Online Counselor Education

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

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Academic Integrity

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Chapter Overview

This chapter will identify and describe different types of academic dishonesty, some of which are specific to online programs. First, we will cover integrity in academic writing. A full understanding of plagiarism is essential for understanding ways to avoid behaving dishonestly in academic writing. To best understand how to prevent dishonesty in writing, we will address ethical writing styles, specifically American Psychological Association (APA) style, and how students can use APA style to write with integrity. Due to the complexity of integrity in online education, the final section will address some of the ethical concerns specific to distance learning.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this chapter, students will

1. Define the different types of academic dishonesty that can occur in online counseling programs

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2. Analyze steps to access resources that will help them prevent academic dishonesty

3. Distinguish how to behave using academic integrity in many different ways throughout their counseling preparation program

4. Describe why it is crucial for counselors-in-training to apply principles of academic integrity in their counseling preparation program

Introduction

Integrity in academia is a multifaceted topic and online education adds greater complexity to this issue. It is crucial that graduate students understand the different ways to behave with academic integrity as well as ways to prevent academic dishonesty. Behaving with integrity is of utmost importance for counseling students since ultimately the skills obtained in graduate school will be necessary to best meet the needs of clients.

Definition and Intentionality

Integrity is defined as "the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles" ("integrity," n.d.). Academic integrity is therefore the quality of being honest in all work pertaining to one's education. Academic integrity applies to coursework, such as tests, papers, projects, and presentations that are required to obtain credit in a class. Academic work also applies to scholarly activities outside of actual coursework, such as research projects, presentations at conferences, and writing for a publication.

There are instances when students are clearly being dishonest in their academics. Some students intentionally behave dishonestly, such as students who buy papers online or those who purposefully copy someone else's work and present it as their own. Intentional cheating is considered an intolerable offense at the university level and often results in expulsion. However, some students may behave dishonestly, but they then claim that their academic dishonesty was not intentional. For example, two students may decide to work together on an assignment and turn in the same work. While the professor did not clearly state that the students cannot work together, students must understand that they are always expected to do their own work. The only exception to this rule is when

students are explicitly told they can work as a team and hand in the same work, such as with group projects.

While certain types of academic dishonesty may be unintentional due to lack of knowledge, this offense may result in the same level of punishment as an intentional offense. It is the responsibility of the students to educate themselves and make sure they understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Claiming ignorance is unacceptable, especially at the graduate student level. Graduate students must make sure they thoroughly review their university's policies regarding academic integrity and ask their professors if any questions surface regarding these policies. It is also important to pay attention to your own intuition and common sense. If you are working on an academic task and you have concerns about using a resource or obtaining assistance from someone, it is always a good idea to consult with a professor in your program to make sure that you are following the policies of your university and behaving with academic integrity.

Integrity and the Internet

The Internet is an extremely useful tool to people in academia. The pervasive use of the Internet and electronic resources makes it quite simple to access a wide variety of resources from all over the world. Fortunately, it is no longer necessary to physically go to a library to photocopy journal articles. Instead, now students can pull up a journal article or an e-book on a wide range of topics. To make things even easier, today it is unnecessary to be on a home computer to gain access to many of these resources. Many people have Internet access on their phones, laptops, or other personal devices such as iPads or tablets, and therefore can access online resources from any physical location. While the accessibility of online resources is a huge benefit to graduate students, these resources can be severely misused if students lack awareness of how to behave with academic integrity.

It does not take a skilled computer expert to figure out how to use electronic resources and the Internet as a means of academic dishonesty. In addition to accessing professional resources (e.g., journal articles, textbooks), students can also access resources such as PowerPoint presentations, term papers, and websites on a wide variety of topics. Copying and pasting sections from these resources may be a temptation; however, copying and pasting from resources without properly referencing the

material is clearly a case of academic dishonesty. Some unscrupulous students could even use the Internet to hire a "shadow writer" to do their online work for them. The temptations are more profound than ever because access is at anyone's fingertips. While graduate students should already understand these blatant cases of academic dishonesty, it is important to mention a few of these obvious abuses of resources as severe cases of academic dishonesty do occur, even in graduate school.

There are a few questions you should always ask yourself if considering utilizing an online resource. First of all, is this a professional resource that your professor will allow you to use? If the resource is an unpublished paper that you came across online, and it is not an article from a refereed journal or another reputable organization, it is not a highly respected piece of writing. If you ever have any doubt on the professionalism of a resource, you should ask yourself, "Who wrote the article/ piece? How do I know that the authors have the credentials they claim?" Another question you should ask is, "Do I know how to properly cite and reference this resource?" As always, whenever you are in doubt about a potential issue with professionalism or plagiarism, consult with your professor. Later in this chapter, we will cover APA style methods of citing and referencing since it is crucial to professionally reference a resource if you do decide to use it in your writing.

Integrity in Academic Writing

As mentioned above, it is always essential to cite and reference resources where you obtain your information. You want to make it clear when you are using someone else's ideas. If you do not cite resources when stating an idea, you are essentially telling your reader that what you are writing is your own original idea. There are multiple ways students can inaccurately represent their ideas in academic writing. These methods of misrepresentation are outlined in this section to ensure that you understand the depth and breadth of ways academic dishonesty in writing can occur. The primary way students can misuse other's work is through plagiarism. The Oxford Dictionaries define plagiarism as "the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own" ("plagiarism," n.d.).

Considering that students can "take someone else's work or ideas" in many ways, the definition of plagiarism is quite broad, and so are the policies as outlined by professional associations. The American Counseling

Association (ACA) includes plagiarism within the *Code of Ethics* (ACA, 2005) for counselors. ACA code G.5.b. states, "Counselors do not plagiarize, that is, they do not present another person's work as their own work" (ACA, 2005, p. 18). The 6th edition of the APA publication manual states that plagiarism occurs when people "claim the words and ideas of another as their own" (APA, 2010, p. 15).

It is essential that students clearly read and understand their university's policies as they relate to plagiarism. Universities often have severe repercussions for students who plagiarize. Many universities consider any (or all) of the following as forms of plagiarism, and therefore punishable offenses:

1. Traditional plagiarism: Using another person's words as your own without giving proper credit. This can be in the form of blatant cheating (e.g., buying papers off the Internet or having someone write a paper for you), or it can be in the form of copying and pasting sections of someone else's writing into your own work.

2. Self-plagiarism: Reusing your own work to obtain credit in two different courses or for two different assignments.

3. Patchwriting: Failure to properly summarize someone else's work (Howard & Robilliard, 2008). For example, if a student copies a sentence from another source and replaces a few words with synonyms, this would be considered patchwriting.

The APA manual stresses that writers must give credit to the "individuals whose ideas, theories, or research may have directly influenced your work" (APA, 2010, p. 169). Resources containing ideas from other individuals can take on many forms. Examples of resources include books, articles, movies, websites, presentations, or even individuals (via personal communication). Keep in mind that your instructor may only allow the use of professional resources (e.g., professional books, refereed journal articles). The methods of properly citing and referencing will be explained further in a subsequent section.

Self-Plagiarism

As outlined in the previous section, self-plagiarism is generally considered a form of plagiarizing. However, self-plagiarism is still a somewhat nebulous topic. The APA (2010) publication manual states, "Just as researchers do not present the work of others as their own (plagiarism),

they do not present their own previously published work as new scholarship (self-plagiarism)" (p. 16). This statement is directed more toward researchers who publish their writing; however, the concepts can be applied to students as well. The concept is that students must not reuse formerly submitted writings as new scholarship. Students must quote themselves when using portions from a past paper, just as they would quote another author's work. However, you should always consult with your professor if you are planning to cite a previous paper you wrote.

It can be tempting in online counseling programs to self-plagiarize. Discussion boards are often used in online courses in lieu of in-class discussions, and rather than typing up an original thought for the discussion board, a student could recycle past work. For example, a student may be given a discussion board assignment that closely aligns with a research paper that was done in a previous class. The student previously wrote a paper on Gestalt therapy techniques for a theories class. Then a few semesters later, the same student is now in internship and is asked to write a discussion board post where they are required to include information about a specific technique implemented with a client. The student may be tempted to copy and paste sections from the original Gestalt paper into the discussion board post. However, this would be considered self-plagiarism. If you find yourself in this type of situation, the best thing to do is to write the new assignment completely separate from the original assignment. If you do decide to reuse portions of a past assignment, plan to cite yourself but also consult with the professor to make sure that this is allowable.

Some universities outline a clear policy on self-plagiarism, but other universities do not. Therefore, it may be up to your professor to determine a policy on self-plagiarism in each specific class. In cases where the university does not have a clear policy, it is always better to err on the side of caution and not reuse past writings. One study sought out professors' opinions on academic integrity issues such as self-plagiarism (Halupa & Bollinger, 2013). The results of the study demonstrated that most faculty (54%) believed students who recycled any portion of their past writing were self-plagiarizing. The majority of faculty surveyed (80%) also reported that students who reused an entire paper they wrote for another class were self-plagiarizing. While these percentages are not at 100%, it does demonstrate that many professors consider recycling old papers or projects used in past classes to be problematic. Therefore, if you ever plan to reuse a portion of an old assignment, it is best to

consult with the instructor and determine the best method of citing and referencing the past paper.

Patchwriting

In addition to self-plagiarism, it is important that students understand the concept of patchwriting. Patchwriting is defined as: "writing passages that are not copied exactly but that have nevertheless been borrowed from another source, with some changes" (Elder, Pflugfelder, & Angeli, 2010, para. 4). Patchwriting is an offense even if the student cites the original work. Students who use patchwriting in their work often do so because they do not fully understand the work that they are citing (Howard & Robilliard, 2008). Therefore, they copy and paste portions of the original work to try to cover the topic adequately. Oftentimes students who patchwrite may copy a sentence directly from a source and then look for synonyms to replace a few of the words. While this may not be blatant plagiarism, it is a form of academic dishonesty nonetheless, and it must be recognized and corrected.

Howard and Robilliard (2008) give recommendations for helping students avoid patchwriting. To effectively summarize someone else's work, she recommends several steps. First, you can skim the resource and read topic sentences and headings to get the general idea. Next, read the resource again, but this time, read each sentence and take your time trying to understand it. Now, read the resource a third time and take notes. Give yourself a short break (30 minutes should be sufficient), then write your own summary without looking at the original resource. Compare your summary with the original source to make sure that you did not unintentionally repeat phrases. If you did, use direct quotes and make sure to insert page numbers. Recommendations for using APA style to properly cite and reference will be covered in a subsequent section.

Turnitin and Other Plagiarism Detection Packages

While the definition of forms of plagiarism is complex, university faculty do have tools to help them identify the different forms of plagiarism when they occur. There are now a variety of tools to help detect plagiarism. Therefore, it is less complicated to verify whether or not a student has plagiarized in comparison to 5–10 years ago. Websites such as Turnitin, Viper, and iThenticate are used by many professors to scan papers

for potential plagiarism. Professors can use these websites as they deem necessary. Some professors may use the plagiarism detection software for every paper handed in by every student, while others may only scan papers that seem suspicious.

Plagiarism detection websites often have enormous content databases where they index content. Turnitin advertises a database of over 40 billion current and archived websites as well as over 300 million student papers (Turnitin, n.d.). Turnitin also has partnerships with publishing companies and library databases where they obtain other sources such as textbooks and journals. When a paper is submitted for a plagiarism check on Turnitin, the paper is compared to billions of resources. The "originality check" is then performed, and the instructor is given a percentage that measures how much of the paper is the student's original words versus someone else's. For example, a score of 30% indicates that approximately 30% of the paper may have come from another source. The instructor can then see the sections of the paper that the Turnitin detection tool measured that the student may have been plagiarizing. Turnitin highlights this portion of the paper and identifies the original source that contained the specified wording. The instructor can then refer to the university's plagiarism policy in order to make an informed judgment call on whether or not this student truly "plagiarized" his or her paper.

It may be helpful for students to inquire about which plagiarism detection software is used in their counseling programs. Students can even scan their own work to see what the software detects. This is useful in cases where students are still working on developing a writing style. If students are concerned about whether or not their writing would be considered patchwriting, they can always show the instructor in advance of the project deadline, but students can also see if it is possible to run their paper through plagiarism detection software to do a self-check.

Preventing Plagiarism

Citing other people's work is essential to avoid plagiarism. There are two primary ways to give credit to others' ideas. If you are copying word-for-word from another resource, you must use a direct quotation. If you are not using a direct quotation, but are putting the idea into your own words (i.e., summarizing), you must still cite using APA style. Keep in mind that regardless of the type of citation you are using, citation

"implies that you have personally read the cited work" (APA, 2010, p. 169). All references cited in the paper must be included in a reference list at the end of the paper, and if a reference is included in the references list, it must be cited within the body of the paper.

Quotation marks must be used when citing a source directly (i.e., copying and pasting). APA style requires that you provide the author, year, and page number where you found the direct quote (APA, 2010). Direct quotes should be used sparingly, and only when a paraphrase of the information would not capture the essence of the message you are trying to deliver. In other words, make sure there is a good reason you are using a direct quote. Reference the current edition of your APA manual to learn the variety of ways you can use a direct quote. The specific method of using APA style for direct quotes varies depending on the length of the quote you are using.

If you are not using a direct quotation, but you are using a concept or idea from a resource, you still must use a citation. APA style requires that the writer include the author and year of publication of the resource. It is important to note that replacing one or two of the author's words is not sufficient if citing without quotations. Instead, you need to completely rephrase how the author stated it so that it truly is in your own words. This will help you avoid the academic error of patchwriting that was referenced in the earlier section.

As a student, you will learn a significant amount of information. However, just because this information has been acquired does not make it your original idea. Therefore, you need to reference the resources where you learned this information when using it in a paper. Then cite this resource appropriately according to APA style. For example, in your theories class, you will learn about Ellis' Rational Emotive Behavior (REBT) Therapy, the A-B-C model, and how it is important to help clients dispute their irrational thoughts (Ellis & Ellis, 2011). When writing about this technique, just because you know about this model, does not make it your idea. Therefore, when using ideas from Ellis' REBT model, you must always cite where you learned this information.

Why Do Counselors Use APA Style?

The APA writing style has already been referenced several times throughout this chapter (APA, 2010). It is important that graduate

students in counseling recognize that APA style is the standard writing style for the profession of counseling. Different disciplines have their own preferred style of writing. For example, MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines are typically used in the field of humanities (Yale College Writing Center, 2015). Chicago Style (University of Chicago) is primarily used with historical research (Yale College Writing Center, 2015). APA style, which is outlined by the American Psychological Association, is commonly used by psychologists and other professionals in the behavioral and social sciences (APA, 2010). To learn more about APA style, you will need to review *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition* (APA, 2010). The manual was first published in 1929 and has been revised several times over the years (APA, 2010). It includes information about ethics, word choice, language, graphics, and writing style (APA, 2010).

APA style addresses issues that are important for counselors to consider in their writing, such as the importance of using nonbiased language. When writing about people, it is important to consider the language used to avoid bias and stereotyping. APA recommends specific techniques in regard to writing about people of different disabilities, genders, and sexual orientations. For example, APA style recommends that when discussing people, avoid using *he, she,* or *he/she* because readers can get confused and only picture one specific gender when interpreting what you wrote. APA style recommends using plural pronouns so *they* and *their* can be used (APA, 2010; Paiz et al., 2010).

APA Style Resources

Using APA style in the beginning can be a challenge; however, fortunately there are a number of resources you can use to assist you in writing in APA format. In addition to the resources discussed in this chapter, it is strongly suggested that you research APA style guides available through your university. Many graduate programs offer their own APA style resources.

APA Style Manual

The APA style manual is very helpful, especially for students who would like an easy to access resource that can be pulled right off their

own bookshelf. While the Internet is full of useful tools for using APA style, sometimes the answers are more easily found by referencing your own book. Students can bookmark their most frequently referenced pages of the APA manual and become familiar with the format so that it is more efficient to use the manual as opposed to searching online for a specific APA style question.

The most recent 6th edition of the APA manual has useful sample papers that you can refer to when writing APA style papers (APA, 2010). Keep in mind that the first printing of the 6th edition APA manual contained errors in the sample papers, so make sure that you have the second printing (APA, n.d.). It can be challenging to learn and remember all the different rules for writing a paper, and the sample papers highlight the most important formatting rules. The title page and headers have their own structure and formatting rules, and if you have a sample paper in front of you, it is easier to format the title page and headers appropriately.

The APA style manual also has useful chapters on how to write professionally (APA, 2010). One chapter focuses on grammar and usage, such as agreement of subjects and verbs and dangling modifiers. Another chapter focuses on writing style, including punctuation, capitalization, and the use of abbreviations. For students who need an overview of the best writing techniques, it would be helpful to buy the publication manual and read about the most effective writing methods according to APA style.

APA Templates

One confusing issue with using APA style can be the proper formatting of your word processing software document. APA style requires a different running head style on the title page than on subsequent pages. Therefore, students need to learn how to properly insert headers and footers using their word processing software. Students should also understand how to set up the format of the paper so that the first page has a separate header from the rest of the document. The formatting of the different levels of headings can also be confusing, and while many word processing software packages (e.g., Microsoft Word) offer suggested header levels for writing, these usually do not align with APA style.

Microsoft Office offers APA style templates that you can download online for free. If you do an Internet search for "Microsoft Word APA style template," you will find a number of different options. These templates are basically frameworks that are set up for you to type your own text into

for proper APA style formatting. The templates generally have the title page, abstract, headers, subheaders, and reference pages set up for you in APA format. However, it is important that you ensure that the template is in the most up-to-date APA style format. Also, make sure to verify that the website you are using comes from a reputable source, such as the official Microsoft Office site (e.g., office.microsoft.com). This will help prevent downloading a virus onto your computer.

Bibliographic Software

There are a number of different types of bibliographic software programs (also called citation managers) that can assist you with formatting your citations and references according to APA style. Bibliographic software assists writers with using citations and references in a paper in a variety of professional writing formats, including APA style. If writing a short 3- to 5-page paper, you may not find the use of bibliographic software to be necessary since your reference list will likely be manageable. However, if writing a longer paper, such as a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the use of bibliographic software is valuable as it can help you write your paper much more efficiently.

Bibliographic software enables the writer to catalog references as they are found. Many university library online catalogs have the option to download references into a format that can be merged into the bibliographic manager. Writers can also manually enter references into the bibliographic manager. When it comes time to write the paper, there are plug-ins for Microsoft Word that enable the bibliographic software to "communicate with" the Microsoft Word document. While writing the paper, the author can insert citations from the bibliographic software. The reference will then automatically be added to the reference list in the writing style selected (i.e., APA style).

Some of the more common bibliographic software programs include EndNote, Zotero, and Mendeley. Choosing which software to use can be challenging, but comparison guides can assist you with this decision (Penn State University, 2012). One big difference between bibliographic software programs is that some can be accessed online on any computer, while others must only be used on one computer. If you use several different computers in your work, this is a function you would want to have online. In choosing a bibliographic software, it is also important to consider which one is most commonly used at your university. That way,

if you run into questions, there is most likely someone at your university who can assist you.

While bibliographic software expedites the writing process, it takes time to train yourself and learn how to fluidly use one of these software programs. There is a learning curve and the first time the bibliographic software is used it will take longer since the writer is still adapting to the use of this new software. However, after using the software a few times, the process gets much easier and in the end can be an essential time-saving tool. This tool will help you cite and reference more easily in your academic writing, which is another useful way of preventing academic dishonesty.

Citing Sources

Now that you have a basic understanding of APA style and have found the resources you want to use in your paper, you need to be sure they are properly cited. Citing information ensures that you are giving proper credit to the author. So, how do you know when to cite? As a general rule of thumb, citations are used to reference the works of any individual whose ideas, theories, or research influenced your writing (APA, 2010).

There are many different writing styles that can be used when citing information. Perhaps you have come across articles that were published in APA, MLA, or Chicago style, or maybe you have used one of these writing styles in an earlier academic program. *Writing styles* are simply publishing standards and guidelines for authors to use when writing and/or citing information. In this section, you will learn more about citing information in APA style.

Citations in the Reference List

The first step in citing information involves knowing where to put the citation. Citations are included in the body of the text, as well as at the end of the paper. At the end of your paper, you will have a reference page containing a list of all of the resources you used when writing your paper. You must have personally read the work if you cite it in your reference page (Lambie, Sias, Davis, Lawson, & Akos, 2008). Earlier in the chapter, you learned the difference between primary and secondary sources. You would not include a secondary source in your reference page if you did not review that particular document (Lambie et al., 2008).

A reference cited in the reference page provides the reader with the author's last name and first initial, the year the document was published, the title of the document, and publishing information. For example, a journal article cited in your reference page would look similar to this:

Whitlock, J., Wyman, P. A., & Moore, S. R. (2014). Connectedness and suicide prevention in adolescents: Pathways and implications. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 44*(3), 246–272. doi:10.1111/sltb.12071

Notice that along with the authors' names, the year of publication, and the title of the article, you also see the name of the journal. The first set of numerical digits indicates the volume and volume number, and the second set of digits is the page numbers. You will then see the doi number, which is an alphanumeric string assigned to an article when it is published and made available electronically (APA, 2010). If you know an article's doi number, you can use that number to locate the article.

There is a section of the APA manual that specifically addresses formatting references in the reference list. You can find this information on pages 180–192 (APA, 2010). You will notice that there are differences in the way that various publications are cited. For example, journal articles, books, and periodicals are all cited differently. In the paragraph above, we showed how to cite a journal article. See the example below related to citing a book.

Capuzzi, D. (2009). *Suicide prevention in the schools: Guidelines for middle and high school settings.* Alexandria, VA: The American Counseling Association.

This citation looks a little different than the previously listed citation for the journal article. The author's name is given, the title of the book, and the publisher. Chapter 7 of the APA manual contains reference examples (APA, 2010). Page numbers are given to help you find examples of the specific citations you need. It is always a good idea to keep your APA manual nearby when you are writing so that you access information quickly and easily.

In-Text Citations

The body of your paper should contain citations to direct the reader to the source of the information you are providing. These citations are known as *in-text citations.* An in-text citation lets the reader know that you have

borrowed this information from another source and directs the reader to the source in the reference page (APA, 2010). Pages 174–179 of your APA manual address in-text citations. Remember the book and journal article we referenced earlier in this section? We showed how those citations would look in the reference list at the end of a paper. Now, let's see how those same sources would look as in-text citations in the paragraph below.

> Capuzzi (2009) discussed warning signs related to adolescent suicide. Adolescents who attempted suicide in the past were considered to be at higher risk for suicide (Capuzzi, 2009). It is important that counselors be aware of this risk factor, as well as other risk factors that may indicate that a suicide attempt is imminent. Whitlock, Wyman, and Moore (2014) reported how adolescents' feelings of connectedness are related to the presence of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. There is variation in the way that males and females experience connectedness (Whitlock et al., 2014). Therefore, more research is needed to explore the relationship between gender and connectedness in suicide prevention.

In the first sentence, the reader is directed to Capuzzi's book, which is listed in the reference page. Note that in the second sentence, the reader is directed to the same publication, but the citation is provided at the end of the sentence instead of at the beginning. Either way is appropriate. The third sentence includes a citation with three authors. All three authors' names are listed the first time, however the phrase *et al.* is used in the fourth sentence after the first author's name. Et al. is a Latin abbreviation that means "and others." When citing three to five authors, you list all three authors in the first citation; thereafter, you use et al.

By now, you may start feeling as though citing information can be rather tedious. Citing references in many cases can be pretty straightforward, but there may be times when you find it difficult to cite a particular source. For instance, how do you cite a document from a website? What if the author is unknown, or you can't find the date of the publication? First, take a deep breath and relax. Finding the information you need might take a little more time than you expected, but the information likely exists. Second, try not to feel discouraged. Scholarly writing is a developmental process, and it will take time and practice to become familiar with APA style. The good news is that there are a lot of resources available that can show you how to cite even the most challenging documents.

Clearly, it is important to keep your APA manual handy when you are writing so that you can quickly reference the sections that you need. Suppose you are using a direct quote from a website with no page numbers. How do you cite it? First, try looking in the index of your APA manual. If you look under "Online Material," you will see "Online material, direct quotation of." The page numbers (171–172) and the section number (6.05) are given. If you turn to that section of the manual, you will find the section "Direct Quotations of Online Material Without Pagination." Sometimes you have to do a little exploring of the index before you find what you need. But, you can trust with the thorough nature of the APA manual, you will be able find what you need.

There are also online resources available that can help. For example, Purdue Owl is on an online writing lab that can give you specific information about APA style (Paiz, J. M. & Spronk, C., 2015). You can conduct a search by entering your specific question pertinent to APA style, and the information will be presented. Purdue Owl is considered to be a reputable site and can be a good substitute for finding citation examples, particularly when you do not have your APA manual with you. In addition, APA workshops are available on this site.

You may also discover that there is software available (both for free and for purchase) that will format your paper and insert the citations for you. Use caution when using these types of software programs. Not all of them format the information correctly. If you choose to use existing software or templates, you should still use your APA manual as a reference. Be sure that the software uses proper formatting and citing.

Self plagiarism. The APA manual has reference examples for a wide variety of resources (APA, 2010). If your professor allows it, you can reference past papers that you wrote to avoid self-plagiarism (see examples in the APA manual for citing unpublished works). Citing previous papers you wrote will prevent ethical violations of self-plagiarism. Always consult with professors before citing yourself as they may not allow it. If your professor does allow you to cite yourself, do so sparingly.

Personal communication. In addition to providing a style for citing unpublished works, APA also has a method for referencing personal communications, messages in electronic mailing lists, and messages in discussion groups, just to name a few examples. If your professor allows you to cite these forms of resources, always do so in a professional manner

as outlined in the APA style manual. It is more scholarly to reference professional resources (e.g., journal articles and professional texts) in comparison to those listed above (e.g., personal communications). However, if you need to cite informal resources it is important to understand that there are professional methods of citing and referencing these types of documents and communications.

Developing a Professional Writing Style

One of the reasons students may commit errors of plagiarism is that they have not developed a professional writing style. Therefore, rather than appearing incompetent, the students copy portions of other people's writing to make themselves sound more professional. It is crucial that graduate students develop a solid writing style to avoid errors such as plagiarism and patchwriting. This section will offer recommendations for developing your own professional writing style.

Some people may wonder why counselors must use APA style and learn to write professionally. While most of counselors' time is spent as a practitioner, counselors must have solid writing skills. Counselors must write numerous reports, including intake assessments, treatment plans, progress notes, and other important paperwork. These reports may be read by a number of professionals including, but not limited to, physicians, lawyers, insurance company professionals, social workers, psychologists, and other mental health–related professionals. Counselors' credibility and professionalism will diminish significantly if they cannot communicate professionally in writing. Clients will also see your writing style, and if they cannot understand your writing or see that there are many writing mistakes, clients will be less likely to respect and trust your professional judgment.

It is important, therefore, to consider how to hone your writing skills while in graduate school. Hopefully you came into your graduate program already possessing the basics of writing while in your undergraduate program. However, regardless of the status of your writing skills when you entered your graduate program, it is important to refine these skills as they relate to the profession of counseling.

In the beginning of your counseling program, it is essential that your professor assess your writing skills. You will write a number of papers throughout your graduate program, and it is important that you obtain

feedback from your professors regarding your writing style. You need to be open to hearing professors' feedback so you can then use this feedback to hone your writing skills. If you know that your writing style needs significant work, it is crucial that you consult with your professor to find ways to improve. Many universities offer writing assistance through the form of writing labs and other tutoring resources. While it can be humbling to recognize that your writing is lacking, the only way to get help is to first acknowledge that you need to improve. Then seek help to improve, whether it be through an additional writing course or through the assistance of a developmental editor at your university.

Ethical Functioning Within an Online Arena

Ethical, competent counselors all possess professional judgment and solid decision-making abilities. Practicing ethical behavior in graduate school is a good way to prepare for a career in the counseling field. There will be many times as a counselor that you come across ethical dilemmas and one key step in resolving a dilemma is to consult. As a graduate student, if you feel hesitancy or uncertainty regarding whether or not an action is acceptable and professional, it is crucial that you consult with your instructor. Asking another student is not sufficient as the student is not the person who will make the decision as to whether or not you behaved with integrity. Therefore if you have questions about ethical behavior in your online class, always ask your instructor. The next section goes into more detail regarding how to properly give credit to another person's work.

Test-taking

Online instructors are completely aware that they have no control over what students can and will do during a test-taking session. Expecting students to take an online quiz or exam in their own home without consulting books, notes, or the Internet is unrealistic. However, that is not to say that students will never encounter an online test where they cannot access the Internet or other resources. It is important that you clarify with the instructor what is acceptable in his or her class in relation to what can be accessed during tests. Instructors often make online quizzes and tests timed. That way, even though students have access to resources, if they do not know the material as a result of studying, time works against

them in the test-taking environment. Students who spend too much time searching for information will most likely run out of time and their grade may suffer.

Online learning platforms (e.g., BlackBoard, Moodle, Edmodo) offer tools to instructors to prevent cheating on tests. Instructors are aware that students may attempt to share test questions with fellow students. Randomizing the questions, as well as the responses, is one way instructors prevent cheating in classes. The instructor may also use a bank of test questions that are randomized to ensure that each student receives a different set of questions. Instructors may also opt to use essay questions that assess students' learning. These types of questions are more difficult to cheat on as the student needs to come up with an original answer. Instructors should also wait until after the test period has closed prior to sharing student feedback on exams. This helps prevent students who finished the exam from sharing feedback on answers with other students who have not yet taken the exam.

Fraud in Online Courses

Online students have more opportunities to behave dishonestly than face-to-face students. It would be much more challenging for a face-to-face student to have someone else attend class in his or her place. However, in an online environment where cameras are not always used, this temptation may be stronger. In fact, there are online services where you can pay someone to take a class for you. Some universities are requiring students to use a website to tape themselves at their computers while taking an exam to prevent this type of fraud. In addition, some universities have an on-campus residency requirement for online programs; however, not all universities do. Some students may complete their entire degree without setting foot on a college campus.

While it is not acceptable for a student in any educational program to fraudulently complete a degree, for counseling students this offense is especially egregious. Counseling programs are designed to prepare students to work with a variety of populations who suffer from moderate to severe mental illnesses. Without the proper training, a counselor working with these populations could do severe harm to an individual. ACA (2005) code C.2.a. states, "Counselors practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience." Counseling students who fraudulently

Table 9.1 Guide to Success in Academic Integrity

Goals/Challenges	Strategies for Success
Integrity in the Internet	
	• Understand the definition of academic integrity. • Avoid using papers written by others. • Do your own work.
Integrity in Academic Writing	
	• Understand the definition of plagiarism. • Cite and reference where you get your information. • Avoid patchwriting. • Know the codes of ethics related to plagiarism. • Know university policies related to plagiarism and self-plagiarism.
APA Style	
	• Purchase an APA manual and use it. • Avail yourself of other APA style resources. • Make sure every reference is cited in-text and vice-versa.
Online Ethical Functioning	
	• Follow the posted guidelines regarding online quizzes and tests. • Do your own work.

complete their degree are clearly in violation of this ethical code as they should not practice as a counselor until they obtain the appropriate education and training. Imagine if your physician or surgeon cheated his or her way through medical school. The same concept applies to counselors as we work with people in need of our assistance. Our clients may be suicidal or in danger of harming others, and we must have the expertise and competency to best meet their needs or we are putting people in danger.

Summary

There are many angles to take into account when considering academic integrity, and even more when examining integrity in online counseling

programs. It is crucial that counselors-in-training understand how to prevent errors pertaining to academic dishonesty. A primary way to behave with academic integrity is to rely on APA style as a guide for writing. Learning how to cite and reference properly is essential for implementing standards of academic integrity. This chapter presented a number of recommendations and tools for future counselors to use, both while in graduate school, and in the future as a practicing counselor.

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