Suggestions for Deterring Plagiarism

- Avoid making open-ended research assignments; instead, require students to relate research to readings or topics under discussion in class (see example).
- Make new assignments or significantly revise assignments each semester.
- Monitor students’ writing progress, if you can make the time to do so. Any of the following strategies will remind them that you consider the writing assignment to be important and expect them to take some time with it:
  - Ask students to submit their topics ahead of time (and you may want to mention that last-minute topic changes are often signals that a student is not doing original work).
  - Ask for a preliminary list of sources.
  - Ask for a tentative outline or abstract.
  - Review the introduction.
  - If you are willing to take the time for brief conferences or reading rough drafts a couple weeks before the due date, you will most likely feel better about the finished products. (Tell students that their citations and bibliographies are part of the draft.)
  - Allow class time for peer response or peer editing.

Checking Papers for Plagiarism

- Familiarity with students’ writing styles can be useful in alerting you to plagiarism. Keeping a writing sample from each student on file throughout the semester may prove helpful if you suspect plagiarism.
- Allow time for spot-checking use of sources.
- Use a search engine to check for any phrasing that sounds more sophisticated than you expect from the student writer.
- Warn students ahead of time that incomplete bibliographical information is grounds for failure or refuse to read any paper handed in without a reasonably accurately formatted bibliography. Check the bibliography first and try Web addresses or look for an article in a subscription database.
- Check some cited information for accuracy of attribution or thoroughness of paraphrase.
- Use a plagiarism detection program such as Wcopyfind.

Note: Bridgewater College students receive the following kinds of instruction in ethical use of sources in ENG 110: Effective Writing:

- The necessity of citing all sources, including in-text citation (parenthetical; in some sections numbered citations or notes as well), and
- Specifically, the necessity of citing sources for information, whether or not direct quotation is used;
The mechanics of quoting (use of quotation marks or indentation, scrupulous accuracy, bracketing any changes, etc.);
Definitions of “paraphrase” and “summary/summarize” with instructions in how to write each;
Definition of “plagiarism”;
Practice in quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing and citing in, minimally, papers written for class; often with additional practice exercises and examples of ethical paraphrase and/or plagiarism;
Bridgewater College’s plagiarism policy
Instruction in integration of quoted material;
The mechanics of constructing a bibliography in, minimally, MLA and APA formats;
Introduction to critical evaluation of sources.

Instruction in these skills occurs over the course of the semester, but all ENG 101 instructors introduce the topic within the first month of the semester. See relevant Goals and Objectives.

Bridgewater College's Plagiarism Statement is at http://www.bridgewater.edu/WritingCenter/BCplagiarism.htm.

See Writing Center guidelines for quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

Updated by A. L. Trupe August 25, 2010