

Center for Faculty Development presents

FRIDAY FOCUS ON . . .



Friday, November 30, 2007

This week's Friday Focus on Teaching is short but critical for your students. Do your students know the difference between paraphrasing and "patchwriting?" Do they really know what plagiarism looks like?

Here are some helpful sites that provide clear examples of each.

This is our last Friday Focus on Teaching until classes begin in January. Have a restful holiday.

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Paraphrasing or Plagiarism?

As my class was preparing to write papers for other courses last semester, I reviewed APA manuscript style in connection with word processing. As a refresher, I led my students in a discussion about effective use of quotations and contrasting paraphrasing with what some authors term "patchwriting," or pulling significant phrases from another's work and inserting them into students' own sentences. I demonstrated several examples of the differences between the two and walked my students through steps involved in paraphrasing without plagiarizing. We looked at several examples of the sometimes subtle but important differences between plagiarizing and paraphrasing.

During this exercise, I was unprepared for my students' shocked expressions as they realized that what they thought was paraphrasing was actually plagiarism in one of two forms, 1) "patchwriting" and 2) using others' sentence structure but replacing significant words and phrases with synonyms.

The students were surprised at how **easy** it is to plagiarize inadvertently, and how **difficult** it is to paraphrase successfully unless one fully understands the text they are interpreting.

The three sites below have some very good **examples of the differences between paraphrasing and plagiarizing**, as well as **guidelines for effective paraphrasing**. I encourage you to share this information with your students—I did! This would be a great addition to a beginning-of-the-semester lesson in January.

 www.lib.sfu.ca/researchhelp/tutorials/interactive/plagiarism/tutorial/paraphrasingversuspatchwriting.htm

 www.ucmo.edu/PreBuilt/documents/PARAPHRASINGvsPlagiarizinginWesternCulture.pdf

 www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_paraphrase.html

Good teaching,

Sara