As a member of the University of Michigan's academic community, you will likely have to prepare and complete a project of some form during your time here. While projects can come in a variety of formats, like an essay or a take-home exam, it's likely that the assignment will require you to utilize knowledge that isn't your own.

Referencing others' ideas or concepts you've learned in class to complete your project is perfectly acceptable, provided you include proper acknowledgement or a citation to the original source.

If you don't provide acknowledgement of someone else's work, whether knowingly or unknowingly, you are presenting someone else's ideas, words, or statements as your own. That's plagiarism and it's considered a violation of academic integrity.

Let's look at the following plagiarism cases presented to the Office of Student Academic Affairs to get a better understanding of what constitutes academic dishonesty:

Example #1

In a Communication and Media course a student is asked to complete a persuasive campaign. As part of the assignment the student needs to complete a literature review on the strategies of persuasion. Once completed they will then create a campaign using a media form of their choice (e.g. Powerpoint, YouTube, Podcast) and write a memo detailing which strategies they chose to utilize and why.

For their part, the student creates a powerpoint detailing how a major clothing brand is partnering with a smaller company that they really like. They provide the necessary descriptive information about each of the company's backgrounds, detail why the partnership will be successful for both companies, and utilize several persuasive strategies learned in class to further generate interest in the partnership.

By the time the student is close to finishing the assignment, it's getting late and the assignment is due in approximately 10 minutes at 11:59PM. They don't have time to review their work before submission, but it is completed. They turn it in at approximately 11:57PM with a couple minutes to spare.

A week later, when reviewing the assignment, the instructor noticed that both the student's memo and powerpoint included several paragraphs that were copied directly from an article found online. In addition, the instructor also noted that the student did not reference the article in either the memo or the powerpoint text or include a reference page. The instructor suspects that this is plagiarism and forwards the case to the Office of Student Academic Affairs.

While meeting with the Office of Student Academic Affairs the student indicates that they forgot to provide attribution to the original source and accepts responsibility.

What could the student have done differently?

1. Start Early: In this instance procrastinating until the last minute was a significant factor in the student's situation. Beginning earlier, would have allowed the student enough time to review the assignment and ensure that they properly cited the source they inadvertently plagiarized.
2. Proper Note-Taking: While completing the literature review, the student could have taken notes more carefully by highlighting which parts were direct quotes. This would make it easier to incorporate the information and ensure proper attribution.
3. Time Management: managing time effectively and setting deadlines is important. Ensuring you have enough time to review your finished product is beneficial.
4. Seek Help: If you're struggling with an assignment or in a time crunch, reach out to your instructor for support or even an extension. Instructors are people too. They appreciate proactive communication from students facing challenges.

Example #2

A student is assigned a short paper in her philosophy course, which requires her to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using AI in the creative industry. The student has a fairly good grasp of the pros and cons, but doesn't feel confident in her understanding of the course readings as it relates to them.

Although she has a good number of sources to draw on from course readings, she instead chose to find information from outside sources since her instructor indicated this was okay. The student finds a source that clearly outlines the advantages and disadvantages of AI, but still struggles to break down the concepts they discuss.

While writing the assignment, the student finds herself relying heavily on the material in the article she found to help with her analysis of the pros and cons. She doesn't directly quote the source, but her sentence structure and the concepts she discusses mirror the original article. Since she doesn't directly quote the articles, the student doesn't include any citations.

Later, while reviewing the short paper the instructor recognizes an article they'd previously read in preparation for teaching the course. After pulling it up, they start to notice several similarities in the article and the student's short paper. The instructor suspects that this student has paraphrased and forwards the case to the Office of Student Academic Affairs.

In their meeting with the Office of Student Academic Affairs, the student discusses that they weren't aware that paraphrasing was a form of plagiarism. The student and Coordinator discuss what constitutes paraphrasing and additional resources on campus that could help the student avoid this in the future.

What could the student have done differently?

1. Ask Questions! The student indicated that they were struggling with the concepts as they were outlined in the course. Speaking with the instructor either during office hours or asking questions during class would help them better understand the material.
2. Cite Sources! When using external sources, even if not using direct quotes, it's important to properly cite sources. When in doubt, cite!
3. Consult campus resources: recognize that there are resources like the Sweetland Writing Center that are available on campus to assist you. These resources can help you recognize when it's appropriate to cite and how to go about doing so.

Example #3

A student is participating in an American Culture course focused on Superheroes and Comic Culture. For the final project, students are required to submit either a paper, presentation, or podcast that focuses on the cultural impact that these characters can have on Americans. The student chooses to focus on several characters from the Marvel cinematic universe and write a paper on it.

When reviewing the assignment, the instructor is initially impressed by the student's use of source material in crafting his argument, but also slightly confused because there are inconsistent citations. The instructor uses several search engines to find the sources the student referenced in their paper, but is unable to find any of them.

As the instructor's concerns grew, they ran the paper through several artificial intelligence (AI) detection tools which indicated that substantial portions of the project were written using AI. This prompted the instructor to reach out to the student and have a conversation about their concerns.

During their meeting, the student indicated that he had used chatGPT while completing the assignment because he was pressed for time while preparing for other final projects and exams. He accepted the grade sanction imposed by the instructor and a record was submitted to the Office of Student Academic Affairs.

What could the student have done differently?

1. Time Management: The student indicated that he had several projects and exams, but struggled to effectively complete all of the assignments. As a result, the student resorted to AI-generated content. Planning out assignments and study schedules can ensure that you have enough time to complete these tasks.
2. Communicate! The student could have reached out to the instructor to discuss his level of stress as it related to all the academic work that needed to be completed. If you're struggling with an assignment or in a time crunch, reach out to your instructor for support or even an extension.
3. Recognize that an overreliance on AI-generated content hinders your ability to think critically, analyze information, and develop your own ideas. By relying on AI-generated content it means you aren't learning or engaging with the material, but instead just

regurgitating information. Real integrity means obtaining the knowledge and producing original work to reach your maximum academic potential.