
**Notes**


2. Siva Vaidhyanathan is not the only scholar to analyze the United States’ overreaching copyright policy. For similar viewpoints see Lessig (2001). Also, for an excellent summary of the related issues see Ginsburg 2002).

3. Vaidhyanathan writes that Twain even stated “These object lessons should teach us that ninety-nine parts of all things that proceed from the intellect are plagiarisms, pure and simple” (p. 65).

4. Vaidhyanathan’s ideas regarding music and copyright are echoed and expanded upon in a recent work by Joanna Demers (2006).

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**Fundamental Values: Honesty and Academic Integrity On College Campuses Today**

*Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*


*Understanding Plagiarism: A Student Guide to Writing Your Own Work*


Academic dishonesty and plagiarism are on every teacher’s mind. Discussions of plagiarism are ubiquitous, from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to local college student newspapers. Various listservs (for example, the WPA listserv for writing program administrators) have lengthy dialogues about whether there is/is not an epidemic of student cheating—and whose responsibility it is to deal with it. Clearly the increasing number of universities with site licenses for use of Turnitin.com, as well as the use of other cheat detection software (Essay Verification Engine, Integriguard.com, Glatt Plagiarism Services), suggests that the problem is both pervasive and frustrating.

If the statistics regarding the number of students who cheat are accurate, the American cheating ethos appears to be deep-rooted. In his best-selling book, *The Cheating Culture: Why More Americans are Doing Wrong to Get Ahead*, David Callahan argues that cheating has taken hold in all aspects of American life—sports, business, politics—but only rarely are cheaters held accountable. For this reason, merely presenting academic dishonesty or plagiarism as a classroom evil to be squelched is woefully inadequate for getting to the heart of the problem and may even lead to a classroom atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust.

Certainly plagiarism can be the result of misunderstanding or inexperience with integrating research sources into a student’s text, as every teacher understands. This may be especially true for students...
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from other cultures. But the thousands of hits per day on termpaper sites such as cheathouse.com or schoolsucks.com suggest many students are indeed shopping for papers rather than writing them. To have impact, then, any discussion of plagiarism must go beyond classroom specifics of “thou shalt not”; the real goal is to develop a deep understanding of academic integrity and a campus-wide commitment to such integrity as an essential foundation for higher education. Thus the context for addressing plagiarism begins with grounding students in ethical principles.

Given the national conversation on cheating, it comes as no surprise that publishers are offering their own contributions to this conversation. A student supplement, *Understanding Plagiarism: A Student Guide to Writing Your Own Work*, by Rosemarie Menager-Beeley and Lyn Paulos, was recently published by Houghton Mifflin; *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*, written by Charles Lipson, was published by the University of Chicago press in 2004. Both are designed as classroom resources.

*Understanding Plagiarism* was written, according to the English Senior Marketing Manager for Houghton Mifflin, to “give students a constructive, nuts-and-bolts guide to both understanding and avoiding the pitfalls of plagiarism” and to provide “a solid awareness of what is expected to maintain academic honesty”. Available as a course supplement or packaged with any text for $1.17, its conciseness may be of some value to teachers who lack other resources. It partially fulfills its first purpose, but does not accomplish the second. Its limited focus on plagiarism lacks the necessary ethical context most likely to make an impact on students, and its low budget format is reflected in the quality of the content.

The text addresses the reader directly in an attempted friendly tone (“When you draft your paper . . . .”) but the style is mechanical, not motivational, and thus unlikely to inspire a student’s best efforts. And it’s hard for any instructor—or student—to give credence to a text so carelessly edited. Editing lapses include wrong and extraneous words, inconsistent bolding for headings, incorrect spacing for ellipses, example citations with incorrect punctuation and missing italics for volume numbers, and inconsistent language (e.g., “reverse the first author’s name” in one location, “invert all names” a few pages later), all within a brief 57 pages. One citation on the final page of examples is missing a period, and the ellipses throughout the book are incorrectly spaced; several, in fact, are just plain incorrect—no ellipsis should have been used at the beginning of the block quotations on p. 28.

The organization of citation examples in Chapter 6 is curious. The chapter is titled “Listing the Works Cited”; however, the chapter also includes APA, which uses “References” rather than “Works Cited” to title its bibliography page. The chapter includes only MLA and APA models. Furthermore, all handbooks I have seen organize specific sections for each documentation style, followed by parallel sections or chapters for other formats (e.g., MLA, APA, CMS, etc.). This organization is used for a good reason—students will use only one format in a paper. However, in *Understanding Plagiarism*, the chapter section for online sources alternates between MLA and APA, which is likely to confuse a student. An even greater problem is the complete lack of any examples of database citations, the most likely online sources to be used in students’ researched papers by far. Such an omission is baffling.

Some passages are just plain hard to understand: “It may be confusing when and how to add a citation to the original source. A good practice to follow is if a sentence or idea came from an outside source, then it should be acknowledged with a parenthetical citation” (p. 23). Where were the editors who should have remembered that their audience was students—students for whom lack of clarity and abstract language are likely to cause confusion rather than enlightenment? I wonder also if students would grasp the concept of a “guest voice” (p. 10). And exactly what is an “indirect quotation”? Isn’t that an oxymoron? The book defines it as “a recast-
ing in your own words of the ideas of another person” (p. 15), but then uses nearly the same language to define paraphrase as “a restatement of an author’s writing by using your words and accurately conveying the original information (p. 21).

Furthermore, the tone of the book suggests that the principles outlined are universal, rather than reflecting the conventions of the American academy. International students may comprise 10% or more of the student populations on many campuses, and there are some students—American students included—who come from academic and cultural backgrounds which may not have provided a common understanding of intellectual property, not to mention respect for the network of laws to protect it; thus presenting a discussion of plagiarism without awareness of cultural context seems both unwise and uninformed.

Perhaps some teachers will find useful features in this short book; however, everything in the book is covered in any of the standard handbooks or the accompanying peripherals produced by nearly all academic publishing houses. The “Knowledge Check” (quiz) with “Answers” at the end of each chapter to help students review the content might be useful to some teachers. However, many of the questions, like the “Tips” in each chapter, hardly inspire deep thinking (e.g., True or False: “Getting a paper from a friend or the Internet is a good way to get a head start on your assignment,” p. 14; clearly the answer is False, but students I know would be likely to choose a different answer: “duh”). Many of these criticisms may appear to be minor issues; however, we all know colleagues who do indeed expect students to “get it right” and penalize when they do not. It appears to me a reasonable expectation for publishers to “get it right” as well.

Lipson’s book, Doing Honest Work in College, in contrast, opens with “The Three Principles of Academic Honesty,” followed by a lengthy second chapter discussing academic honesty “from your first class to your final exam” before its discussion of plagiarism in Chapter 3. The book is divided into two parts, plus a helpful index. Part One, “Academic Honesty,” covers the first 48 pages; Part Two, the remainder of the 180 pages, begins with a chapter on “The Basics of Citation,” followed by individual chapters on nine different documentation formats. It concludes with a FAQs chapter about all reference styles.

Several aspects of Part One would make it a useful classroom tool. It teaches students, especially in Chapter 2, how to “do college”; his discussion ranges from work in groups to lab work to take-home exams. It too contains “Tips,” highlighted boxes with key information; Lipson’s Tips, however, are clear and explicit:

Tips on writing honest papers:

• Cite others’ work whenever you rely on it.
• When you use someone’s words, quote them accurately, mark them as a quotation, and include a citation.
• When you paraphrase, use your own distinctive voice, not a facsimile of the author’s. Be sure to include a citation.
• Never represent anyone else’s work as your own.
• Never hand in the same paper to two classes unless you have permission from both instructors.
• Never buy, sell, or “borrow” papers. Do your own work. (p. 10)

Clearly, the book values the “why” of academic integrity, not just the “what,” focusing on academic honesty, a positive behavior, and then explaining how plagiarism undermines it. Lipson describes cheating as “a self-inflicted wound on your own education” (p. 11), reminding students that “academic honesty is central to the university” (p.
Thus the book speaks to students’ aspirations, not only to their classroom behaviors, a strategy far more likely to help students develop ethical commitment.

The tone is conversational, addressing the reader directly; the content is highly readable and appropriate for both American and international students. For instance, the three principles of academic integrity which open the book, are stated thus:

- When you say you did the work yourself, you actually did it.

- When you rely on someone else’s work, you cite it. When you use their words, you quote them openly and accurately, and you cite them, too.

- When you present research materials, you present them fairly and truthfully. That’s true whether the research involves data, documents, or the writings of other scholars. (p. 3)

One of the helpful suggestions Lipson offers students is the idea of “Q-notes,” which would make inadvertent plagiarism far less likely. Lipson suggests that when drafting, students use the letter Q and the page number whenever they integrate a quote; that way they will remember both the quotation and its source. The book also provides multiple examples of quoting and paraphrasing, to help students learn these skills.

In Part Two of the book, Lipson’s “Basics of Citations” (chapter 4) presents a helpful overview of why different disciplines have distinctive citation styles and what they have in common. Each citation style then comes under a separate chapter heading, beginning with an overview of the distinctive features of that style, followed by an index for all the examples in the chapter. Chicago Manual of Style is listed first (probably by publisher’s choice), followed by MLA, and APA, as well as less common citation styles such as CSE for the biological sciences and Bluebook legal citations. Perhaps Lipson canvassed his colleagues in all departments, and then provided citation formats for all styles used on the University of Chicago campus. (The book is required for all University of Chicago students).

In each citation style chapter, the examples of the different citation formats for different types of publications (e.g., books, journal articles, newspaper articles) are separated by lines across the page, a very user-friendly way to guide students to the appropriate format for the type of source they are citing. The examples are organized with the bibliographic entry and the in-text citation for each type of source within the same block; this is an efficient way to group the information, demonstrate what information is required for each, and remind students that both types of citation are necessary. And each chapter includes multiple examples for databases, as well as for weblogs, software, and other electronic sources frequently cited by students.

Each citation style chapter concludes with a helpful list of the common abbreviations used in each style; some also include FAQs about that citation format. The concluding chapter is titled “FAQs About All Reference Styles” and includes typical student questions, such as “What about citing a work I’ve found in someone else’s footnotes?” (p. 174), or “How do I handle the line break [for a URL]?” (p. 178). The final chapter thus brings the student back to the central focus that “pretty much” every type of source used in the paper must be cited (except well-known facts), and that the quality of a paper will depend directly on the quality of the sources used to research it.

Lipson’s book would cost students more ($10.40 new on Amazon) than Understanding Plagiarism, but the book provides information that would be helpful to students in all disciplines throughout their academic career. Furthermore, it reminds them again of the underlying principles which have made American higher education respected around the world and of their role in upholding these principles.

As the homepage for the Center for Academic Integrity2 at Duke University reminds us, “Academic integrity is a fundamental value of teaching, learning, and scholarship.” Of these two books, only
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Lipson’s makes a valuable contribution to our shared responsibility to cultivate this fundamental value in all our interactions with students and colleagues.

Notes

1. email communication, 17 November 2005


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