Plagiarism Education and Prevention: A Subject-Driven Case-Based Approach.

Plagiarism: it remains the perennial issue on college campuses, makes for popular fodder in the media, and appears regularly in the scholarly and professional literature. With so much already said about it, one wonders, not without irony, whether anyone can truly add anything new to the discussion. Bradley does. In keeping with the trend towards teaching information literacy skills in the context of discipline-specific research problems, Bradley gives practical guidance on how to tailor anti-plagiarism education to specific scholarly communities. Expanding on a chapter in Lynn Lampert’s Student Plagiarism: An Academic Librarian’s Guide (reviewed in RUSQ 49.3), Bradley complements her theoretical claims with usable examples for stimulating discussion and debate about plagiarism with students in the classroom.

Each chapter is organized by subject and focuses on those that best represent unique, discipline-specific issues in the arts and humanities, social sciences, sciences, and professional schools. Each section begins with a brief explanation of the discipline’s citation practices and its attitude toward plagiarism. This overview is then followed by an actual “case study” that illustrates the complexities and nuances of the issue as they relate to that particular community. Sharing these examples with students will help them understand that plagiarism has real life consequences (outside of school) and can impact their professional futures – making ethical use of information a more relevant topic. Discussion questions, based on the scenario, are truly interesting and help stimulate critical thinking.

Each section is essentially a complete lesson plan; one can easily imagine incorporating her examples and questions into a BI presentation on plagiarism. Though Bradley advocates for a subject-driven approach, she also includes general examples that could be used for discussion in First Year Experience courses. In other words, she accommodates several teaching scenarios so that instructors can easily create an entire session on plagiarism. Basically, she invents the wheel so librarians (or teaching faculty) don’t have to.

Though those serving international students might wish that she included some discussion of how plagiarism is relative to culture, instruction librarians, especially those new to teaching, will not be disappointed.

Meagan Lacy, Assistant Librarian, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN