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Examples Using the 3-Step Rule

The following examples include writer's attempts that move from unethical to ethical summaries and citations. Study them and the explanations. Then, print them out, cut and mix them up, and see if you can easily see the problem in the unethical ones. Unless otherwise indicated, sample text has been excerpted from this reference: Williams, Bronwyn T. (2008). Trust, betrayal and authorship: Plagiarism and how we perceive students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51:4, Dec.2007/Jan. 2008, p. 350-354.

Original wording as a reference point for examples

As Bronwyn (2008) writes:

“Students who copy papers or passages intentionally certainly mean to deceive. Research at many levels, however, indicates that such copying is more likely to be driven by desperation and a desire for success (or fear of failure) than by a simple desire to cheat. Students in panic should cause us to consider the pressure on them, and we should respond to that pressure by getting them to work with us rather than against us. Instead of beginning with a classroom discussion of plagiarism penalties, we should focus on teaching students how to respond to pressure and how to work with deadlines and the people who set them. In addition, we should teach students that they create identities in everything they write. We need to help them understand the importance of trust in the relationship between the author and the audience. Quite frankly, I think it would be difficult to talk about trust in a convincing way while using a service such as Turnitin” (Bronwyn, 2008, p.353).

Reference: Williams, Bronwyn T. (2008). Trust, betrayal and authorship: Plagiarism and how we perceive students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51:4, Dec.2007/Jan. 2008, p. 350-354.

#1. MISUSE OF SOURCE: EXACT LANGUAGE WITHOUT PARAPHRASE, QUOTES, OR ANY SOURCE CITATION

WRITER'S ATTEMPT: Students in panic should cause us to consider the pressure on them, and we should respond to that pressure by getting them to work with us rather than against us. Instead of beginning with a classroom discussion of plagiarism penalties, we should focus on teaching students how to respond to pressure and how to work with deadlines and the people who set them.

EXPLANATION: The student cuts and pastes an exact passage from the original source into his paper and fails to 1) paraphrase or use quotation marks to set off the passage, or 2) cite

in the author's name and year of publication in the paragraph and 3) cite the source in the references. This violates all three steps in the **3-Step Rule**.

#2. MISUSE OF SOURCE: EXACT LANGUAGE WITHOUT QUOTES

WRITER'S ATTEMPT: Not all students want to cheat. Students in panic should cause us to consider the pressure on them, and we should respond to that pressure by getting them to work with us rather than against us. Instead of beginning with a classroom discussion of plagiarism penalties, we should focus on teaching students how to respond to pressure and how to work with deadlines and the people who set them. (Bronwyn, 2008)

EXPLANATION: The writer correctly cites the original source in parenthesis at the end of the passage (Step 2). But he does not mark original language with quotations or an indented block, and presents this language as if he had written them himself. This violates Step 1 of the 3-Step Rule and is a common way to plagiarize.

#3. MISUSE OF SOURCE: SYNONYM SUBSTITUTION OF SAME TEXT

WRITER'S ATTEMPT: Some students who take passages from articles intend to deceive, but research shows that this can be motivated by their desperate desire to succeed. They fear failure, and do not necessarily want to cheat. Stressed out students should cause professors to think about how much pressure they put on students, and how important it is to gain their cooperation (Williams, 2008). Rather than starting the conversation about plagiarism by stressing the penalties, instructors should focus on helping students deal with pressure and deadlines and their professors. Also, students should be taught that they should take pride in their identity as an author and engender trust in their audience, although this might be difficult if Turnitin is the service being used.

EXPLANATION: The writer cites the source in the paragraph, but uses the Synonym-Substitution approach to paraphrasing. It's quick, but risky. He could accidentally plagiarize by preserving the overall integrity of the paragraph and the sentences, which belong to the original author. Equally bad is the fact that the writer might not fully understand the material – and won't be able to answer questions about it during the defense of a paper, professional discussions, etc. This method cheats his own brain of the knowledge he seeks to learn. This text violates the spirit of Step 1 and still lacks Step 3.

#4. PROPER USE OF SOURCE, BUT OVERUSE OF QUOTES, INCOMPLETE CITATION

WRITER'S ATTEMPT: "Students who copy papers or passages intentionally certainly mean to deceive. Research at many levels, however, indicates that such copying is more likely to be driven by desperation and a desire for success (or fear of failure) than by a simple desire to cheat. Students in panic should cause us to consider the pressure on them, and we should respond to that pressure by getting them to work with us rather than against us." (Williams, 2008).

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EXPLANATION: This text is clearly marked (Step 1) and referenced (Step 3), but it might not be acceptable to a professor in certain disciplines. That's because it's OK to use exact quotes in the humanities and social sciences, such as education, political science, and law. But most math and lab science fields – lab sciences, math, engineering and technology – frown on the use of exact quotations and insist on paraphrasing. Also, there is no page number in the citation.

#5. ACCURATE AND ETHICAL PARAPHRASE

WRITER'S ATTEMPT: Some professors argue that many students who plagiarize on high-stakes writing assignments actually want to succeed, but fear that they cannot. (Williams, 2008). These situations present opportunities for teachers to evaluate the pressure students feel when writing for a final grade under deadline. Instructors should also model more ethical conduct – such as the trust that that an author develops with his readers – in the classroom

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EXPLANATION: This writer creates an ethical and accurate paraphrase (Step 1). How? He/she captures the essence of the idea in his own language. He/she summarizes it concisely. He/she adds his own perspective and he credits the source properly in parenthesis. The writer also includes an in-text citation that matches the reference at the end, using the **3-Step Rule** effectively and efficiently. Bravo!!!