Workshop Objectives

- To explore the continuum of writing activities associated with academic integrity
- To investigate approaches to discussing academic integrity with students
- To discuss strategies for teaching source use
- To examine source use as a sophisticated understanding of a rhetorical community’s conventions
- To approach source use as part of the larger instructional topic of identifying support or evidence appropriate for the writer’s purposes and the rhetorical community’s expectations
- To review briefly the Elon Academic Honor Code & Plagiarism Statement and Elon’s Academic Integrity Policy

1. Academic Integrity as a Complex Continuum

        Intentional-----------------------------Unintentional

        Cheating--------------------------------------Learning

Where along these continuums would you classify the following scenarios? How would you deal with the situation? Would you address the situation as an academic integrity violation?

   a. Before you have directly taught strategies for synthesizing, summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources, a student attempts to cite a source but does not adhere to the citation conventions of the rhetorical community for which she is writing.

   b. A student changes some of the words used by a source but retains the source’s sentence structure. She includes a parenthetical citation for the source.

   c. A student submits a paper similar to one you have found online, but the student has changed the paper’s supporting evidence to Elon examples. The student also submitted pre-writing activities related to the topic.

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1 Today’s session has strong connections to the September 8, 2004, English 110 Lunch Session on “Teaching about Plagiarism in Sophisticated, and Ongoing, Ways.” Materials from this previous workshop also are available on our English 110 Resources Blackboard site.
2. Plagiarism in Context: Opportunities for Class Discussion

From *Meeting of Minds* (p. 214): “Plagiarism disrespects the people you are learning from, and it misrepresents your own learning process. It is quite unnecessary: there is no requirement that all the ideas in an academic essay be original. But there is an expectation that a writer will have gone through the mental process of relating and shaping, and contributing to, the ideas of others in a way that composes the writer’s unique ‘sense’ of things.”

See “Plagiarizer, do you have no shame?” handout for ideas for class discussion.

3. Teaching Source Use as a Sophisticated Understanding of Writing Conventions

See Lance Massey’s handouts. From Lance:

- Using sources is not a simple, skills-based activity. It requires a sophisticated understanding of the writing conventions appropriate for the genre, documentation system, and other aspects of rhetorical context.

- Source use begins with strong analytical/reading skills, meaning that “teaching” source use must happen throughout the semester, and that teaching writing always also implies teaching reading.

- The notion of “support” is incredibly complex and it is intertwined with other liberal academic values—especially “originality.” That is, if you say “find sources to support your argument,” students are likely to look for sources that agree with or disagree with them (which means they'll likely only use secondary sources, and in not terribly imaginative ways). But if you explicitly address the different kinds of sources and the different purposes they can serve in a research paper (or any other paper), then students will be better prepared to use sources effectively.

4. Rhetorics as Resources for Teaching Source Use

Rhetorics present discussions of academic integrity and source use in the context of the writing conventions of rhetorical communities. They also combine instruction in source use with direct instruction in other parts of writing processes.

See “Academic Integrity and Using Sources: Examples of How a Rhetoric Can Help” for a sampling of ways that *A Meeting of Minds: A Brief Rhetoric for Writers and Readers* explores source use.

5. Teaching Within the Context of Elon’s Honor Codes and Academic Integrity Policy

See “Elon Academic Honor Code” and materials from Mary Wise.
Making Effective Use of Sources

Common misperceptions about citing sources

- Citing sources effectively is a matter of simply learning a few rules and applying them.
- Citing sources is primarily a mechanical operation, divorced from the deeper rhetorical activity of invention and arrangement of arguments.
- Proper citation of sources can be “taught” once, after which students will never have difficulty again.
- Students who do not cite sources correctly after being taught may be safely assumed to be lazy, dishonest, or unintelligent.

A different view

- Incorporating sources into one’s writing is a deeply complex rhetorical act that, to be done well, requires deep understanding about how particular fields make and represent knowledge.
- Learning to cite sources appropriately is, for most students, tantamount to developing a completely new kind of literacy and, as such, requires extensive teaching, practice, and feedback.
- It is possible, and even likely, that most students will find citing sources in the complex, synthetic ways we would like them to exceedingly difficult and will, therefore, produce writing that “breaks the rules” of source citation.
- Incorporating sources into one’s writing is a deeply complex rhetorical act that, to be done well, requires deep understanding about how particular fields make and represent knowledge.

Implications

- Like other aspects of effective writing instruction, teaching effective source use is largely a matter of making our implicit knowledge of writing and research conventions explicit, and then giving students opportunities to practice under our guidance.
- I find that a great way to begin is by unpacking the term “support” for students: it most decidedly does not mean “find sources that agree with you.” Rather, it means “use sources in conjunction with each other to move a particular academic or civic conversation forward in a specific way.”
- Hence, “support” is actually predicated upon the value of originality, since (in theory) there is no need to reproduce arguments that have already been made. It is, in short, the polar opposite of “find sources that agree with you.”
- I also begin—and now I’m talking about throughout the semester, not just during the “research paper”—by letting students know that argument is not just about polarized issues. I let them know even as early as the second paper that even analyses are arguments (and that source-supported arguments always involve analysis.) I try to prepare them from the beginning, in other words, to treat sources in complex, analytical ways, rather than to plug them into a pre-fab argument as a way to lend authority to the inherently non-authoritative student voice.
- Finally, I offer specific, concrete instruction about the different ways sources can be used (see attached handouts.)
Intro to research:

- What is research?

- Why do it?
  - To answer important and complex questions.

- Does it have to have an argument?
  - Yes.

- Do I have to argue both sides?
  - Yes and no. You should definitely take a side, if your issue has sides, but that does not mean you should not address differing opinions in the process of arguing for yours.

- Research is any attempt to answer a question by consulting sources, as well as the formal argument that often results from it.

- Most often, research will lead to an argument or insight that is new or original, that contributes something to the conversation that wasn’t there before and therefore moves it forward.

- So, research involves not merely assembling sources, but also synthesizing and analyzing them in new, original ways to create new knowledge. In other words, true research does not let the sources speak for the author; it lets the author speak through the sources.

One model of the research process:

- Begin with a question or problem
- Find out as much as you can about the problem by reading about it
  - What have others said
  - What ideas appeal to you
  - What ideas do not appeal to you
  - What can you add to the conversation
- Develop a thesis
- Begin second phase of research that is more focused (b/c you’ve got a thesis)
- Modify thesis as research demands
- Assemble, notate, summarize, and synthesize sources
- Begin formal drafting
- Complete rough draft
- Revise rough draft (as many times as it takes)
- Hand in final draft
Primary Sources:

- You synthesize these by putting them together to make a larger argument
  - Cell phones are dangerous to use when driving
    - Source: popular opinion
    - Source: cartoons say so
    - Source: scientific studies say so
  - Existing legislation does not adequately address the problem
    - Source: evidence of inadequacy of existing state legislation
    - Source: evidence of inadequacy of existing federal legislation
  - **Synthesis:** These two reasons suggest that we need to enact legislation specifically addressing cell-phones and driving

Secondary:

- You synthesize these in different ways:
  - By summarizing different sources to create a complete picture or background for your topic.
  - By articulating relationships between and among sources. These relationships usually take the one of two forms—likeness and contrast. Secondary sources either tend to compliment or contrast each other. The following sample sentences reflect these relationships. The first shows difference, the second shows similarity, and the third shows both difference and similarity:
    - Anderson argues that ultra-low carbohydrate diets are healthy for everyone, from the very thin to the morbidly obese, because they drastically reduce the amount of insulin the body produces (34). However, unlike Korang, Anderson does not take into account that our bodies are supposed to produce insulin; that is what they were designed to do. Korang argues that low-carb diets are unnatural and dangerous, saying that the only good way to lose weight is a sensible, balanced diet combined with regular exercise (97).
    - Trudeau and Simpson both argue that prison reform is necessary because prisoners’ rights are being violated under the current system. Trudeau draws on statistics showing that in every state reports of prisoner mistreatment is on the rise (41), while Simpson’s interview with a former inmate details such atrocities as being denied food and water and being beaten for no reason.
    - While many have argued both in favor of and against the public funding of cloning research (Quigley and Zinn; Jameson; Rodriguez; Matthews; Chin), few have even considered a pragmatic approach, which takes into account that, no matter what we decide, such research will be carried out—either in the U.S. or elsewhere. One exception is Laslo. Laslo compares cloning to illicit drug use, calling for congress to establish oversight now so that it can provide a safe, regulated outlet for this useful but potentially dangerous practice (221).
A thesis statement is a statement of the position you are taking or the argument you are making in your research papers. It should articulate a debatable position, answer a question that has not been answered (or answered sufficiently) before, and be be narrow enough so that you can explore it in seven to ten pages.

How do I know if something is debatable?
Let’s start with what is not debatable. You cannot debate matters of fact (e.g., that North Carolina is a U.S. state), you cannot debate matters of pure opinion (e.g., that red is prettier than green), and you cannot debate the obvious (e.g., that the presidency is an important office in the U.S. government). What is debatable? Arguments that attempt to establish:

· what something is, e.g., pornography;
· what something means, e.g., the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Consitution;
· what something is worth, e.g., the nationalism of the Olympics;
· what its consequences are, e.g., the effect of Nader's candidacy on Kerry’s chances;
· what causes it, e.g., school shootings like the massacre at Columbine High School;
· what should be done about it, e.g., federal deregulation of energy.

Why does my thesis have to be narrow?
Your thesis has to be narrow for two reasons. First, if you want to write a paper detailing the causes of World War II, you are not going to be able to do so in seven to ten pages (maybe you could get that done in one book). Second—and this one seems to go against common sense—as you narrow your thesis, you actually give yourself more to write about. That’s because a narrow thesis has more room for detail than a broad one. A detailed thesis, moreover, will contain at least two, possibly more, parts to it, each of which reflects a section of the paper to come. The examples below will clarify this point.

How will I know when it is narrow enough?
There’s no hard rule for saying when a thesis is narrow enough and when it is too broad (or, for that matter, too narrow), but use the following examples as guides. The following are ideal examples (perhaps even extreme ones), and you may not get your thesis to sound as detailed or complex as these, but use them as a guide.

Example One: Elvis

Bad: Elvis was important to rock n roll history.

Better: Elvis made significant contributions to music history in both the early and late stages of his career.

Best: Elvis made important contributions to rock n roll history in both his early and late periods as an artist and performer. The nature of those contributions in each period, however, was dramatically different, with the first coming primarily in the form of musical innovation, the
second in the form of a new brand of rock idoldom—one centered almost exclusively on a middle-aged audience.

**Example Two: JFK Conspiracy Theories**

*Bad:* There are many conspiracy theories surrounding Kennedy’s assassination.

*Better:* The many conspiracy theories of John F. Kennedy’s assassination are evidence more of Americans’ desire to find meaning in an apparently random world than of any complex plot by Russia, Cuba, or the CIA to kill the leader of the free world.

*Best:* The many conspiracy theories of John F. Kennedy’s assassination are evidence more of Americans’ desire to find meaning in an apparently random world than of any complex plot by Russia, Cuba, or the CIA to kill the leader of the free world. Horrific events like the attacks of September 11, 2001, as well as depressing everyday realities like the ever-increasing gap between the wealthy and the poor in the U.S., make conspiracy theories attractive to many Americans, because such theories provide easily graspable explanations for phenomena whose causes are immeasurably complex.

**Example Three: Alternative Medicine**

*Bad:* Many Americans are turning to alternative methods of healing.

*Better:* Many Americans are turning to alternative methods of healing, because they are unsatisfied with our current health care system.

*Best:* Americans have developed a strong interest in alternative medicine in recent years, because they are increasingly unsatisfied with the state of traditional health care in the U.S. Much of the U.S. population is uninsured or underinsured, HMO’s are difficult at best to work with, and pharmaceuticals are almost criminally expensive. However, rather than turn to alternative healing methods, Americans should develop grassroots political movements designed to improve traditional medical care in the U.S., including securing adequate health care for all U.S. citizens.

**Example Four: Fantasy Novels**

*Bad:* Harry Potter is an innovative book series.

*Better:* The Harry Potter book series expands on the genre of fantasy in important ways.

*Best:* While the fantasy novel has been around at least since J.R.R. Tolkein wrote The Hobbit and the Ring Trilogy, J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter book series modifies the genre in innovative ways. While Rowling preserves the supernatural elements of the genre, her choice to set the action within our already-existing world gives the Harry Potter stories a timeliness and relevance that is often missing in more traditional fantasy novels.
Looking for Sources Exercise

Elvis made important contributions to rock n roll history in both his early and late periods as an artist and performer. The nature of those contributions in each period, however, was dramatically different, with the first coming primarily in the form of musical innovation, the second in the form of a new brand of rock idoldom—one centered almost exclusively on a middle-aged audience.

- What kinds of secondary sources would you look for if this were your thesis? Why?
- What kinds of primary sources? Why?

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In the past year, Americans have discovered that the Bush administration manipulates news media, both by paying national pundits to endorse its pet programs and by creating ultra-conservatively-biased news “reports” and distributing them to television stations for air during news local news programs. While, moreover, every presidential administration in the modern era has produced propaganda, the Bush administration has taken such strategies to unwarranted, dangerous, and perhaps even illegal heights.

- What kinds of secondary sources would you look for if this were your thesis? Why?
- What kinds of primary sources? Why?