Chapter 21

Revisioning Paraphrasing Instruction

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Abstract Academic misconduct frequently occurs because developing academic writers lack both knowledge about the conventions for writing from sources and procedural skills for applying this knowledge. Paraphrasing is a particularly underdeveloped skill among students in higher education. This chapter illustrates how findings from existing quality assurance processes are supporting a revised approach to paraphrasing instruction by the writing strategist team at a Canadian undergraduate university. The new approach underlines the interpretive nature of paraphrasing and the agency of the student writer. By focusing less on the technical aspects of paraphrasing and more on its rhetorical purposes, we aim to foster among students a deeper level of engagement with texts, a more nuanced awareness of intertextuality, and recognition of the role disciplinary conventions play in writing from sources. Our vantage point as professionals working with students in a wide range of disciplines affords us unique opportunities to be campus changemakers. If we can encourage recognition that paraphrasing instruction must extend past first year composition courses and one-off workshops, and if we can help instructors seize opportunities to provide students with feedback on their paraphrasing, students will move beyond patchwriting and towards writing from sources with more confidence and integrity.

Keywords Paraphrasing · Patchwriting · Plagiarism · Academic integrity · Source use · Canada

The ability to effectively incorporate source information into one's work is a complex and essential skill for every academic writer. Although student writers quote, paraphrase, and summarise the work of others in their writing assignments long before they enter higher education, expectations around source use become more rigorous in post-secondary settings, and a common concern for university and college instructors is that their students' ability to use sources appropriately and in line with academic integrity standards is underdeveloped. One specific type of source use in which

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students tend to lack confidence in paraphrasing, but since explicit instruction in and consistent feedback on paraphrasing are rare over the course of a student's undergraduate program, undergraduate writers have few opportunities to be guided in developing their paraphrasing skills. When these rare opportunities do occur, they tend to emphasise plagiarism avoidance, which can have the unintended effect of making students fear and even avoid paraphrasing. This chapter describes how writing specialists in the learning centre at one Canadian undergraduate university are using findings from existing quality assurance (QA) processes to support a new approach to teaching paraphrasing.

At Mount Royal University (MRU), a teaching and learning focused undergraduate institution with approximately 15,000 students (Mount Royal University [MRU], 2021), I am employed in the learning centre as one of five full-time professional writing strategists. Writing strategists mainly facilitate open workshops (i.e., workshops which students from any program, in any year, may attend) and in-class workshops (i.e., workshops tailored to an assignment in a particular course and facilitated during regular class time), consult with individual students and small groups of students, and develop learning resources in collaboration with faculty members. MRU is situated within the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Îyârhe Nakoda, Tsuut'ina and Métis Nations, and just over 6% of students self-identify as Indigenous (MRU, 2021). Over 75% of MRU students are from Calgary, and international students make up less than 2% of the population (MRU, 2021).

In 2020, our writing strategist team revised its approach to teaching paraphrasing to prioritise contextualisation and writer agency. We shifted our attention away from plagiarism and towards the affordances of paraphrasing. Rather than leading students through mechanistic, decontextualised paraphrasing exercises, we found ways to emphasise not only the purpose of paraphrasing, but the broader purpose of source use, what research is and is not, and the responsibilities student writers have to their scholarly discourse communities. Importantly, we engaged with our faculty partners to generate opportunities for the integration of principled paraphrasing instruction into content classes. There are simple ways to bring nuanced paraphrasing instruction and feedback into disciplinary classes, and a collaborative approach between content instructors and writing specialists has the potential to make a positive impact on students' ability to write from sources with integrity.

Why Are Undergraduate Students' Paraphrasing Abilities Underdeveloped?

Lack of Explicit Instruction on Paraphrasing

Students rarely receive explicit instruction on how to paraphrase. In Shi et al.'s (2018) study of graduate students, 10 out of 18 participants had "never received any formal instruction but learnt how to paraphrase through reading published works" (p. 34).

Anecdotally, in the paraphrasing workshops I have facilitated since 2016, I have periodically asked undergraduate students how they learned to paraphrase, and no student has ever reported that they received explicit instruction on paraphrasing beyond the dictum “say it in your own words.” Students report the dictum being followed by a caution: if they did not paraphrase well, they would risk committing plagiarism. This strong association between paraphrasing and plagiarism can lead students to avoid paraphrasing altogether—out of fear. In some cases, students even come to believe that the primary purpose of paraphrasing is to avoid plagiarism (Hirvela & Du, 2013). A participant in Shi et al.’s (2018) study reported that in high school, teachers did not provide instruction on paraphrasing; “they just [said] ‘don’t plagiarize’. And in university, they give you a paper about the policy about plagiarism” (p. 42). It seems that the focus is so strongly on avoiding plagiarism that students completely miss the point of paraphrasing and the benefits it confers on the writer. Rather than teaching students what paraphrasing can help them accomplish, the emphasis is too often on how paraphrasing can hurt them. When students are fearful of manipulating sources in any other way than safe quotation, getting excited about joining the academic conversation becomes difficult. As Jamieson and Howard (2019) noted, “the criminalization of missteps makes [writing from sources] a terrifying rather than satisfying learning experience for students” (p. 83).

Lack of Emphasis on the Purpose of Paraphrasing

The root of the problem may lie precisely in the “say it in your own words” conception of paraphrasing. Resources on post-secondary institutions’ writing centre and library resource web pages typically describe paraphrasing as rendering an author’s idea in one’s own words. These descriptions of paraphrasing are consistent with knowledge telling as opposed to knowledge transforming (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987), or knowledge display as opposed to knowledge making (Abasi & Akbari, 2008). They imply an objective process of “linguistic reformulation” (Mori, 2018, p. 46). In scholarly writing, however, paraphrasing does more than recast the original author’s idea. Writers paraphrase “to reconceptualize the source text coherently with [their] own authorial intentions” (Shi et al., 2018, p. 32). Interestingly, despite many university/college websites’ definitions of paraphrasing corresponding to knowledge telling, the paraphrases they provide as models for students reveal processes of inferential thinking (Yamada, 2003). If paraphrasing involves inferential thinking, then it does more than simply recast an idea; it falls into the category of knowledge making. As Mori (2018) put it, “a paraphrase in its most basic sense is re-creation,” (p. 51) not simple retelling. This function of paraphrasing is powerful, but students are rarely made aware of it, so they do not view paraphrasing as an empowering academic writing tool.

When student writers believe that the function of paraphrasing is only to recast what has been said by someone else, it is no wonder they have a difficult time finding the value in paraphrasing and feel resistance towards it. This undervaluing may even

come directly from their instructors. One of the university professors interviewed by Pecorari and Shaw (2012) reported telling a student that “you have to somehow really write this and put it in your own words. I know that it isn’t always so easy and sometimes it’s silly but that’s how it is” (p. 154). If the inherent value of paraphrasing is not made clear to students, then they are justified in asking themselves why their professors insist they go through the challenging, time-consuming and risky activity of paraphrasing when a quotation would serve to report the original author’s idea more directly, quickly and safely. When students ask why they have to paraphrase, they are sometimes told that paraphrasing helps the instructor know whether the student has understood the source. Mori (2018) found that students were encouraged to paraphrase rather than quote because paraphrasing constitutes “proof of critical thinking and intellectual work” (p. 48). Although this may be one benefit of having students paraphrase information, it is not the reason paraphrasing exists in scholarly writing. Emphasising this purpose limits paraphrasing to a school-writing context, ultimately working against the goal of initiating students into the discourse community of their discipline (Abasi & Akbari, 2008). If the intention is that students begin to see themselves as members of and contributors to disciplinary communities, then it is vital that the tasks they complete, (academic writing-related or otherwise), be connected authentically to the real-world activities of those disciplinary communities.

Single-Sentence and/or Decontextualised Practice Activities

Where explicit instruction on paraphrasing does exist, instructional activities are too often based on single, decontextualised sentences that students are asked to transform into their own words (Pecorari & Petrić, 2014). Decontextualised activities deprive students of the opportunity to consider what they are using the information *for*. If paraphrasing involves recontextualisation, but neither the original context of the information nor the target context is provided, then the writer is faced with a simplistic, mechanistic and inauthentic task. In addition, single-sentence practice may lead student writers to believe that when they use sources, they should be on the lookout for individual sentences to extract and incorporate into their own writing. Although it could be argued that transforming single sentences is a suitable controlled practice activity—one that fits well within a scaffolded approach to paraphrasing instruction—the reality is that paraphrasing practice activities rarely go beyond this stage.

Lack of Feedback on Paraphrasing

Continuous feedback is essential to the development of complex skills, but post-secondary students rarely receive feedback on their paraphrasing. There are practical reasons for this. An instructor can easily miss a poor paraphrase if it does not

contain red flags such as an abrupt change in style (Pecorari, 2013). More intentional approaches can be time-intensive. To provide feedback on a single paraphrase, an instructor would need to obtain the original source text, locate the exact passage in the text and compare it to the student's paraphrase. Since many research assignments require that students select sources themselves, each student will have used different sources, making this work of locating original passages prohibitively time-consuming. Even if students are required to provide the original passages, evaluating paraphrases takes time. Since the line between acceptable and unacceptable paraphrasing is difficult to draw (Roig 2001), a quick written comment may not be sufficient feedback; a conversation may be necessary.

In the absence of feedback, students are left to their own devices, and a sensible strategy some employ is imitating what they see in scholarly writing. The problem is that students draw incorrect conclusions from what they see (Pecorari, 2013), and when instructors do not alert them to textual missteps in their writing, they understandably conclude that their source use is appropriate, going on to potentially misuse sources unchecked for years (Pecorari, 2013). At my university, instructors regularly refer senior students to our team of writing strategists because of poor paraphrasing, and the instructors express surprise at the lack of understanding of paraphrasing basics. The conversation between the student and the instructor has usually revolved around plagiarism, so emotions run high on both sides. Students often feel angry that no one “called them on it” at an earlier stage of their undergraduate program.

Outsourcing Paraphrasing Instruction

The question of who is responsible for teaching students to paraphrase is part of the broader issue of responsibility for academic writing instruction. Instructors tend to believe that students should already have acquired academic writing skills such as paraphrasing by the time they enter higher education (Jamieson, 2013; Peters & Cadieux, 2019). As a result, “faculty often assign rather than teach research-based writing” (Serviss, 2016, p. 553). The Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) movements evolved in response to this problem, and WAC and WID proponents have advocated for a whole-institution approach to student writing development for decades. Still, a persistent belief on the part of many instructors is that it is not their responsibility to teach writing.

Perhaps if faculty conceived of writing not as a generic skill students should possess before entering higher education, but rather, as a discipline-specific mechanism for constructing knowledge, they would be more inclined to see writing instruction as integral to initiating students into their disciplinary community. As we work to decolonise the curriculum, educators have a responsibility to challenge the privileged position writing holds as a scholarly mode of communication, but for as long as writing retains such a vital role in the academy, we also have a responsibility to our students—to help them uncover the conventions of academic writing for their discipline. Writing is a manifestation of thinking, so if we accept that a central role of

the university teacher is to guide students' "cognitive apprenticeship" (Brown et al., 1989)—that is, to help them learn how biologists think or how historians think—then it follows that we need to facilitate their learning to write in ways that are common in the discipline, too.

Even when instructors acknowledge the need to teach writing, real barriers exist. The first is time:

Most instructors at Canadian universities would probably agree that the time and resources they have to effectively deliver their courses are either stretched to the limit or insufficient, so their reluctance to assume additional responsibility for instructing students in appropriate source use is understandable. (Evans-Tokaryk, 2014, p. 20)

Another barrier is that content instructors who are not writing specialists may feel ill-equipped to teach source use skills like paraphrasing. Because of these barriers, when student writing fails to meet expectations, many instructors refer students to first-year composition classes or writing centres.

Although writing experts on campus have an important role to play in supporting students' academic writing development, the discipline-specific aspects of writing need to be addressed by disciplinary experts. Paraphrasing conventions differ from discipline to discipline. In the hard sciences, it may be acceptable (indeed, necessary) to copy longer word strings from the original source than is acceptable in the humanities (Shi et al., 2018). Differences in citation practices also exist, and these differences have implications for the syntactic structure of paraphrases. In the social sciences and humanities, narrative (or integral) citations are more common than they are in the hard sciences and engineering (Hyland, 2004), and the reporting verbs necessary for the narrative citation structure are frequently the locus of the recontextualisation inherent in paraphrasing. Evans-Tokaryk (2014) concluded that "we need to make individual disciplines more accountable for the way they teach citation practices, source-use, and rhetorical strategies for engaging in the scholarly conversation" (pp. 20–21). A complicating factor, however, is that members of the same disciplinary community do not necessarily agree on the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable paraphrasing (Roig, 2001). This reality makes it crucial for individual instructors to specify and illustrate expectations. As Susan Bens (2022) shows in her chapter in this volume, it is unfair to expect students to navigate the ambiguity of expectations related to academic integrity across courses on their own. Faculty members must address what they deem to be acceptable and unacceptable source use in their courses.

A Way Forward

Increased Content Instructor-Writing Specialist Collaboration

It is understandable that instructors who are not writing specialists may feel uncomfortable taking on the full responsibility for teaching source use skills such as

paraphrasing. They, like our students, may never have experienced explicit paraphrasing instruction, and most disciplinary experts have not needed to think about how paraphrasing is used in their discipline as compared with other disciplines. In contrast, professional writing consultants meet with students from a variety of disciplines every day, giving us regular exposure to scholarly texts from many fields and a constant reminder that conventions differ by discipline. Writing centre professionals cannot deeply understand the conventions of every discipline, but the question is central to our day-to-day work. Collaboration allows both professionals to benefit: the instructor gains access to writing specialist knowledge, and the writing specialist gains access to disciplinary knowledge. A writing specialist could even be a partner in a Decoding the Disciplines style interview (Middendorf & Pace, 2004), where the writing consultant's role would be to ask questions to make explicit the paraphrasing conventions the faculty expert knows only implicitly. Serviss (2016) argued that instructors "need robust support as they design [writing] assignments for students, strategize ways to provide productive feedback, and ultimately evaluate and assess student work for both its course-specific content and its adherence to broader academic conventions such as academic integrity" (p. 553), and the specialists who work in writing centres are equipped to provide this very support.

At my institution, learning strategists developed and use an Intentional Model of Service Delivery (MRU, 2018) which prioritises embedding writing and learning strategies within content courses. The service model identifies four types of collaboration with our faculty partners: general (e.g., faculty partners offering students incentives for attending our open workshops), complementary (e.g., learning resources customised to specific assignments), integrated (e.g., co-created teaching materials) and embedded (e.g., consulting on curricular design).

Writing centre specialists across the country offer a similar range of collaborative support types (although they may not use the same labels), but it is not uncommon for writing centre professionals to feel that the potential for robust and sustained collaborations with faculty goes somewhat untapped. A perennial theme appearing in the conference programs of the Learning Specialists Association of Canada (LSAC) and the Canadian Writing Centres Association (CWCA) is generating and maintaining collaborations with content instructors. On these associations' 2019 conference programs were session titles such as "Now I Know You're Our Partners: Creating Embedded Learning Centre Services with Faculty" (LSAC), "Out of the Learning Centre and into the Classroom: Strategies for Embedding Writing Support" (CWCA) and "Supporting Sustainable Collaboration Between Writing Centres and Writing Instructors" (CWCA). Writing centre professionals are seeking opportunities to meaningfully and sustainably facilitate learning in partnership with faculty.

Projects at MRU, ranging from general workshops to integrated course-specific learning materials, have provided opportunities for our writing strategist team to approach teaching paraphrasing in new ways. Feedback from students and our faculty partners has been encouraging, and each of the sections below describes an aspect of this new approach.

Acknowledging Conflicting Notions of Authorship

When students enter college or university, they enter new discourse communities, and these scholarly communities conceive of authorship in ways that may conflict with students' notions of authorship. Many young adults entering our institutions are steeped in what Lawrence Lessig (2008) termed *remix culture*. They create memes and videos from multiple sources and share them freely without attribution. They quote from TV shows, films and songs, and *not* identifying the source is part of the appeal; the shared experience of watching or listening to the original makes explicit attribution unnecessary, and this implicit understanding is what sparks connection (Blum, 2009). When discussing source use, educators must be careful not to assume that students understand or agree with scholarly practices surrounding source use. Evans-Tokaryk (2014) advocated that when discussing source use, educators should "take remix culture as a point of (counter) reference" (p. 8). Using remix culture as a starting point allows us to build upon students' current experience and common practices and can make the contrast between what they know and the expectations of their new academic discourse communities clearer. Pecorari (2013) emphasised the importance of helping students understand their responsibility for transparent source use, and approaching this conversation by contrasting it with the way in which students engage in remix in their non-academic lives makes sense.

Contrasting remix culture with academic writing culture can be quick and easy. In a co-created asynchronous resource on academic integrity (including sections on paraphrasing and referencing), a nursing faculty partner and I included the slide reproduced in Fig. 21.1.

Giving credit to other people's work	
We are not expected to give credit to other people's work in all areas of our lives.
<p>(Naomi89, 2013)</p>	(Ever shared a meme with friends on social?)
In academic writing, the strong cultural expectation is that we must give people credit when we use their work.	
	✓

Fig. 21.1 Slide from asynchronous learning resource for nursing students

Note. This figure shows a slide whose purpose is to acknowledge that citation is expected within the cultural context of academic writing, but not within all contexts.

The inclusion of a slide like this one creates a quick opportunity to underline that citation is a cultural practice and to remind students that they are members of multiple cultures, each with unique norms.

Introducing Students to Paraphrasing As a Powerful Tool

Presenting paraphrasing as a tool which puts the writer in the powerful position of interpreting, evaluating and recontextualising information can help students view paraphrasing as valuable. In Mori's (2018) words, "a paraphrase in its rhetorical realisation may always involve some sort of evaluation or opinion, seeing that any writer has a reason for using a source, whether to support or refute a claim" (p. 46). When students recognise that they have the agency to shape information for a reason, and that reason is theirs to determine, they can begin to see paraphrasing as a useful tool rather than a burden.

The key may lie in orienting students to how scholarly discourse actually works and crucially, in helping them see themselves as active contributors to this discourse. As Hendricks and Quinn (2000) noted, many students enter higher education believing that knowledge is "something out there" (p. 451) rather than something that is constructed, that it is fixed rather than dynamic. Many approach writing from sources as a kind of reporting rather than the more creative and generative work of integrating ideas from sources with their own ideas. Faculty members could do more to unveil the rhetorical processes inherent in academic discourse and to guide students towards recognising the opportunities they have to participate in knowledge construction (Hendricks & Quinn, 2000), and the same goes for writing specialists.

For many years, the writing strategist team at MRU has offered a paraphrasing workshop as part of our Academic Success series. We commonly refer to workshops in this series as "open workshops" since they are open to students from any program, in any year of study. When I joined the team in 2015, the "Paraphrasing, Not Plagiarizing" workshop included no discussion of the reasons academic writers paraphrase or the benefits of paraphrasing. A later version included notes for the facilitator on the reasons paraphrasing is valuable, but the information did not appear on a slide or on the student handout. When I took over facilitation of the workshop, I moved the benefits of paraphrasing onto a slide: (1) [Paraphrasing] helps you to truly understand the original, (2) shows your instructor you understand, and (3) allows you to make complex ideas simple for your reader. Over time, I became dissatisfied with this list of benefits; if the point was to generate buy-in from students and break down their resistance to paraphrasing, the list felt flat and unconvincing.

I began to skip that benefits slide in favour of an approach that highlighted disciplinary conventions. I would ask students to generate an example of a discipline in which quoting is a common way to incorporate source information and a discipline where source incorporation occurs more commonly through paraphrasing (i.e.,

where quotation is uncommon). Students found this task challenging, leading me to conclude that most had never encountered the idea that the ratio of quoting to paraphrasing might vary by discipline. In the workshop, I would contrast Comparative Literature with Biology, exploring the reasons why, in general, the former would use more quotation than the latter. Although students generally reacted with interest, becoming curious about whether quoting was common or uncommon in their particular discipline, the explanation still seemed superficial. It fell short of a complete explanation of why paraphrasing is useful and sometimes preferable. Students came away with the idea that they should paraphrase, and that conventions differ by discipline, but they did not have a clear sense of why paraphrasing might *serve them better as writers*.

The 2021 version of the workshop retains the discussion of disciplinary conventions but also highlights that writers paraphrase because paraphrasing allows them greater flexibility for reformulating information to fit the point they are making in their own text. Our focus has shifted away from what students need to prove to their instructor, away from what the rules and conventions are, and towards the affordances paraphrasing provides the student writer, who is ultimately in charge. The idea that paraphrasing actually empowers the writer led one workshop participant to suggest that we refer to paraphrasing as “power-phrasing” (K. Toseland, personal communication, September 16, 2020). Not only did we immediately include the newly coined term in the workshop slide deck, but we incorporated it into the revised workshop title in January 2021: “From Paraphrasing to ‘Power-Phrasing’.”

Students who attend the paraphrasing workshop may choose to fill out a Reflection & Participation Form: an online form designed to take approximately 10–15 min to complete. (Each of the 15 workshops in our Academic Success series has a separate Reflection & Participation Form.) This assessment tool helps us determine whether learning outcomes are being met in the workshop and is a key quality assurance mechanism. The form for the paraphrasing workshop includes this question: “What’s one strategy or concept you learned in this webinar that you’ll apply in your future course work?” Responses from the Fall 2020 semester included:

I learned a major benefit of paraphrasing. In some cases paraphrasing is better than quoting as it gives you more flexibility to shape your work.

I learned the benefit of paraphrasing which is greater flexibility, incorporating the information more smoothly, shaping the information for specific purpose, and power phrasing.

The comments suggest that before the workshop, these students did not understand that paraphrasing grants the writer flexibility; they did not see that paraphrasing actually *serves* the writer.

Once students realise that paraphrasing serves them as writers, they are in a much better position to understand why they should avoid patchwriting, where the text “restates a phrase, clause, or one or more sentences while staying close to the language or syntax of the source” (Jamieson, 2018, p. 110). Students cannot truly understand why patchwriting is undesirable unless they first understand the purpose and benefits of paraphrasing. When they recognise that paraphrasing allows more flexibility in

interpreting and re-shaping information, they can grasp why the mechanical “synonym substitution strategy” they may have thought of as paraphrasing misses the point. As a colleague explained to students, “when you patchwrite, you’ve essentially done a direct quote but made more work for yourself” (C. Willard, personal communication, September 28, 2020). Rebecca Moore Howard and others have argued that patchwriting represents a developmental phase in learning to write from sources and that the remedy is pedagogy, not punishment (Howard, 1993; Jamieson, 2016; Jamieson & Howard, 2019; Pecorari & Petrić, 2014). I wholeheartedly agree and believe that an emphasis on the purpose of paraphrasing is precisely the pedagogical starting point.

Evidence from an asynchronous learning module incorporated into a Fall 2020 first-year Health and Physical Education course revealed that for many learners, the idea that patchwriting is undesirable is new. After students completed the paraphrasing section of the module, they were asked to name one new thing they had learned about paraphrasing. Although only a fifth of the section focused specifically on patchwriting, 68/168 (40%) of students identified patchwriting (what it is, why they should avoid it, how to avoid it) as new to them.

A single workshop or learning module can only be a starting point on the road to competent paraphrasing, but as a starting point, it is gaining traction at our institution. Faculty members increasingly provide incentives (e.g., a small percentage of the final course grade) to their students to encourage them to participate in open workshops, and 69% of the students who registered for the paraphrasing workshop in Fall 2020 indicated either that an instructor was giving them some sort of incentive for participation and/or an instructor had recommended the webinar.

Avoiding Single-Sentence, Decontextualised Paraphrasing Activities

When modelling paraphrasing or creating practice activities, using a short passage from a source rather than a single sentence makes it possible to focus on the selection process so important to authentic paraphrasing. The educator can discuss with students which information to include in the paraphrase and which information to exclude so that the paraphrase best supports the writer’s point. For the selection process to be remotely authentic, students must first have some context around the source (e.g., the author’s main thesis) and some context around the text they are producing themselves (e.g., the topic sentence of the paragraph into which they are inserting their paraphrase). This target context helps students see that paraphrasing always has a rhetorical purpose. Another benefit of choosing a passage over a single sentence is that this practice aligns with the message that students should read sources thoroughly instead of mining sources for single sentences. Although any simulation is artificial to some degree, the more authentic the task, the more easily students will be able to transfer the knowledge and skills to a real situation.

In earlier versions of the open paraphrasing workshop, we used a single (albeit relatively complex) sentence from a scholarly journal article to walk students through our suggested steps in paraphrasing. We provided minimal context for the article itself, but no context for what students would be using the information *for*. We led students through the mostly decontextualised, mechanistic exercise of breaking the original sentence into lexical chunks, re-organising those chunks into a new sentence pattern, and finding new phrasing for each chunk. The workshop heavily emphasised a tool we called the “BIG-4 Checklist” for evaluating paraphrases: a plagiarism-free paraphrase must (1) have new words, (2) have new sentence structure, (3) have the same meaning as the original, and (4) be cited. Students evaluated a series of paraphrases as acceptable or unacceptable based on the BIG-4 criteria, and in our suggested set of steps to follow for successful paraphrasing, the final step was to “cross-check your paraphrase with the BIG-4.” The learning assessment form students filled out at the end of the workshop asked them to identify one concrete idea/strategy they took away from the workshop, and the most frequent answers were the BIG-4 Checklist and, more specifically, a new awareness that changing sentence structure is a requirement for plagiarism-free paraphrases. What students were taking away from our workshop were techniques for avoiding plagiarism, but what we wanted them to come away with was something deeper, more positive, and more exciting: an understanding of how paraphrasing can make their writing stronger and how it is connected to writer agency.

The revised workshop uses a different source text (an article from *Canadian Business* magazine), and instead of providing students with a single sentence to work from, we use a passage:

The company has been working to rapidly expand Tim Hortons beyond its Canadian roots. It signed a master franchise joint venture agreement with a private equity firm last year to open more than 1,500 of the coffee-and-doughnut shops in China—home to a burgeoning coffee culture and a hotbed of international coffee chain expansions. It also recently expanded into the Philippines, the United Kingdom and Spain. (Sagan, 2019, para. 10).

Using a three-sentence passage rather than a single sentence allows students the opportunity to consider which parts of the passage they would select to support a particular claim. And this step—selecting information according to the writer’s purpose—is now central to the workshop.

We present two different scenarios to illustrate the importance of information selection in paraphrasing. In the first, students imagine they are taking a Sociology course and are writing a paper about coffee culture around the world. The topic sentence of the paragraph is, “China is another country where coffee culture has taken hold over the past decade.” The students’ task is to paraphrase the original passage to best support this topic sentence. In other words, they need to select only the parts of the original that are relevant to the point of the paragraph. Students need to ask themselves whether details such as “signed a master franchise joint venture agreement with a private equity firm” are useful for their purpose.

In the second scenario, students imagine they are taking a Management course and are writing a paper on international expansion. This time, the topic sentence is,

“Canadian food and beverage companies have been expanding into Asian markets through joint venture agreements of various types.” In this scenario, students should realise that for this context, the specific type of joint venture agreement *is* significant and should probably be included in the paraphrase.

Logistically, the changes we have made to the paraphrasing practice activity are simple: (1) use a passage instead of a single sentence, and (2) provide context around what the writer is using the information *for*. Despite the simplicity of the adjustments, comments on learning assessment forms indicate that students are taking away deeper insights from the workshop.

In my future work in paraphrasing, I will be focusing more on the context of my topic and taking the time to thoroughly decide which ideas are important. As shown in the webinar, I will highlight the sentences that pertain to my subject matter and focus on how I can include that information into my writing.

I liked the idea of looking at what isn't important in the source so that you are able to focus on paraphrasing what is relevant. Compared to paraphrasing the entire quote or source. Looking at what parts of the source are relevant to my specific topic and how those important aspects might change depending on the topic. Especially taking a look at how that important information might change depending on if you are looking at it from a business perspective or a sociological perspective.

Although the above changes apply to the open paraphrasing workshop, we are making similar changes to paraphrasing-focused segments of our in-class workshops and asynchronous learning modules (i.e., more complementary and integrated types of support), and our faculty partners are expressing enthusiasm for the new direction. Faculty partners frequently report that our student learning materials are adding to their own understanding of paraphrasing. In reference to an asynchronous learning resource on paraphrasing for nursing students, one faculty partner commented, “I guess, I know how to do [paraphrasing], I have just never seen it so clearly delineated” (J. Harris, personal communication, October 14, 2020).

De-emphasising Plagiarism, But Teaching Paraphrasing in the Context of Academic Integrity

In paraphrasing instruction, plagiarism should cease to have such a central place. Students need a safe space in which to practice source use, one in which the fear of plagiarism is not a deterrent to exploration and experimentation. At the same time, Jamieson and Howard's (2019) assertion that “textual missteps commonly classified as ‘plagiarism’ do not belong in the category of academic integrity” (p. 74) is problematic. Academic writers have a responsibility to represent their sources fairly, accurately and transparently, and student writers are no exception. Jamieson and Howard (2019) argue that “like grammar, spelling, and punctuation, whose rules students may not know or may sometimes knowingly or carelessly neglect, careless source attribution and incorporation produces bad writing and should be addressed as such” (p. 72). Careless source incorporation results in more than bad writing,

however. It represents a lack of respect for other members of the academic community, which makes it distinct from and more egregious than careless grammar, spelling or punctuation. Careless paraphrasing can result in a misrepresentation of the original author's position, and when this outcome is not connected to the values of academic integrity, specifically fairness, responsibility and respect (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2021), students miss out on the opportunity to see themselves as active members of disciplinary communities—members who have a responsibility to one another. Although I agree that single instances of patchwriting should not lead to punishment for the student writer, tying source use instruction to the values of fairness, responsibility and respect is essential.

An experience with senior students at my institution has strengthened my conviction that paraphrasing instruction must be tied to academic integrity. After the instructor identified source misuse in the work of a surprising number of their students' written assignments, I facilitated several small group sessions on referencing and paraphrasing. These sessions, along with reports of conversations the instructor had had with students, revealed that in some cases, the origin of source misuse was a lack of understanding of the purpose of paraphrasing and how to approach it. In other cases, however, the students admitted to "getting away with" sloppy paraphrasing and referencing for years. They were fully aware that they were taking shortcuts, but since no instructor had ever addressed the issue, the students had never felt the need to adjust their practice. These students did not recognise themselves as active, responsible members of their disciplinary community.

Expecting an undergraduate student to recognise a personal responsibility to their disciplinary discourse community is not unrealistic. At MRU, senior undergraduate students make public presentations, engage in primary research activities, and present their results at academic conferences. These students do contribute to the advancement of knowledge in their disciplines and need to understand how the misuse of sources can undermine scholarly discourse.

A collaboration with second-year clinical nursing instructors is providing an opportunity for students to receive feedback on their paraphrasing in a way that helps them make authentic connections between source use and their responsibilities to the communities they serve. Students in this community nursing course work in groups to complete a project in close partnership with a community agency, and one of the students' final tasks is to provide a written report to the agency. Agencies sometimes refer to these reports in funding proposals and/or their own stakeholder communications. Approximately one week before the due date, students can book a one-hour group consultation with a writing strategist, who reviews the report and prepares feedback. Although the feedback can range from matters of organisation to writing style to APA formatting, a key objective is to provide feedback on paraphrasing. Strategists consult the sources students have paraphrased and identify places where they have misunderstood the source, failed to delineate the source authors' conclusions from their own, misrepresented source authors' positions and/or patchwritten. Because all the students in the group and their instructor attend the appointment, the opportunities for discussion about what constitutes acceptable paraphrasing are rich and often nuanced. Over the course of our two-year collaboration, we have worked

with approximately 10 different instructors who have consistently told us that (1) they come away from the appointments with new insights on paraphrasing, and (2) they would not have had time to compare students' paraphrases with the original sources and would not have caught many of the paraphrasing missteps we identify. Students are grateful for the feedback on their paraphrasing, especially because they know they will be presenting their report to their agency partner; the fact that their writing will go beyond the school-writing context enhances their sense of accountability.

The changes to our open paraphrasing workshop are also generating evidence that undergraduate students readily make the link between paraphrasing and academic integrity insofar as they recognise the importance of fairly representing the original source author's position. Whereas previous versions of the workshop dedicated little time to misrepresentation, the new version prominently lists misrepresentation as one of four paraphrasing pitfalls and uses a specific example to illustrate the link between the common practice of mining a source for a single useful sentence and unintentional misrepresentation. When asked (in the learning assessment form) to identify their main takeaway from the workshop, students are mentioning strategies for avoiding misrepresenting the original source:

In order to avoid misrepresenting the original author, I will thoroughly read through sources in order to gain knowledge of the authors position accurately. Much of the time I find myself skimming through sources and sometimes this has resulted in me not fully understanding the main idea of the text and ultimately paraphrasing their position inaccurately.

to make sure I read the source thoroughly so that I do not misinterpret what the author is saying. I need to make sure I know all the facts before paraphrasing a source, because I could potentially give the wrong interpretation, making it seem like I did not read the source, I just looked for what I wanted to find but did not go into depth with it.

Before this workshop I wasn't really aware that it's very common to misinterpret an authors work by just reading small parts of their article. I just always assumed that all the parts of the article would specifically present their idea.

Students seem to be recognising the need for a deeper engagement with source texts—indeed, their *responsibility* to engage more deeply with source texts.

Future Directions

One-off workshops and learning modules are insufficient if our goal is to help students develop their ability to paraphrase competently and with integrity. Students need multiple opportunities, contextualised within their discipline, and spiralled throughout their program, to focus on source use, and crucially, to receive feedback on their paraphrasing. As writing strategists, we find ourselves working hard to dispel the notion that if all students participate in a paraphrasing and referencing workshop in the first year of their program, then they “should know it” and can be held accountable for source misuse in every course thereafter. We wholeheartedly support bringing key writing strategies like paraphrasing into first-year content

classes, but we advocate for and can support next-level opportunities at subsequent stages of students' programs.

An approach analogous to Lang's (2016) "small teaching" may help make the integration of multiple learning opportunities more feasible. Small teaching activities "require minimal preparation and grading" (p. 8), and should take up only a small amount of class time. Instructors, in collaboration with writing specialists, could design and facilitate short paraphrasing activities so that students revisit key concepts and have chances to practice. A 15 minute block of time would be sufficient for educators to lead students through a side-by-side comparison of a paraphrase and the original passage from which it was derived, for example. Choosing a passage from a text students have already read for class would instantly provide authentic context, and if students evaluate the corresponding paraphrase in the context of a full paragraph rather than in isolation, the activity is more realistic and potentially illuminating. Even a simple comparison activity like this one can engender rich conversations about the line between interpretation and misinterpretation of an author's words/intent or the line between paraphrasing and patchwriting. Other quick classroom activities could include having students notice the balance between quotation and paraphrasing in a disciplinary text (Pecorari, 2013), comparing student-generated paraphrases of a passage from a text the whole class has read, or identifying the specific problem in each of several variations on a paraphrase. In all cases, writing specialists could be partners in co-creating the teaching materials and/or co-facilitating the activity.

Conclusion

To progress in their ability to use sources with integrity, students benefit from explicit instruction on the complex skill of paraphrasing and, importantly, feedback on their paraphrasing. When instruction and feedback focus more on what paraphrasing allows the writer to do and less on instilling fear of plagiarism, more on students' responsibilities as members of discourse communities and less on technicalities, students' confidence and abilities will grow. Sustained collaboration between content instructors and writing centre professionals may make it more feasible to weave paraphrasing instruction and feedback throughout a student's program.

Recommendations

- Leverage opportunities for instructor-writing specialist collaboration
- Acknowledge conflicting notions of authorship
- Help students see paraphrasing as a powerful tool
- Avoid single-sentence and/or decontextualised practice activities
- De-emphasise plagiarism, but link paraphrasing to the values of academic integrity

- Provide feedback to students on their paraphrasing
- Integrate short activities and feedback opportunities beyond the first year

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