
Lesson 1: Developing Something to Say

Focus: Authority and originality

Description: Students develop a line of argument on a controversial topic, drawing from their own experiences and two source texts.

Rationale: Students may not understand what teachers mean by “originality” in the context of writing from sources. Furthermore, they may not have had experience developing their own arguments or combining their own ideas with those of source texts. This lesson, therefore, introduces them to these important skills of source-based writing.

Students: Intermediate to Advanced L2s; L1s

Preparation: Provide students with copies of the plagiarism policy of your institution and Howard’s (1995) “proposed policy on plagiarism,” which is part of the *College English* article, “Plagiarisms, authorships, and the academic death penalty.” As homework, ask them to read both texts, using active note-taking strategies (see Chapter 5, Lesson 4). The students should take notes that capture the main points of each text. Provide scaffolding questions such as: What specific behaviors are considered punishable in each policy? How is *plagiarism* defined? What sections does the policy have? The students should also take notes on their own responses to the texts. Scaffold this process by asking students to copy out a quote (using quotation marks and a page number citation) and either freewrite about their own related emotions and experiences or build supporting or counterarguments.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to freewrite on their personal connections to plagiarism and share what they wrote in small groups.
2. Ask students to work in small groups to compare the main ideas of the two texts and to discuss their ideas about which aspects of which policy they prefer.
3. Bring students back together as a class and model a “new” idea—namely, an idea that you have that does not occur in either text. For instance, the Howard policy does not explore the differences between the ramifications of being found “guilty” of prototypical plagiarism for international students and domestic ones. Encourage the students to generate other “new” ideas from their own knowledge and experience.

4. Assign a writing task. There are a variety of approaches students could take:
 - Compare the two positions, commenting on the good and bad aspects of each and using illustrations from their own experiences.
 - Write a letter to a friend discussing the topic, describing the differing positions that they have read about and commenting on them.
 - Critique one position, using ideas from the other and their own experiences.
 - Create their own position, based on ideas drawn from both positions and their own experiences.
5. Ask students to read one another's writing and give feedback on which aspects of the papers they see as "original."

Adaptations: Choose two texts that reveal basic disagreements about a different controversial topic that your students have some experience with.

Lesson 2: That's What I Do! Relating to Other Writers' Source Use

Focus: Source use—different approaches

Description: Students read L2 student writer remarks about their source use and discuss the remarks in a non-judgmental context.

Rationale: L2 writers have often experienced different ways of using source texts and constructing authority. This lesson, therefore, provides an opportunity for them to discuss and value these different approaches while at the same time providing an opening for the discussion of Western academic approaches to textual reuse.

Students: All levels of L2s

Preparation: Make a handout with several quotes from this list:

- "At certain stage you are at the border between imitation and plagiarism . . . First, it's pretty much imitation. The sentences are exactly the same . . . It's the very first step of developing your own writing style . . . And after some time, you change a lot and add in your personal style" (as quoted in Shi, 2006, p. 275).
- ". . . I don't have the vocabulary to express my own style . . . After I read an article, I tend to use exactly these words that were in the article because I think they sound better than mine" (as quoted in Shi, 2006, p. 273).

- ❑ “I consider it important to memorize sentences to write better. . . . If the English teacher required me to write a long English essay I would turn to famous sayings and sentences derived from famous writers and essays on the same topic. I would imitate what other people say and use their sentences in my essays. I would at most change a single word but I would not change the main frame or structure I would use famous sayings, proverbs, and quotable phrases quite often, . . . for I consider they are essential in writing. . . .” (Ho, 1998, p. 234, as quoted in Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999, pp. 54–55).
- ❑ “If you write an assignment from different references, I think it’s not plagiarism. It’s just like the mosaic” (as quoted in Shi, 2006, pp. 274–275)
- ❑ “What I’ve started doing now is to use the prescribed works [assigned texts] only, that’s what I’ve attempted to do particularly with my latest essays I’m trying to do so because when you come up with your own examples and your own ideas then it is assumed [by the teacher] that you are plagiarizing—simply because there is no referencing. Somehow it is assumed that whatever you know that is tangible and constructive you must have read it somewhere. It is impossible that you might have heard it or you might have thought it on your own” (as quoted in Angélil-Carter, 2000, p. 74).
- ❑ “. . . when I was reading as a preparation for an assignment or an essay, I would read maybe four readings, and then in my mind I would compile them into one whole, to make a coherent and logical argument, and then I write maybe four or eight pages, as one whole thing. So if I had to mention say Leftwich [the name of an author], immediately my logical flow is interrupted” (as quoted in Angélil-Carter, 2000, p. 88).

Procedure:

1. Give students the handout with the quotes, and let them freewrite about one quote that catches their eye.
2. Form groups among students who wrote about the same quote. Ask groups to discuss the quote and report back to the class on the issues that came up in their discussions.
3. Ask students to examine their own source use on a writing task that they have already completed. In writing, ask them to describe their source use and explain their citing decisions, drawing on the quotes for comparison or contrast.

Adaptations: Select one quote that seems particularly apt for your students, assign a freewrite, and then discuss afterward. Or, set up the quotes on google docs or a discussion board on a course website as a way for students to share their thoughts.