Word Count: 447
The Plague of Plagiarism
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You've heard of it before. The P word. That little thing if-you-don't-listen-to-your-teacher then you'll fail the assignment, fail the course, and just maybe get expelled from university.

Plagiarism includes the stealing another's idea, complete word-for-word copying from the internet, to arranging another person to write your exam. The newly revised 2005 *Senate Policy* outlines the process of investigation and the degrees of punishment against plagiarism. The most severe cases can lead to a rescinded degree and expulsion.

Perhaps students expect too much of themselves. According to "Creative Problem Solving", a 2006 article by *Robbins & Hunsaker,* overachievers are more likely to cheat than underachievers. Other expectations from family and competitive peers may pressure a student to plagiarize. For business students, some may point the blame at the stereotypical "personality requirements" of a business career, basing their theories off of the recent *Toronto Star* article that reported 56% of MBAs admitted to cheating. Or perhaps modern technology has desensitized our morals, seeing that plagiarism is a mere Google and copy-and-paste away.

We might conclude that plagiarism is an outright crime against academia, robbing authors of their deserved credit, and students of self-worth and a sense of accomplishment. There is the blatant type of plagiarism: the verbatim copying and use of ideas completely outside one's league. However, there is also plagiarism type involving ideas; the one that tries to distinguish when an idea is original or a slight variation of another person's. Many academics have struggled to find that one original topic and idea to claim as their own. Many people before our time have already thought our same "new" thoughts. Many ideas are unoriginal—including this one.

Consider one of the world's greatest "plagiarists". It would be a tragedy if Shakespeare were unable to borrow the story of Romeo and Juliet from Arthur Brooke's poem, "Romeus and Juliet". Shakespeare is renowned for using myths and others' stories to create his plays. The lesser-known original authors, in their graves, may feel just a little cheated of credit.

This does not mean that we should allow students to submit work without proper citation and due credit. Instead, simply do not dismiss plagiarism as the straightforward word-for-word copying. Plagiarism is a complicated issue if we attempt to "thought police" every idea in society.

Although the competitive Schulich standards may intimidate overachievers, in my opinion, plagiarism in Schulich hardly seems prevalent. Schulich educators can rest assured that the deterrents are effective for now. Student codes of conduct and latest resources such as turnitin.com have contributed to the movement against plagiarism.

Technology is improving, and as some students continue to find ways around the system, the system will find ways to combat plagiarism.