

# Introduction

## Why We Wrote This Book

*TEACHING EFFECTIVE SOURCE USE* is a comprehensive and practical resource for teachers working with student writers, particularly second language (L2) writers. We undertook this project because, although there has been an explosion of research and theorizing about source use over the past twenty years, many of the insights gained from this work have not yet made their way into classrooms. Indeed, a 2010 survey found that writing instructors were not satisfied with the available teaching materials and pointed to the need for more comprehensive, high-quality instructional materials that teachers can use to support L2 writers' writing from sources (Tomaš, 2010). A recent review of L2 writing textbooks published since then also revealed minimal attention to source use. Perhaps because of the lack of good materials, the approaches of some instructors is to spend classroom time focusing on the development of decontextualized sentence-level skills (practicing paraphrasing one sentence at a time, for example), to offer warnings against misuse of sources, and to rely on software to detect plagiarism when grading. While such approaches may be useful at times, we believe that they need to be situated within a much more comprehensive approach that emphasizes not the mechanics of source use but its meaning.

We have written this book for all educators who help student writers with source-based writing assignments. Developed for teachers working with L2 writers, many of the lessons have proven useful for native (L1) speakers as well. The book can be used in a variety of contexts, including college-level ESL writing courses, Intensive English Program writing courses, high school ESL classes, and EFL programs in international contexts. It can also be used by instructors teaching in Writing across the Curriculum, Writing in the Disciplines, and graduate L2 teacher training programs; by consultants and tutors in university writing centers; and by library faculty working with students on research projects. The book can be used to develop a lesson to meet an immediate need, but our primary vision is for teachers to use the book to develop lessons on source use for an entire course.

## A Multidimensional Approach

Our approach to source use has five dimensions that provide multiple vantage points from which to address the goal of teaching effective source use:

1. *The concept dimension* defines keywords and values that undergird Western academic source use.
2. *The discourse dimension* addresses the ways in which sources are used within discourse communities.
3. *The sentence dimension* addresses the skills necessary to paraphrase, summarize, and quote effectively.
4. *The process dimension* covers strategies for effective source use employed during the entire reading-thinking-writing process.
5. *The response dimension* emphasizes learning to give, receive, and apply feedback on source use.

The dimensions allow us to conceptualize different perspectives on source use that teachers can take. They are not discrete but overlapping, and many of our lessons incorporate ideas from more than one dimension. Our multidimensional approach not only helps student writers avoid plagiarism but guides them to articulate their source-based ideas more effectively and with a more authoritative voice. We do not provide lessons that focus on minutiae, such as the use of ellipsis to omit words from a quote, because we believe that such things are details and should be addressed as questions about them arise rather than in formal class lessons. There are also many resources available that address these types of details. Instead, we present lessons that focus on meaning because we believe that they empower students to become strong academic writers.

### Terminology

Our multidimensional approach is non-punitive. Throughout the book, we use terminology that avoids judgment. Because the term *plagiarism* carries ethical connotations, we prefer to use *textual reuse*, which is descriptive and allows for an open discussion of the decisions writers make as they construct their texts. When we discuss the conventional view of plagiarism, we prefer the term *prototypical plagiarism* (Pecorari, 2003) because it flags the fact that the construct of plagiarism is problematic. We use the term *attribution* to refer to the various

formal ways in which writers give credit to their sources, including quotation marks, citations, and a reference page. When attribution does not meet the standards of the context, we prefer to call it *unconventional attribution* rather than *inadequate attribution*, as the former term is less judgmental.

We also prefer the term *attempted paraphrase* (Keck, 2006) to *unacceptable paraphrase* because it emphasizes the effort of the student writer rather than inadequacy. Finally, we use the terms *source use* and *referencing* as umbrellas for all of these terms. *Effective source use* refers to source use that is rhetorically persuasive and/or establishes authority and that is well-integrated linguistically. *Conventional source use* refers to source use that follows the rules relevant to the context.

## Using This Book

We suggest that readers begin with the first chapter, “*Plagiarism*” *Hysteria: Taking a Stance against the Cat-and-Mouse Game*, to become familiar with the ideas and assumptions that frame our approach. This chapter discusses the ways that plagiarism has traditionally been cast in ethical terms and argues that this frame is not conducive to student writers’ mastering of effective source use. We stress that teachers should recognize the diverse behaviors that have been included under the umbrella of plagiarism, understand the historic roots of plagiarism as a cultural construct, and appreciate the diversity of plagiarism standards and judgments made by different individuals and in different disciplines. Further, we challenge the stereotyping of L2 writers as plagiarizers and explore three approaches in the literature to understanding L2 writers’ source use: culture, language, and identity.

Following this introductory chapter, we lay out our approach to teaching effective source use over five chapters, each of which addresses one of the five dimensions. These five chapters may be read out of order. Each is structured similarly, beginning with a discussion of the theory and research that informs the dimension, followed by presentation of lessons for the classroom. Each chapter ends with a summary of take-away points.

Chapter 2, *The Concept Dimension*, addresses the cultural ideas that students need to understand in order to use references effectively and conventionally. These ideas include authority, voice, originality, knowledge transformation, ownership, discourse community, common knowledge, plagiarism, and copyright. We argue that it is necessary to teach L2 writers how to be original and how to establish authority in writing. We believe that it is important to discuss

why textual reuse can engender such strong negative reactions in some contexts while being allowed, even expected, in others.

In Chapter 3, *The Discourse Dimension*, we focus on teaching source use from the perspective of establishing authority and making room for one's ideas within a discourse community. We discuss both text-level source use decisions and the larger disciplinary discourses that shape these decisions. We explore the rhetorical functions of references, connect the notions of stance and engagement to referencing, and briefly discuss disciplinary differences in referencing.

Then in Chapter 4, *The Sentence Dimension*, we move from discourse- and text-level issues to sentence-level issues. We explore patchwriting in detail and encourage teachers to explore the topic together with students as a way to open a dialogue about how L2 writers construct texts. In addition, we discuss the need to teach L2 writers how to distinguish their voices from those of their source texts in order to learn to paraphrase and quote conventionally. We discuss what makes paraphrasing and summarizing difficult, including the formulaic nature of language and the fact that paraphrasing often involves critiquing an idea or combining it with others in addition to restating it accurately. We also discuss what makes quoting difficult, focusing on how to incorporate quotes smoothly in one's writing.

In Chapter 5, *The Process Dimension*, we look at the use of sources over the entire reading-thinking-writing process so that teachers can scaffold and assess the subprocesses that students are often left to accomplish on their own. We present strategies for avoiding procrastination, selecting sources, reading, keeping track of sources, and integrating ideas from source texts into a paper.

Chapter 6, *The Response Dimension*, discusses the importance of ongoing, formative response as a way to practice applying the rules of effective source use. Because it is important to support students so that they can understand and know how to apply teacher feedback, we discuss response as a dialogue between teacher and student that can give teachers insight into student theories of source use. We discuss self-assessment and peer response as ways to develop the meta-language of source use and independence in writing.

In the final chapter, *Bringing It All Together*, we show how three experienced writing instructors (the co-authors of this book) incorporate lessons from each of the five dimensions into their writing courses. Specifically, Jennifer describes her first-year college composition course for L2 writers; Zuzana describes her research paper writing course for third- and fourth-year undergraduate L2 writers; and Ilka describes a graduate writing course for L2 writers.

To help teachers quickly access the lessons described in the various chapters of the book, a Lessons Chart that gives an overview appears in Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 includes a list of texts and videos at a range of levels for use in the classroom. Appendix 3 shows writing samples that we have used to illustrate our discussions of lessons and that can be used to develop your own lessons. Appendix 4 features three types of idea organizers: a graphic organizer, an outline, and a chart.

## A Note on Source Use in the Context of Academic Writing

We would like to acknowledge that teaching source use is only one part of the work of teaching writing. We certainly do not want to imply that other issues that arise when teaching writing, such as creating space for students to pursue their own ideas, expand their analytical thinking abilities, and develop their writing processes, should be replaced by the rhetorical or genre concerns that are part of referencing. However, referencing is a fundamental way that academic writers provide support, construct authority, and establish significance, so learning to reference is important to the growth of students as academic writers. Regardless of the context in which you work, we hope that this book helps you gain insights into the complexities and nuances of source use and leaves instructors feeling informed and confident to deal with this component of academic writing. We also hope that the lessons included here help instructors build confident and skilled academic writers who have authoritative voices and can weave sources into their writing conventionally, effectively, and meaningfully.