

A TUTOR'S GUIDE TO PLAGIARISM

Quality Enhancement 2022



Contents

Detecting and gauging levels of plagiarism	Page 2
▪ Causes of concern	Page 2
▪ Using Turnitin to help gauge the level of concern	Page 2
▪ Turnitin set-up issues that can elevate the similarity score	Page 3
▪ Gathering further evidence of plagiarism	Page 4
▪ Example Turnitin Reports	Page 5
Risk factors for cheating and plagiarism	Page 8
Designing Plagiarism out of Assessment – a few tips	Page 9
Considerations on managing discussions and further actions	Page 10

Detecting and gauging levels of plagiarism

Although the detection of plagiarism is not an exact science, there are several factors that can raise initial suspicions when marking student work. The factors listed below are not definitive as such, but they may be noted as red flags that require further exploration.






Causes for concern

Suspicious of plagiarism may be raised if:

- The submission topic is only tenuously linked to the assessment brief.
- The submission format does not follow specified requirements e.g. inappropriate headings or non-relevant sections or datasets.
- There is marked variation in a student’s writing style within a piece or pieces of work i.e. where writing switches between a clumsy, informal, unacademic style to a style that is fluent and sophisticated. Consider inconsistencies with:
 - Syntax i.e. sentence structure and clarity of meaning.
 - Vocabulary e.g. switching from simple phrasing to highly scientific phrasing.
 - Spelling inconsistencies
 - Punctuation. Pay attention to inconsistent use of punctuation. For example, the aberrant use of the semicolon or inconsistencies in the use of speech marks and inverted commas.
 - Inappropriate use of tense e.g. an aberrant reference to the first person, denoting the actual author, when it would be inappropriate in the context of a student assignment’.
 - Outdated details that are common knowledge e.g. incorrect name of Prime Minister.
- Changes in font (colour, size, type) and formatting (e.g. spacing)
- Multiple different referencing conventions used within a submission and/or missing footnotes and endnotes.

Using Turnitin to help assess the level of concern

If plagiarism is suspected, the submission should be double marked in the first instance and then submitted to Turnitin (where possible) to identify a similarity score. The student work will be checked against the Turnitin database to see if it is similar to or matches the stored sources. Similarity Reports provide a summary of matching or highly similar text found in a submitted paper and the similarity score will be generated as a percentage match. Colour changes indicate the increasing incidence of matching text.

TITLE	SIMILARITY
Submission	0% 
Submission	6% 
Submission	43% 
Submission	58% 
Submission	80% 

Turnitin Similarity Scores

The University Framework of Academic Misconduct Penalties categorises offences within levels of concern i.e. minor, moderate and major. When evaluating the level of concern for suspected plagiarism, the Turnitin similarity score is considered as follows:

Minor: 10%-15%

Moderate: 16%-30%

Major: >30%

Academic judgment must be applied when analysing the Turnitin similarity score to determine whether student submitted work falls within these thresholds. Academic misconduct must be considered on a case by case basis and within the context of the associated assessment and subject area. The thresholds identified above are offered as a guide to help evaluate the degree to which student submitted work matches source material. However, the set-up of Turnitin (e.g. through the Turnitin Assignment tool in BBL) is critical to ensure that students are not penalised unfairly. ODL provides guidance on Turnitin Assignment settings and particular attention must be given to the optional settings:

<https://ulster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/BLS/pages/33742/Turnitin+Assignment+Tool>

The subsequent evaluation of Turnitin reports is outlined below:

Turnitin set-up issues that can elevate the similarity score

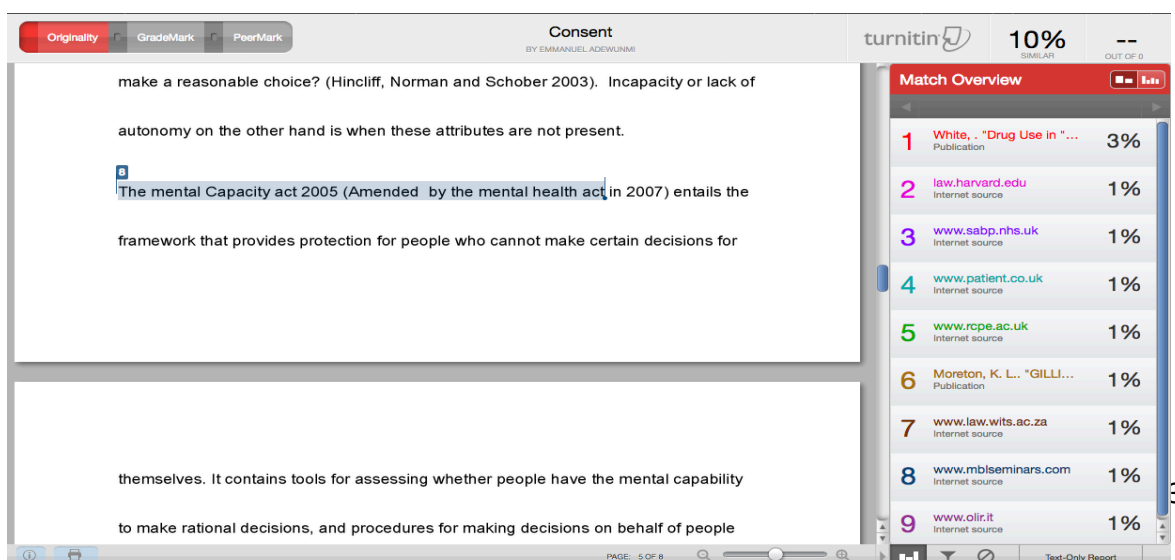
Turnitin matches against student's own work

A Turnitin assignment can be established as a formative tool. In this way, students may submit work to Turnitin several times prior to final, summative submission. To support this formative process, the settings must indicate that papers are submitted to 'no repository' so that the formative assignments are not stored and matched against existing papers. If student work is stored in a repository then it would cross match with their own, previously submitted work and would generate a 100% match. For formative purposes, originality reports should be generated 'immediately (can overwrite reports until due date)'.

For summative assignments, student work must be stored in the 'standard paper repository' to allow for matches with literature in the Turnitin database including work from other students within the course/University (to evidence potential collusion) and students from other institutions. A similarity report may be set to be generated on the due date.

Multiple small sources

Multiple, very small (1 or 2%) matches within a text can easily boost the similarity score to well over 10%+. These matches may simply be references to relevant legislation for example, and so can be discounted from the report. You can exclude small sources i.e. less than 10 words or 1% or 2% matches in the settings.



The screenshot shows a Turnitin report for a document titled "Consent" by EMMANUEL ADEWUNMI. The overall similarity score is 10%. The report displays a list of matches on the right side, including:

Match Number	Source	Similarity Percentage
1	White, - "Drug Use in "... Publication	3%
2	law.harvard.edu Internet source	1%
3	www.sabp.nhs.uk Internet source	1%
4	www.patient.co.uk Internet source	1%
5	www.rcpe.ac.uk Internet source	1%
6	Moreton, K. L.. "GILLJ... Publication	1%
7	www.law.wits.ac.za Internet source	1%
8	www.mblseminars.com Internet source	1%
9	www.oilir.it Internet source	1%

The main text of the document is visible on the left, showing a section on "Consent" with a highlighted sentence: "The mental Capacity act 2005 (Amended by the mental health act in 2007) entails the framework that provides protection for people who cannot make certain decisions for themselves. It contains tools for assessing whether people have the mental capability to make rational decisions, and procedures for making decisions on behalf of people".

Bibliographic and Quoted materials

A bibliography will also generate multiple smaller matches within the report. There is scope to exclude the bibliographic materials from the similarity index to reduce the similarity score however, it is advisable to retain quoted materials. Although quotes may be cited and referenced correctly, over reliance on quoted material indicates a style that is overly derivative and assignment feedback should identify this as a concern.

Inclusion of coversheets

If a student submits a piece of coursework that includes an assignment coversheet then the wording/format will match all other Turnitin submissions that include this content, thus boosting the similarity score. If students are required to submit a coversheet then this should be attached as a separate file.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrased text from a source will still be highlighted within the report, even though some of the wording/structure of the original has been changed. If the source has been cited, it remains the academic judgment of the tutor to decide if the text has been suitably paraphrased or whether it is too derivative. If the source material has not been cited then this would be identified as plagiarised content.

Appendices

Appendices are likely to contain common materials and sources that have been included across multiple student submissions. Appendices should be discounted from the final similarity score.

Gathering further evidence

In addition to the Turnitin similarity report, a reviewer should consult with different members of staff i.e. other module coordinators who will have access to a student's previous work for comparison. The reviewer may then be able to gauge the style of writing/quality of work to check for any inconsistencies.

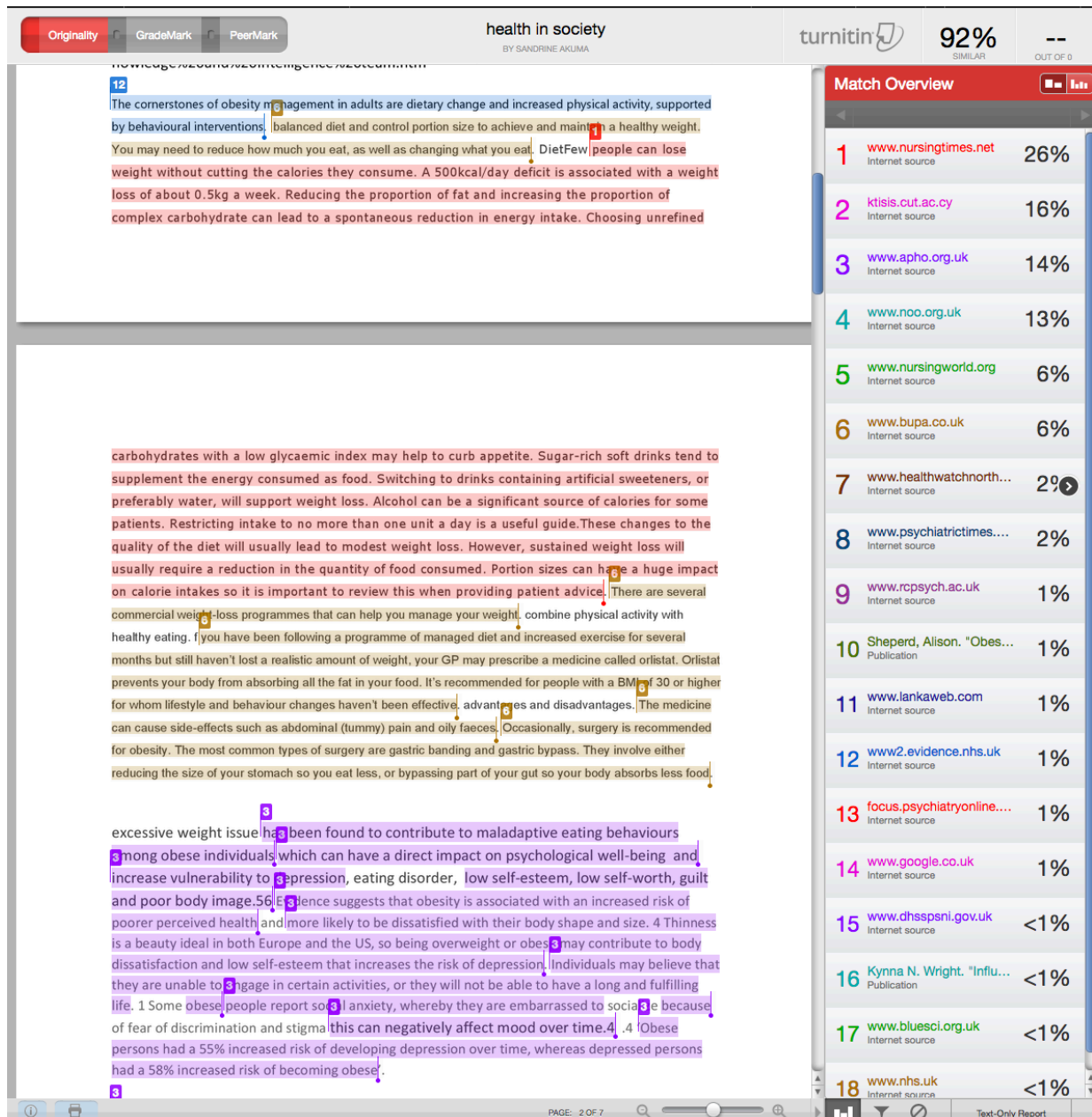
If plagiarism is suspected following this initial investigation, the student may be invited to a meeting with the marker (and colleague) to discuss the work. The matter should be approached delicately with no accusations at this stage. A record of this meeting must be kept.

Any subsequent allegations should be made on the balance of probabilities. Academic judgment should be exercised to determine whether a student made a deliberate attempt to deceive in order to gain an unfair advantage, or whether the student made some attempt to reference source material, and derivative content is attributed to poor academic writing and referencing skills.

Where plagiarism is still suspected but not admitted after interview, it may be necessary to hold a viva to test the student's actual knowledge and understanding on the topic. Staff may choose to wait until a later stage in the assessment process when the student's overall profile becomes clearer. For longer pieces of work, such as dissertations, the external examiner may be consulted if internal staff are unable to prove plagiarism.

Examples of Turnitin Reports:

Example 1. A clear case of material copied word for word from multiple sources (even if 1% and 2% matches are subsequently excluded).



health in society
BY SANDRINE AKUMA

turnitin 92% SIMILAR OUT OF 0

Match Overview

Rank	Source	Similarity
1	www.nursingtimes.net Internet source	26%
2	ktisis.cut.ac.cy Internet source	16%
3	www.apho.org.uk Internet source	14%
4	www.noo.org.uk Internet source	13%
5	www.nursingworld.org Internet source	6%
6	www.bupa.co.uk Internet source	6%
7	www.healthwatchnorth... Internet source	2%
8	www.psychiatrictimes... Internet source	2%
9	www.rpsych.ac.uk Internet source	1%
10	Sheper, Alison. "Obes... Publication	1%
11	www.lankaweb.com Internet source	1%
12	www2.evidence.nhs.uk Internet source	1%
13	focus.psychiatryonline... Internet source	1%
14	www.google.co.uk Internet source	1%
15	www.dhsspsni.gov.uk Internet source	<1%
16	Kynna N. Wright. "Influ... Publication	<1%
17	www.bluesci.org.uk Internet source	<1%
18	www.nhs.uk Internet source	<1%

12 The cornerstones of obesity management in adults are dietary change and increased physical activity, supported by behavioural interventions, balanced diet and control portion size to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. You may need to reduce how much you eat, as well as changing what you eat. Diet Few people can lose weight without cutting the calories they consume. A 500kcal/day deficit is associated with a weight loss of about 0.5kg a week. Reducing the proportion of fat and increasing the proportion of complex carbohydrate can lead to a spontaneous reduction in energy intake. Choosing unrefined

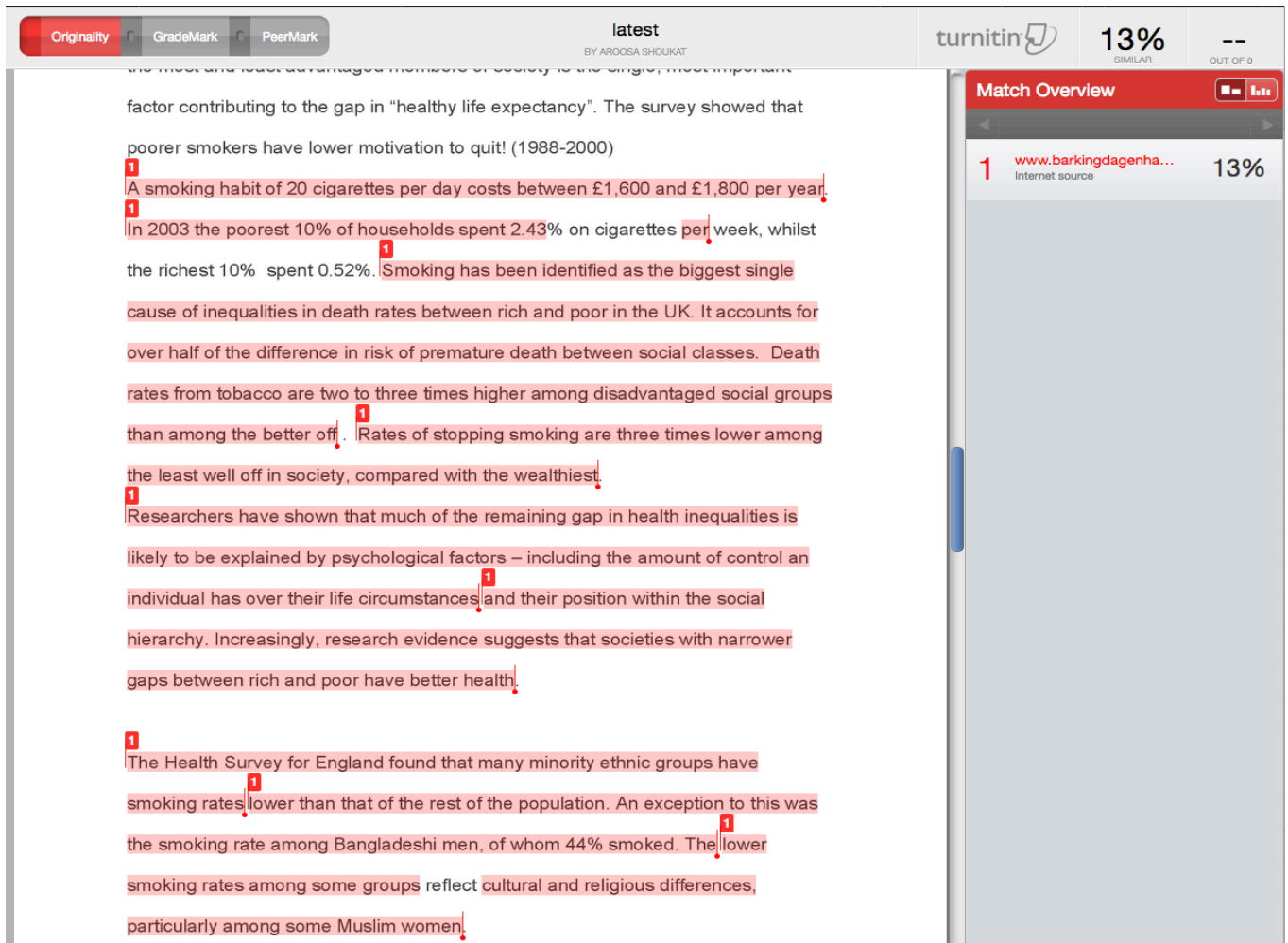
carbohydrates with a low glycaemic index may help to curb appetite. Sugar-rich soft drinks tend to supplement the energy consumed as food. Switching to drinks containing artificial sweeteners, or preferably water, will support weight loss. Alcohol can be a significant source of calories for some patients. Restricting intake to no more than one unit a day is a useful guide. These changes to the quality of the diet will usually lead to modest weight loss. However, sustained weight loss will usually require a reduction in the quantity of food consumed. Portion sizes can have a huge impact on calorie intakes so it is important to review this when providing patient advice. There are several commercial weight loss programmes that can help you manage your weight, combine physical activity with healthy eating. If you have been following a programme of managed diet and increased exercise for several months but still haven't lost a realistic amount of weight, your GP may prescribe a medicine called orlistat. Orlistat prevents your body from absorbing all the fat in your food. It's recommended for people with a BMI of 30 or higher for whom lifestyle and behaviour changes haven't been effective, advantages and disadvantages. The medicine can cause side-effects such as abdominal (tummy) pain and oily faeces. Occasionally, surgery is recommended for obesity. The most common types of surgery are gastric banding and gastric bypass. They involve either reducing the size of your stomach so you eat less, or bypassing part of your gut so your body absorbs less food.

excessive weight issue has been found to contribute to maladaptive eating behaviours among obese individuals which can have a direct impact on psychological well-being and increase vulnerability to depression, eating disorder, low self-esteem, low self-worth, guilt and poor body image. Hence suggests that obesity is associated with an increased risk of poorer perceived health and more likely to be dissatisfied with their body shape and size. Thinness is a beauty ideal in both Europe and the US, so being overweight or obese may contribute to body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem that increases the risk of depression. Individuals may believe that they are unable to engage in certain activities, or they will not be able to have a long and fulfilling life. Some obese people report social anxiety, whereby they are embarrassed to socialise because of fear of discrimination and stigma this can negatively affect mood over time. Obese persons had a 55% increased risk of developing depression over time, whereas depressed persons had a 58% increased risk of becoming obese.

PAGE: 2 OF 7

Text-Only Report

Example 2. A fairly low similarity score of 13% derived from 1 source but a clear indication of (continuous) plagiarised content.



The screenshot displays a Turnitin plagiarism report for a document titled "latest" by AROOSA SHOUKAT. The report shows a similarity score of 13% (SIMILAR) out of 0 (OUT OF 0). The document text is highlighted in red, indicating plagiarised content. The match overview panel on the right shows a single match from "www.barkingdagenha..." (Internet source) with a 13% similarity score.

Originality GradeMark PeerMark

latest
BY AROOSA SHOUKAT

turnitin 13%
SIMILAR OUT OF 0

Match Overview

1 www.barkingdagenha... 13%
Internet source

the most and most disadvantaged members of society to the single, most important factor contributing to the gap in "healthy life expectancy". The survey showed that poorer smokers have lower motivation to quit! (1988-2000)

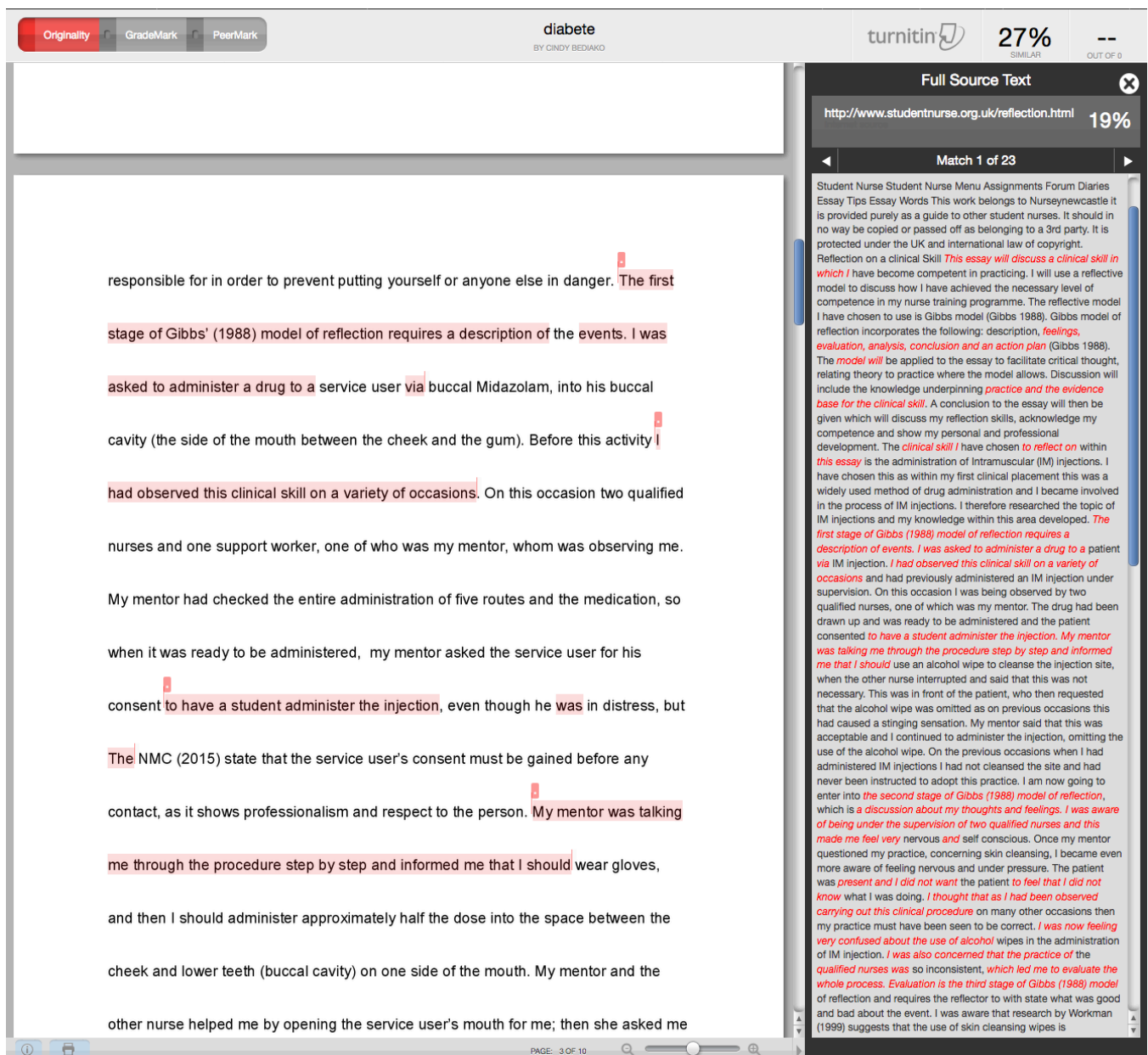
A smoking habit of 20 cigarettes per day costs between £1,600 and £1,800 per year.

In 2003 the poorest 10% of households spent 2.43% on cigarettes per week, whilst the richest 10% spent 0.52%. Smoking has been identified as the biggest single cause of inequalities in death rates between rich and poor in the UK. It accounts for over half of the difference in risk of premature death between social classes. Death rates from tobacco are two to three times higher among disadvantaged social groups than among the better off. Rates of stopping smoking are three times lower among the least well off in society, compared with the wealthiest.

Researchers have shown that much of the remaining gap in health inequalities is likely to be explained by psychological factors – including the amount of control an individual has over their life circumstances and their position within the social hierarchy. Increasingly, research evidence suggests that societies with narrower gaps between rich and poor have better health.

The Health Survey for England found that many minority ethnic groups have smoking rates lower than that of the rest of the population. An exception to this was the smoking rate among Bangladeshi men, of whom 44% smoked. The lower smoking rates among some groups reflect cultural and religious differences, particularly among some Muslim women.

Example 3. A more challenging example where the script requires closer scrutiny. A relatively high overall score of 27% with 19% derived from 1 source although matches are scattered across the text. Matches may be viewed as coincidental and due to commonly used words but the structure of the assignment (using reflection in this case) is taken from an article from Student Nurse and so the student may be overly dependent on this source material.



The screenshot displays a Turnitin interface for a document titled "diabete" by Cindy Bediako. The overall similarity score is 27%, with a 19% match from a source titled "http://www.studentnurse.org.uk/reflection.html".

Match 1 of 23:

Student Nurse Student Nurse Menu Assignments Forum Diaries Essay Tips Essay Words This work belongs to Nurseynewcastle It is provided purely as a guide to other student nurses. It should in no way be copied or passed off as belonging to a 3rd party. It is protected under the UK and international law of copyright.

Reflection on a clinical Skill *This essay will discuss a clinical skill in which I have become competent in practicing. I will use a reflective model to discuss how I have achieved the necessary level of competence in my nurse training programme. The reflective model I have chosen to use is Gibbs model (Gibbs 1988). Gibbs model of reflection incorporates the following: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and an action plan (Gibbs 1988). The model will be applied to the essay to facilitate critical thought, relating theory to practice where the model allows. Discussion will include the knowledge underpinning practice and the evidence base for the clinical skill. A conclusion to the essay will then be given which will discuss my reflection skills, acknowledge my competence and show my personal and professional development. The clinical skill I have chosen to reflect on within this essay is the administration of Intramuscular (IM) injections. I have chosen this as within my first clinical placement this was a widely used method of drug administration and I became involved in the process of IM injections. I therefore researched the topic of IM injections and my knowledge within this area developed. The first stage of Gibbs (1988) model of reflection requires a description of events. I was asked to administer a drug to a patient via IM injection. I had observed this clinical skill on a variety of occasions and had previously administered an IM injection under supervision. On this occasion I was being observed by two qualified nurses, one of which was my mentor. The drug had been drawn up and was ready to be administered and the patient consented to have a student administer the injection. My mentor was talking me through the procedure step by step and informed me that I should use an alcohol wipe to cleanse the injection site, when the other nurse interrupted and said that this was not necessary. This was in front of the patient, who then requested that the alcohol wipe was omitted as on previous occasions this had caused a stinging sensation. My mentor said that this was acceptable and I continued to administer the injection, omitting the use of the alcohol wipe. On the previous occasions when I had administered IM injections I had not cleansed the site and had never been instructed to adopt this practice. I am now going to enter into the second stage of Gibbs (1988) model of reflection, which is a discussion about my thoughts and feelings. I was aware of being under the supervision of two qualified nurses and this made me feel very nervous and self-conscious. Once my mentor questioned my practice, concerning skin cleansing, I became even more aware of feeling nervous and under pressure. The patient was present and I did not want the patient to feel that I did not know what I was doing. I thought that as I had been observed carrying out this clinical procedure on many other occasions then my practice must have been seen to be correct. I was now feeling very confused about the use of alcohol wipes in the administration of IM injection. I was also concerned that the practice of the qualified nurses was so inconsistent, which led me to evaluate the whole process. Evaluation is the third stage of Gibbs (1988) model of reflection and requires the reflector to with state what was good and bad about the event. I was aware that research by Workman (1999) suggests that the use of skin cleansing wipes is*

The student's reflection text in the main window includes the following highlighted segments:

- responsible for in order to prevent putting yourself or anyone else in danger. The first
- stage of Gibbs' (1988) model of reflection requires a description of the events. I was
- asked to administer a drug to a service user via buccal Midazolam, into his buccal
- cavity (the side of the mouth between the cheek and the gum). Before this activity I
- had observed this clinical skill on a variety of occasions. On this occasion two qualified
- nurses and one support worker, one of who was my mentor, whom was observing me.
- My mentor had checked the entire administration of five routes and the medication, so
- when it was ready to be administered, my mentor asked the service user for his
- consent to have a student administer the injection, even though he was in distress, but
- The NMC (2015) state that the service user's consent must be gained before any
- contact, as it shows professionalism and respect to the person. My mentor was talking
- me through the procedure step by step and informed me that I should wear gloves,
- and then I should administer approximately half the dose into the space between the
- cheek and lower teeth (buccal cavity) on one side of the mouth. My mentor and the
- other nurse helped me by opening the service user's mouth for me; then she asked me

Risk factors for cheating and plagiarism

Ideally, course teams would wish to prevent plagiarism from occurring in the first instance and would wish to instil academic integrity from the outset. Considerations should be given to the student experience and the various factors that can lead a student into the temptation of cheating. For example:

Factors that increase the risk of plagiarism	Mitigation methods
Students not knowing how to reference/cite correctly	Clear signposting to study skills support at pre-induction, induction, within handbooks, module activities, workshops and tutorials
Previous approaches to learning include rote learning so confusion about what practice is legitimate or not within assessments.	Consider student transition to HE and establish expectations for learning/study within marketing material and pre-induction activities. Explain and signpost to the plagiarism policy and include learning activities to provide examples of cheating/plagiarism.
Lacking confidence in their abilities and feeling they cannot improve the original source material	Provide formative, low-stakes learning activities with opportunities for feedback. Provide clear assessment briefs and marking criteria. Avoid assessments that invite overly descriptive text.
External pressures and fear of failure	Formative study skills/academic writing opportunities embedded within curriculum. Promote time management and organisational skills within pre-induction/induction activities.
Poor organisational and time management skills	Promote time management and organisational skills within pre-induction/induction activities. Review assessment schedules within the course to avoid pressure-points
Convenience – targeted by essay mills/marketing etc.,	Warn students about the risk of being targeted and the associated penalties. Turnitin may still detect outputs from Essay mills. Additionally, warn students about the risks of blackmail where the company may extort further payments from students. Personal data may also be stored online with little or no security, leaving students vulnerable to identity theft and bank fraud
Students not aware of the impact that cheating can have on their learning experience	Remind students about the impacts of cheating i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Integrity undermined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheating devalues the work of other students A missed learning opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced knowledge and skills • Under-prepared for the workplace • Undermines the value of the programme award and the University Potential Penalties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reprimand and warning on student file

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced assessment mark, capped mark or a zero mark which may impact progression and classification • Suspension or expulsion
English Language proficiency	With regards to international students, consider opportunities to signpost to CELT support. Provide students with local experiences to help immerse them in local culture and language. Consider mentorship opportunities.
Laziness/apathy	Encourage motivational skills e.g. goal-setting, inspirational case studies from alumni. Offer opportunities to develop organisational and time management skills. Include self-assessment opportunities within the curriculum to allow students to reflect on personal development.

Designing Plagiarism out of Assessment – a few tips

- Avoid the verbs *explain* or *describe* within an assessment task (and associated learning outcomes), especially if the available subject sources are finite. For example, if you invite students to describe some form of anatomy within an essay, then textbooks will provide a succinct, accurate description that would be difficult to re-phrase which would lead to highly declarative essays. A class test might be a better assessment option in this context. So consider alternative active verbs such as *justify*, *create*, *interpret*, *analyse*, *invent*, *revise* etc. which promotes deeper learning and a more personalised approach to the assessment task.
- Ensure students are clear about the assessment criteria. Provide clear assessment briefs in written/visual form as well as providing in-class/real-time briefing sessions. Assessment Q&A sessions e.g. via BBL can also be useful. Provide bespoke assessment rubrics that help to clarify performance. Include formative activities to allow students to apply the rubric to a self/peer assessment activity.
- Ask for drafts/plans to be submitted at an interim point. This provides opportunities for formative feedback. This may be via self-assessment, peer assessment or tutor-feedback, but formative opportunities allow students to stay on track. Additionally, if tutors have access to draft work, they can gauge a student's writing style which can then be used to compare against a final submission if necessary, if plagiarism or collusion is suspected.
- Individualise assessments – ask for personal examples and reflective accounts or learning logs/diaries which will be harder for essay mills to generate.
- Provide ways to mark the process of the assessment, not just the final product. A final product can be bought or copied but it is more challenging to copy staged assessments and personalised/reflective portfolios.
- Where appropriate, include annotated bibliographies so that the student is justifying their choice of referenced source material.
- Mix up your mode of assessment from year to year e.g. poster presentation one year, infographics the next (the assessment method is the same but the mode of delivery is

different), and change the theme/topic of the assessment. This prevents students from previous years from sharing their work.

Considerations for tutors on managing discussions and further actions

Potential Scenarios of academic misconduct:

Scenario 1

Turnitin identifies a raised similarity score (10%+) with this content largely copied from existing sources but the student paper cites and lists resources within a reference list.

Response

1st attempt, 10-15% Turnitin similarity score – determine weight of evidence e.g. similarity score. A lower score of <15% but with appropriate citations reveals a low level of intent and poor/unconfident academic writing. Paper will have a reduction in marks in accordance with the weighting of the relevant rubric criterion (referencing or structure/presentation criteria typically weighted at 10% of paper). Assignment feedback must flag the issue. Student should be directed to the Academic Misconduct tutorial and any appropriate academic support for further guidance. Learning agreement signed to ensure student explores sources of support. Subsequent offences and/or higher levels of plagiarism (16%+) – see Framework of academic misconduct procedures

Scenario 2

Turnitin identifies raised similarity score (10%+) with content largely copied from existing sources. No in-text citation but (relevant) bibliography included.

Response

1st attempt, 10-15% Turnitin similarity score - as per response above. Submission suggests poor academic writing style and low intent to deceive as an appropriate reference list was included. Subsequent offences and/or higher levels of plagiarism (16%+) – see Framework of academic misconduct procedures

Scenario 3

Turnitin identifies raised similarity score (10%+) with content largely copied from existing sources. In-text citations included but no bibliography included. (unlikely scenario?)

Response

1st attempt, 10-15% Turnitin similarity score –as per response above. Submission suggests poor academic writing style and *potentially* a low intent to deceive as in-text citations were included. However, tutors would have to explore the citations to try to identify the actual source material to check the validity of these sources. This may be difficult to achieve and there may be a risk of fabricated citations in this context. A missing reference list could simply be an oversight. A request for the student to submit the appropriate reference list would be required as proof. Subsequent offences and/or higher levels of plagiarism (16%+) – see Framework of academic misconduct procedures

Scenario 4

Student submission was mistakenly submitted in the draft format where citations/references had not been completed.

Response

Provide a small window for resubmission but the student should be made aware of the penalties associated with late submission of work. It is the responsibility of students to manage their time and

workload appropriately to ensure that final drafts are complete and submitted. Guidance on sources of academic support (e.g. time management) may be offered.

Scenario 5

Turnitin identifies a raised similarity score (10%+) with content largely copied from existing sources. In-text citations and or reference list do not align with assignment content i.e. fabricated references.

Response

This suggests a raised level of intent to deceive however, check that the submitted draft is the appropriate submission as an incorrect reference list *could* be an oversight. Request for the student to submit their final draft with an appropriate reference list (penalty for late submission of work applied). This submission should be within a short space of time to reduce the suspicion of content being fabricated/plagiarised. Incorrect in-text citations would be harder to defend than an incorrect/mis-matched reference list. The student should be asked to produce the relevant source material associated with the in-text citations. The tutor can then check the validity of this material. If this evidence is not forthcoming or if the source material does not align with the assignment topic in any way then follow 'moderate plagiarism' on the framework.

Scenario 6

Turnitin does not reveal a high similarity index but the student paper (or elements of the paper e.g. graphs/tables/data) does not really relate to the module assignment brief.

Response

Liaise with members of the course team to determine whether the submission matches a previous submission from that student (as evidence of either self-plagiarism or just a submission mistake). Discussions with the student would be required to allow them to explain the structure and content of the submission and to defend its alignment with the assessment brief. Turnitin may reveal tables/data that are copied from published sources and could reveal evidence of fabrication. In this instance, follow the 'moderate' level of concern for 'cheating offences other than plagiarism' in the Framework.

Scenario 7

Student paper is essentially sound in terms of e.g. quality of discussion but phrasing/terminology and spelling is e.g. American when student is e.g. British (*perhaps more difficult to quantify due to spell checking systems used in Word and the default dictionary used, whether English or American*).

Response

Submit paper through Turnitin to gather evidence of matched content. Consult with MCs on the programme to review the student's writing style in previous submissions. Follow the framework in accordance with weight of evidence.

Scenario 8

Student admits to paper being co-written with relative/friend.

Response

Follow guidance for 'Moderate' cheating offences other than plagiarism on the framework

Scenario 9

Turnitin identifies a high similarity score with strong evidence of plagiarism but the student's defence is that the module was level 3 / 4 or compensatable and does not contribute to the overall degree classification (so student doesn't see the problem).

Response

This isn't a sound defence. Student penalties will be aligned with the level of plagiarism. If the assignment does not contribute to the student's degree classification then the penalty (e.g. capped mark) may not impact on the student much. However, the academic misconduct process should log the number of plagiarism attempts over the student lifecycle, and all occurrences should be treated with equal levels of scrutiny. The student must be reminded of their commitment to produce their own work during all assessments.

Scenario 10

Changes in writing style within the paper with sections that are informal/clumsy/unacademic then sections that are very sophisticated/scientific/academic in style.

Response

Submit paper through Turnitin to gather evidence of matched content. Follow the framework in accordance with weight of evidence.

Scenario 11

During discussions between tutors about the excellent quality of a piece of student work it is revealed that the same paper was submitted in both modules

Response

This is evidence of self-plagiarism. Due to the replication of student work across 2 modules, there had been no additional work effort (or learning) associated with the second submission therefore advice is to move to 'moderate, 2nd offence' response on framework as this indicates coursework component is fail with 0 mark.

This scenario should be a prompt for the course team to review assignment briefs to ensure that student work cannot be replicated across two or more modules. *(there may be a need to provide extra clarity on this one due to the nature of some courses e.g. at Doctoral level where the student is required to build on their previous work).*

Scenario 12

High evidence of plagiarism but the student asserts that the assignment brief was not clear enough and they didn't really understand what was expected from them.

Or

Student asserts that the course assessment schedule and workload was untenable and plagiarism/collusion/contract cheating was the only option for them.

Response

These are not really valid defences as a programme should offer assignment briefs and briefing sessions, rubrics, induction sessions to signpost to academic support, and tutorials. These opportunities should be highlighted to students and the student has a responsibility to seek advice as and when appropriate. However, this is an opportunity for the course team to review the nature of assignment briefs/rubrics to ensure clarity, and to review assessment schedules and assessment methods to guard against pressure points and overload during the academic year.

Module/programme feedback and SSCC comments may help to confirm or gauge the extent of this issue.

Follow the framework in accordance with weight of evidence.

Scenario 13

High evidence of plagiarism but socio-economic issues (e.g. bereavement, financial issues, visa issues etc.) means the risk of penalty impacting the health and wellbeing of the student is increased.

Response

This should not influence the process as it is the responsibility of the student to manage their time and workload accordingly. The course team is responsible for highlighting and signposting to sources of support and/or LoA opportunities throughout the student lifecycle. Study advisors/course team/mentors should be made aware of 'at risk' students to ensure support mechanisms are in place.

Scenario 14

The student did not knowingly plagiarise as he had borrowed the paper from his friend on the course who 'must have plagiarised so it is their fault and they should be in the meeting too'.

Response

This is an example of collusion which in itself is an example of misconduct. Follow the 'moderate' level of concern for 'cheating offences other than plagiarism' in the Framework.

Scenario 15

Student submits a sound piece of written work but the module assignment strategy includes an oral defence. The student's oral defence/knowledge of the content is evidently weak.

Response

The oral defence/examination can be an effective assessment method that allows the student to explain and expand upon a piece of submitted work by responding to questions. The method requires the student to reflect on their work, recall key facts and discussion points, and to defend the overall content including the format/design and research decisions they have made. Consequently, this assessment method can help the assessor to distinguish between superficial learning and deeper learning.

In some instances, there may be significant disparity between the submitted work and the student performance during the oral defence which raises suspicions about authorship (although 'stage fright' must be taken into consideration). Oral questioning will allow the assessor to evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding about the submission itself, its context within the wider subject area plus the associated planning, background reading, research and data collection that informed the piece of work. The assessor must decide whether, on the balance of probabilities, the student is the author of the work that they have submitted. If the assessors remain doubtful about the authorship of the student work, the case should be raised with the External Examiner for review and then forwarded to the Academic Misconduct Panel for further scrutiny.

Note: If an oral defence is not part of an assessment strategy but if the authorship of student submitted work is held in question, the submission may be compared with the student's previous assignments to compare writing style i.e. sentence construction, use of language, grammar and spelling, and also referencing methods. Where there is significant disparity, a viva may be held to explore the originality of the work using the discussion methods outlined above. Again, if the assessors remain doubtful about the authorship of the student work, the case should be raised with the External Examiner for review and then forwarded to the Academic Misconduct Panel for further scrutiny.

