  - Relate it to what you already know

5. REVIEW
- If you need it in long term memory
  - For knowledge
  - For exam
- Close text:
  - What can you remember?
  - Try drawing a mindmap to review the information
  - Check back - what have you missed or got wrong?
  - Read parts again if necessary
How do I as the writer come into my writing when I’m usually explaining other people’s ideas?

- Text organisation & presentation
- ARGUMENT
- Analyses / balance of information
- Relationship/s with reported ‘knowledge’
- Relationship/s with reader/s (e.g. being cautious)
- Structuring of ideas & argument/s
- Linking & signalling language
Avoiding Plagiarism?

• Write notes in your own words [i.e. paraphrasing & summarising]
• Be **fanatical** about keeping records of where you get your information from when making notes
• In your own writing, use a clear & consistent system of referencing [Harvard?]
• Always provide a full list of references in your bibliography
• **When in doubt – give a reference!!**
Academic Writing as a Jigsaw

- Piecing it together
- Pieces of jigsaw are the notes you make from the literature you read [paraphrases, summaries, quotations, extracts, words, data etc]
- A haphazard pile to start with
Academic Writing as a Jigsaw

- Tracking down the information
- One article may only have one tiny relevant thing in it e.g. half a sentence
Academic Writing as a Jigsaw

- Sometimes you know exactly what piece/s you’re looking for
Academic Writing as a Jigsaw

- How / Do pieces fit together? You need to interpret relevance & worth using YOUR OWN CRITERIA
- Those criteria are **not always pre-determined** – frequently they are created by you, your needs, your argument, your direction/s
- Sometimes there will be ‘natural’ fits between pieces. Sometimes not!
- Sometimes structures are pre-determined e.g. when working within paradigms / authoritative areas e.g. Law
The same thing may appear different from different perspectives / in different paradigms / industries / settings / contexts / roles
Academic Writing as a Jigsaw

- Hopefully you develop clarity in your own mind
Academic Writing as a Jigsaw
Academic Writing as a Jigsaw

- An incoherent paragraph / section
- A coherent paragraph / section
Academic Writing as a Jigsaw
John’s ill

• John’s ill and won’t be coming in today
• John said he was unable to come as he was ill
• John says he’s unable to come as he’s ill
• John says he’s not coming in today
• John claims he can’t come in due to illness
• I hear John’s ill and won’t be coming in
• I’m told John’s ill and won’t be in today
• Apparently John can’t make it today
• Due to illness, John can’t come in. So he says
As stated by Hall (1998: 32), “codes fix relationships between concepts and signs”

According to Hall (1998: 32), “codes fix relationships between concepts and signs”

As Hall (1998: 32) said, “codes fix relationships between concepts and signs”

Hall (1998: 32) stated that “codes fix relationships between concepts and signs”

Hall (1998: 32) claimed that “codes fix relationships between concepts and signs”
Hall (1998: 32) states that “codes fix relationships between concepts and signs”

As Hall (1998: 32) states, “codes fix relationships between concepts and signs”

Hall (1998: 32) stated “codes fix relationships between concepts and signs”

“Codes fix relationships between concepts and signs” (Hall 1998: 32)
• **Syntactic Choices**

1. **Removed from grammar of sentence**
   - “Codes fix relationships between concepts and signs” (Hall 1998: 32).

2. **As grammatical part of sentence:**
   - As stated by Hall (1998: 32), “codes fix ...”
   - Hall (1998: 32) states that “codes fix ...”
Reporting

• Choice of Reporting Verb
  • Claim; state; prove; suggest; argue; etc

• What differences? What criteria?

• Truth status

• Your interpretation of original writer ‘motivation’ (e.g. Hall denies this however, pointing out ...)

• Your purpose
• Tense of Reporting Verb

• Present Simple / Past Simple / Present Perfect – what criteria?

• Relevance

• Focus

• Generality ≠ specificity

• Truth status

• Your purpose
• You create different relationships between yourself and the person who you report
• You create different relationships between yourself and the ‘knowledge’ / ‘fact’ / claim which you report
• Degrees of proximity ≠ distance
• Humour / sarcasm / irony / criticism
• Respect / harmony / allegiance
• A very strong manifestation of “I” in language [but without using the word “I”]
• Echoing ..., ... [main clause]
• Following ..., ... [main clause]
• Deriving from ..., ... [main clause]
• Based on ..., ... [main clause]
• In a ..., ... [main clause]
• Surprisingly, ...
• Inevitably, ...
• Surprisingly, ...
• Most surprising of all, ...
• Conveniently, ...
• As might be expected, ...
• Wisely, ...
• Sagely, ...
• Sensibly, ...
• Quite rightly, ...
• Even worse, ...
• Disturbingly, ...
Language of Evaluation
– Style

- Quite frankly, ...
- More simply put / Put more simply, ...
- Figuratively speaking, ...
- In a word, ...
- In short, ...
- Putting it bluntly, ...
- Strictly speaking, ...
- Technically speaking, ...
The essence of the argument (Emslie and Hunt 2009) is that ...

In essence, Emslie and Hunt’s (2009) argument is that ...

Essentially, what Emslie and Hunt (2009) argue is that ...

At its heart, what Emslie and Hunt (2009) argue is that ...
Language of Reporting

- Argue
- Claim
- Suggest
- Show
- Demonstrate

- See p.22ff on “Tutorial Resources” handout (available on Oasis+)
How do I as the writer come into my writing when I’m usually explaining other people’s ideas?

- Text organisation & presentation
- ARGUMENT
- Analyses / balance of information
- Relationship/s with reported ‘knowledge’
- Relationship/s with reader/s (e.g. being cautious)
- Structuring of ideas & argument/s
- Linking & signalling language
• LDU-MUSU-LR “Understanding Plagiarism & Referencing” drop-in Workshops
• MUSU-LDU-LR One Stop Plagiarism Shop stalls in the Quad
• http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/plagiarismreferencing
• http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/content.php?pid=220238&sid=1828721
• http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/ldu/onlineresources/index.aspx