This thesis argues for a new approach to developing theories and practices concerning plagiarism and student writing through research and scholarship. This approach, entitled the ethic of collaboration, aims to challenge romantic singular authorship and argues for research and scholarship that is transparent about its influences and engages multiple perspectives. As an example, this thesis also reports the results of a qualitative research study that employs this ethic and seeks to learn more about the actual lived practices of first-year writing instructors as they discuss plagiarism in their classroom. Observations of and interviews with instructors reveal that instructors employ very diverse approaches to teaching about plagiarism and source use, and their discourse deploys various different frames, a system of language that organizes and interprets the meaning, importance, and consequence of plagiarism. Implications for classroom instructors, writing program administrators, and particularly scholarship and research on plagiarism are discussed.
TEACHING PLAGIARISM: DISCOURSE ON PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN FIRST-YEAR WRITING

A Thesis

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Chair: ______________________
James E. Porter
Reader: _____________________
Jason Palmeri
Reader: _____________________
Katherine J. Ronald
# Table of Contents

List of Figures .............................................................................................................................. iii

Dedication .................................................................................................................................. iv

Acknowledgements ..................................................................................................................... v

Chapter 1:  
Teaching Plagiarism: Discourse on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity in First-year Writing ................................................................................................................................. 1

Chapter 2:  
A Pedagogy for Plagiarism? Contemporary Scholarship and the Narrative Tradition........ 9

Chapter 3:  
Methodology and the Ethic of Collaboration........................................................................ 18

Chapter 4:  
Results – Instructors’ Approaches to Teaching Plagiarism and Source Use.................. 27

Chapter 5:  
Framing Plagiarism: Community, Ethos, Correctness, and Loss.................................. 41

Chapter 6:  
Conclusion............................................................................................................................... 50

Epilogue..................................................................................................................................... 55

Works Cited.................................................................................................................................. 56

Appendix A: Interview Questions............................................................................................. 62
List of Figures

Figure 1: Qualitative Data Grid ................................................................. 24
Figure 2: Ashleigh’s Messages about Plagiarism and Academic Integrity ...................... 30
Figure 3: T. Winter’s Messages about Plagiarism and Academic Integrity .................... 33
Figure 4: Henry’s Messages about Plagiarism and Academic Integrity ....................... 37
Figure 5: Abraxas’ Messages about Plagiarism and Academic Integrity ....................... 39
Dedication

For my Cite Right students, who first inspired me with their stories and experiences.

To Michelle, my most patient wife, who daily endured my trials with me and taught me just as much.

To the Lord, my God. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight.
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The number of those who share in this project is inestimable. I recognize their contribution here, though they deserve so much more. I consider those mentioned here not just friends, counselors, or influences but also co-authors. These are the voice with whom I daily engage and that comprise this work.

First, I must thank James Porter, whose voice and influence was central to this project. This thesis has benefitted tremendously from his insight and advice. My committee members, Jason Palmeri and Kate Ronald, also deserve thanks. Their constant praise and support have given me confidence and strength.

I owe much to Dana Driscoll and Sherry Wynn Perdue of Oakland University, whose influence, instruction, and support drove and enabled me to pursue life as a scholar. It was with Sherry and the Oakland University Writing Center that I began to consider the difficulty of plagiarism.

Both Oakland University and Miami University have done much for me. Oakland’s Departments of Writing and Rhetoric and of Japanese Language and Literature and Miami’s Department of English have been instrumental in my development as a scholar and even more as a person. The writing centers of Oakland and Miami and their staff have been my dearest friends and my second homes for many wonderful years. The friends and colleagues I have at both institutions have been essential to this work.

The instructors in this study are most deserving of thanks for their patients, contributions, and participation. I have learned much from their words.

Most of all, though, I must thank my Cite Right students, for whom I began this work. In my three years working with these students, I learned so much about plagiarism and the experience of students. They shared with me their struggles, negotiations, and their triumphs. Their voices echo in this work.

And to the many more, thank you.
Chapter 1: Teaching Plagiarism: Discourse on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity in First-year Writing

I begin this essay with a story.

- Michael Grossberg (159)

Want to hear a funny story? I heard it thirdhand… A teaching assistant encountered an instance of plagiarism in her class. She returned all the papers and said to the students: ‘Someone has committed plagiarism. If you confess, I will work with you to teach you how to improve and won’t file charges.” Nearly all the students in the class…confessed to plagiarism. What do students understand when they hear the term “plagiarism”? Is it the same thing that is understood by faculty?

- Susan Blum (11)

So often when we composition instructors discuss plagiarism, we talk of stories. Encounters we’ve had with plagiarism, secondhand stories of student bravado, the investigative work done to prove it, the dancing students have done to excuse it – most writing instructors have something to share. Scholarship on plagiarism is a store of such stories. A wide variety of articles (see for example, Howard, “Plagiarism Pentimento”; Murphy; Zwagerman; DeVoss and Rosati; Kitalong) begin with stories of the teacher-scholar’s encounter with plagiarism. These experiences have driven much important work in unpacking the unstable idea of plagiarism, including theorizing plagiarism (Howard, Standing), considering the impact of plagiarism on student identity (Valentine), and reconsidering approaches to policy (Price). In all of these cases, these stories propelled these scholars to rich explorations of authorship, academic integrity, and pedagogy. The contributions of such scholarship have substantially impacted teaching of and beliefs about student source use in writing instruction. These stories are important.

But now it is time to move beyond individual stories. In this project, I argue for a new ethic for research and scholarship on plagiarism and authorship, one that recognizes the collaborative and intertextual nature of writing (Porter, “Intertextuality”; Ede and Lunsford). Following the example of Rebecca Moore Howard and Sandra Jamieson and their Citation Project, I argue that plagiarism scholarship now requires collaborative essays and empirical research studies to begin to affirm, challenge, complicate, revise, or even refute the beliefs and practices we’ve built from our personal experiences and lore. I call this view an ethic of collaboration which espouses as most important a plurality of voices collaborating and contributing to create new knowledge and transparency of influence to acknowledge these and other voices. My project employs this ethic in the particularly needful area of writing pedagogy to address plagiarism.

Pedagogical discussions, in particular, have embraced these individual tales and anecdotes. Scholarship which focuses on addressing plagiarism through teaching and coursework offers many recommendations for what instructors can do in their classroom; however, such articles prefer to recommend that author’s personal activity, assignment, or scaffold (see, for example, Desena; Whitaker; Adler-Kassner and Estrem). Although these articles do offer useful strategies, the current scholarship on plagiarism and pedagogy reveals incredibly little about what many teachers actually do beyond what they experientially report about their own
classrooms. That is to say, we know very little about the ways we are teaching plagiarism beyond self-reports, beyond the reflective lore, anecdote, and personal experience of individual scholar-teachers. As a field, we need to establish best practices based not only on our experience but also upon data-supported studies, particularly in regards to writing pedagogies to address plagiarism. Following Jamieson and Howard, this project aims to encourage this conversation.

I return to the selection that began this chapter, from Susan Blum’s wonderfully polyvocal *My Word! Plagiarism and College Culture*, that concludes with following important questions: “What do students understand when they hear the term ‘plagiarism’? Is it the same thing that is understood by faculty?” (11). These seemingly simple questions belie much complexity. My study asks a question at the intersection of Blum’s concerns for student and faculty understanding. I ask: what messages about plagiarism and academic integrity might writing instructors convey to students in first-year composition courses? How do writing instructors position plagiarism in their teaching: what framework do they use; how frequently is plagiarism discussed; when during the course is it discussed; who should care about plagiarism; who or what does plagiarism violate? How is academic integrity discussed: how do instructors invoke ethics and honesty; do they only discuss dishonesty and cheating; are consequences the only reason to respect academic integrity?

To answer these and other questions, my study employs cases studies of four composition instructors in a first-year writing course in a Midwest public university’s composition program. During this semester-long study, participants allowed me to interview them, observe their courses, and collect documents from their classroom. Their contributions to my study reveal several different approaches these instructors take to discuss plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use with their students. In addition to documenting their strategies, I describe a category of ideological frames instructors employed and demonstrated in their teaching. These frames suggest the importance, value, and purpose of source use, attribution, and academic integrity, as well as the significance, injury, and consequence of plagiarism. Before I can begin to unpack any of these ideas, however, I must first describe the exact scope of this work.

**Definitions of plagiarism**

Definition has been one of the most vexing acts in plagiarism scholarship; indeed, “All discussions of plagiarism are therefore vexed by problems in defining the term” (Howard, *Standing* 90). Though plagiarism bears a common implied understanding of the use of another’s ideas or text without attribution, many scholars recognize that plagiarism is hardly that simple:

- Howard: “Too much discussion of plagiarism (both modern and postmodern) treats it as a unified phenomenon, whereas in fact the term encompasses a heterogeneous range of textual practices” (*Standing* 19).
- Norris: “Is [plagiarism] the same as a violation of copyright laws? Is it a universally understood concept? Does it differ from country to country?” (3).
- Buranen and Roy: “Yet, in textbooks and in university publications about academic integrity, plagiarism is often treated as a monolithic, uncomplicated concept or event, whose meaning is simply taken for granted. The assumption seems to be that we all know what we mean when we talk about it: it just is (emphasis in original).” (xvii).
Wheat: “This idea of sole authorship [which undergirds conventional definitions of plagiarism] belies the very concept of ‘writing as a social process, one composed of a dialogic community and collaborative efforts’” (71).

For reasons such as these, Margaret Price argues that plagiarism rejects any “absolute or fixed” definition or meaning. Indeed, Howard’s *Standing in the Shadow of Giants* goes on to recognize, “Asking composition teachers for their personal definitions of plagiarism plainly acknowledges that the definition and treatment of plagiarism is socially constructed, and thus subject to change” (20). While many scholars offer compelling new ways to think about definition, they also ultimately suggest many differing and, at times, conflicting *plagiarisms*. Indeed, in the introduction to their edited collection *Pluralizing Plagiarism*, Rebecca Moore Howard and Amy Robillard write,

> Plagiarism must be pluralized if we are to ethically and productively apply our nuanced knowledge about writing to this form of authorship. We know, for instance, that one size does not fit all when it comes to writing pedagogy… The same must be done in our approaches and responses to plagiarism. (3)

Accordingly, it is difficult to offer a satisfying definition of plagiarism. I do not attempt to impose a single definition of plagiarism onto this study or its participants. To productively engage with instructors addressing plagiarism, I must also engage with their variety of definitions and understandings about plagiarism. With that said, a brief description of common approaches to definition will be instructive to context the discussions of plagiarism in my own study, as such common understandings pervade instructor attitudes toward plagiarism.

For Susan McLeod, there are two definitions of plagiarism which appear commonly. The first defines plagiarism as an explicitly *willful* act – that is, the student must have intended to plagiarize, mislead, or deceive (8). Indeed several authors have argued for intent as the crucial element in defining plagiarism. Howard’s descriptions of patchwriting situate it as a practice of learning to write, where the intent is not to deceive or eschew labor but to learn how to employ academic discourse, and accordingly she separates patchwriting entirely from plagiarism by reason of motive. The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) has defined plagiarism as an exclusively intentional act, labeling all else a “misuse of sources.” Sandra Jamieson argues, “As along as our pedagogy, policies, textbooks, software programs, and scholarship continue to focus on the misuse of sources and ignore the larger *intention* of source use itself, we will continue to fail to address the problem of plagiarism in any discipline” (Jamieson 80). In a way, her argument both agrees with and critiques the CWPA’s position. Jamieson absolutely wants intent to be included in discussions about plagiarism, but she is also arguing here for a move away from language that focuses on *misuse*, on that exclusively negative or pejorative element. Instead, use (without any negative prefix) is the focus and the concern of scholars and instructors.

Jamieson’s point is well-taken, as much popular and scholarly discussion of plagiarism focuses on negative, especially the criminal, as seen in the common use of the term “guilty” to describe students who have plagiarized. Plagiarism is embedded in a discourse with other transgressive, criminal, deceitful activities, such as cheating, fraud, lying, theft\(^1\), and even rape

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\(^1\) See Robillard “Pass it On” for more on theft as a metaphor for plagiarism.
(Robillard, “Theft” 407; “Howard “Sexuality, Textuality” 482). As Howard says elsewhere, “Many commentators agree that plagiarism, in at least some of its forms, is cheating and is thus a moral choice behavior” (Standing 21). Indeed, Robillard recognizes that the emotions that plagiarism summons in teachers result from “an insult to one’s most sacred values” (“We Won’t” 899); plagiarism flaunts those principles which many hold dear – originality, autonomy, ownership, hard work. Howard’s “Ethics of Plagiarism” reveals the common conception that “original writing demonstrated the good character of the writer, whereas derivative writing was the hallmark of the debased reading that the masses appreciated” (83). Situated in such discourse, intent is not seen as the essential determinant of whether something is plagiarism but more often as an excuse explaining away immorality, one that is not easily believed or accepted (Stearns 11).

As a result, “Authors’ intentions are excluded from the definition of plagiarism” (Howard Standing 158). In this way, the role of intent in definitions of plagiarism is shaky at best, often left to the whims of the adjudicator or administrator.

The second of McLeod’s definitions is “one that appears to be the operative definition in most journal articles on the subject” – any undocumented copying or borrowing is plagiarism, without any regard for intentionality (11). In her chapter in Haviland and Mullin’s Who Owns This Text: Plagiarism, Authorship, and Disciplinary Cultures, Linda Bergmann describes this second definition as “as a pejorative catch-all term to describe all cases of appropriation, misattribution, and non-attribution of initial authors,” recognizing its inflexibility and presentation of a unified and singular plagiarism as problematic (132).

Rebecca Moore Howard takes Bergmann’s point a step further; she agrees that the term “plagiarism” is problematic but argues for its complete removal from our common vocabulary. In her own words: “Let’s quit using the term plagiarism altogether” (“Sexuality, Textuality” 489). Howard reaches this conclusion in part through her difficulty in defining plagiarism. “Plagiarism eludes definition because it does far more work that it admits to” (“Sexuality, Textuality” 474). Howard’s essay uncovers the ideology of bodily, sexual regulation embedded in plagiarism, whose metaphors define the author as exclusively male, the text as female victim, and plagiarism as rape. Strikingly, imitation, collaboration, and plagiarism (forms of unoriginal thought) are gendered female, as weak and unmanly forms of writing (“Sexuality, Textuality” 485). Mary Queen puts it this way, “The function of gendering author(ship) as male is to distinguish between and indicate the value of the institutionally and legally authorized Author and that of the unauthorized ‘scribbling’ of women” (107). Elsewhere, Howard also describes plagiarism work as a gatekeeping function, maintaining a hierarchy has student writers at the bottom (“New Abolitionism” 89). While not arguing for the rejection of the term “plagiarism,” Kathryn Valentine likewise finds that discourse of plagiarism works to limit, if not appropriate student identities. She argues that plagiarism traditionally only allows for two identities, the honest student who would never plagiarize and the dishonest student who does – “punishing them for not being the right kind of person” (94). Unaware of the moral discourse that informs this binary, students are unprepared when their identities and morality are scrutinized and marked (as dishonest) as a result of a textual act. Despite the identity work that plagiarism serves and Howard’s convincing call for its unseating (and perhaps because we lack a good replacement), we still find ourselves saddled with this term (and all its metaphors and definitions) over ten years later, though perhaps we have unpacked it more.
If we are to use the word “plagiarism” and indeed attempt to define it, Bergmann reminds us that the term plagiarism is still problematic if we do not allow our definitions to account for professional and disciplinary differences. Several scholars have documented and discussed the varying standards different fields and careers hold concerning source use and especially collaboration. Or, as Sandra Jamieson notes, many disciplines (and indeed many professions) feel that “these rules about how to use and cite sources don’t actually apply in my discipline” (77). In her study surveying professors across disciplines about plagiarism in their field, Amy Martin found that social science, humanities, and science faculty all differed in their opinions of what constitutes ethical collaboration practices. For example, Martin offered her participants a scenario wherein a student incorporates word-for-word recommendations he received from a peer’s review; the participants were asked to describe the scenario on a “continuum from ‘completely ethical’ to ‘not plagiarism’” (58). In their responses, 72% of faculty found this situation completely unethical, while 50% or more faculty from the Humanities and Social Sciences described it as ethical or not plagiarism (69). Indeed, Jamieson also describes differing values for humanities and sciences in her contribution to Pluralizing Plagiarism:

In some disciplines, especially the sciences, general information matters, and it is much less important to know who discovered it; in others, especially the social sciences, data matter, and the gatherer is identified to allow readers to evaluate the validity of that data…; in still others, and especially in the humanities, words and creative product are the object of study, and so it matters very much that the creator be named and given appropriate credit. (80)

This description is not at all unfamiliar as Foucault describes the author-function among various fields in a similar way (237).

Such differences continue beyond faculty and disciplines into the professional world as well. Even within the professional administration of a university, Bergmann finds a much different standard for plagiarism where the individual is not the sole owner of an idea or text but rather the institution as a whole (141). This belief manifests in several ways: the attachment of an administrator’s name to documents not his/her own, the reuse and remixing of stock phrases and expressions throughout public engagements and speaking occasions, or the texts circulated up and down the university hierarchy (including down to students) – texts which Bergmann describes as boilerplate. Chris Anson found a similar boilerplate philosophy at play in an article describing source use practices in the military: “Written text is employed in [the military] system to achieve countless purposes, yet unlike academia, textual production is more often an activity designed to sustain and improve the collective effort of the organization’s members than one that allows individual members to accrue credit and credibility” (“Fraudulent” 37). Anson goes on to describe how the military values of efficiency and productivity can encourage “plagiarism,” if it saves time and effort. Jessica Reyman also identifies many of these same boilerplate-like practices in technical writing professions (61).

Such variety, flexibility, and pragmatism among academic and professional contexts confirm what many theories of authorship have long suggested: that individual authorship and originality are not absolute constructs. The world and its writing do not actually engage in the autonomy which the Romantic writers venerated and celebrated and which still seems to influence (if not comprise) many understandings and discussions of plagiarism today. The works of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes have been particularly influential in recognizing, as
Barthes put it, the death of the author. In his “What is an Author?” Foucault describes the “author-function,” its meaning, and its history. He describes it as “tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine and articulate the realm of discourses” (….). He particularly describes the author-function as an “object of appropriation,” sharing its rise and relationship with property rights and ideas of individual ownership (235) and as recognizing an “individual’s ‘profundity’ or ‘creative’ power” (237), celebrating the author’s genius, the construct that gives plagiarism weight today. Barthes questions this system of authorship that links individual genius and property to texts. He quite pointedly argues that writing only begins when “the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death” (125); in his view, writing immediately separates the subject-writer from the product-writing, and “all identity is lost.”

Indeed, such a point has precedent even in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, wherein Socrates’ critique of writing also recognizes its disembodied nature: “You might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them…they always say one and the same thing… it knows not to whom to speak or not speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect of help itself” (x). For Barthes, writing completely severs the author from the text. Perhaps more importantly, Barthes acknowledges, “A text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, *none of them original*, blend and clash…” (128, emphasis added). He goes on to explain that no writing can be original, only resorting to this blending, clashing and indeed mixing from his “ready-formed dictionary.” From these discussions, new theories of imitation, source use, and “mixing” have emerged, complicating the view of the genius and originality of the author, such as theories of intertextuality, remix, and, more recently, assemblage have called us to recognize the interconnectedness and interdependency of all texts (Porter, “Intextuality” 34; Johnson-Eilola and Selber 380).

In addition to the term “plagiarism,” academic integrity recurs as another important term throughout this project. And like plagiarism, academic integrity is a slippery term that can be quite vague. The International Center for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as “a commitment to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility” (“Fundamental Values”), although it is often better known only as the opposite of academic dishonesty (Davis, Drinian, and Bertram Gallant 168). In relation to plagiarism and composition more specifically, I prefer Amy Robillard description of “sacred values” in the university as a definition of academic integrity: “In the academy generally and in composition studies specifically, sacred values include those associated with work—honesty, struggle, ethics—and those associated with authorship—originality, autonomy, morality, and proprietorship” (“We Won’t” 20). However, as with the definition of “plagiarism,” I likewise here do not assert this definition as the only acceptable one, as I aim to learn how instructors are defining and describing this in their own classroom not in order to measure or evaluate that definition but merely to observe and document it. While I consider plagiarism and academic integrity – as well as source use and attribution – as being distinct (but related) concepts, it is worth noting that I use all these terms together throughout this project as they are central concepts in plagiarism instruction.

**Scope of study**

These discussions of the definition and nature of plagiarism reveal a complex and, at times, conflicting understanding of what plagiarism is and what we should think about it.
However, while I do not assert my own definition for plagiarism, that is not to say there are no bounds which limit my exploration and discussion. My study limits its scope by restricting my exploration of plagiarism in the following ways. First, this study primarily considers only plagiarism of written, alphabetic texts. I limit my focus in this way for reasons of manageability. According, I do not explore issues concerning plagiarism of multimodal digital media, such as images, videos, or audio clips, and of copyright and fair use laws. Though all instructors I observed did require student engagement with multimodal texts at some point in their courses, I make no claims or assertions about this instruction as it pertains to plagiarism.

Second, as may be apparent from my research site and participants, this study only considers plagiarism as it pertains to college students and college-level instruction in first-year composition courses. Again, though a simple point, this restriction removes my project from discussions of primary or secondary education and plagiarism or plagiarism by professionals (though one instructor does use professional reputation as a metaphor repeatedly). I concern myself only with how teachers of writing in higher education discuss plagiarism with college students.

Third, although this study emerged from my concern with how students learn about plagiarism, I did not at all engage the student perspective on these issues. That is to say, it was not the purpose of this study to learn about student beliefs, attitudes, or writing practices of or about plagiarism. Though I noted student activity during classroom observations, the focus of this study is on instructors and their beliefs, attitudes, and practices, as my purpose tends more toward documenting instructor’s teaching strategies than evaluating the effect thereof.

In order to best unpack current understandings of plagiarism Chapter 2, A Pedagogy for Plagiarism? Contemporary Scholarship and the Narrative Tradition, engages in a critical review of contemporary scholarship on plagiarism and pedagogy in the field of rhetoric and composition. Such a review not only establishes current thinking about the teaching of plagiarism but also reveals an emphasis on the individual teacher-scholar as theorist and author, an emphasis which contradicts the theoretical understanding of authorship that Foucault and Barthes suggest and that much of this scholarship celebrates.

Chapter 3, Methodology and the Ethic of Collaboration, argues for a new emphasis that embraces intertextuality and influence as an ethic and methodology for study and discussion of plagiarism. I elaborate on how I employ this methodology in my own study, which seeks to document how instructors teach about plagiarism and to discover what messages they convey about plagiarism through their discourse. To do this, I engage in four instructor case studies through interview and observations. I present my method for analyzing this data through through several binaries which characterize modern discussions of plagiarism, drawn from my review of the scholarship.

Chapter 4, Results – Instructors’ Approaches to Teaching Plagiarism and Source Use, presents the results of these observations of teachers through detailed description of each classroom. I suggest what sort of messages about plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use they convey to students through these strategies and reveal a great diversity in approaches for addressing plagiarism in these classrooms.
Chapter 5, Framing Plagiarism: Community, Ethos, Correctness, and Loss, builds upon these descriptions to articulate four ideological frames which influence these conversations: the frame of community, the frame of ethos, the frame of loss, and the frame of correctness. Community and ethos, in particular, draw heavily on the idea of academic community to motivate students in radically different ways. The former positions students as members of the community proving their legitimacy, and the latter suggests that students attempt to gain access and membership through rhetorical performances of citation and attribution. Loss emphasizes the consequence of plagiarism, and correctness suggests a rhetorical adherence to standards for effective writing.

In Chapter 6, Conclusion, I describe the implications arising from these results for future scholarship and for teaching and administrative practice. I suggest the ethic of collaboration as a new methodology for plagiarism studies so that scholarship on plagiarism no longer continues to valorize and emphasis the single author. Comparing discursive messages and teaching strategies among instructors, I reveal the very different ideas about plagiarism and academic integrity to which students are exposed in first-year composition and discuss the implications of these differing messages for writing program administrators training new instructors and for instructors seeking to present a cohesive message about source use and attribution to students.

While my study cannot even begin to fully describe the variety of strategies and approaches instructors use to discuss plagiarism with students, I hope that my work might begin a conversation on this topic – one which would lead to more critical and reflective teaching practices and awareness of what we present to our students, to more scholarship which would engage multiple voices and multiple authors to build new knowledge about authorship and writing, and to a better understanding of what we as a field believe plagiarism to be.
Chapter 2: A Pedagogy for Plagiarism? Contemporary Scholarship and the Narrative Tradition

“Plagiarism is hot…” – Adler-Kassner, Howard, and Anson 231.

As Adler-Kassner, Howard, and Anson may attest, scholarly conversation on plagiarism and academic integrity in the classroom abounds, particularly in composition studies. Indeed, articles on plagiarism can be found in the English Journal as early as 1920, wherein Dora Smith defends Shakespeare from students’ accusations of plagiarism. Since that time, many scholars have critically examined the role of academic integrity, plagiarism, ethics, and student source use in student writing and teaching. In order to advance new ideas on pedagogies to address plagiarism and academic integrity, it is necessary and productive to revisit this past scholarship. In this chapter, I engage in a critical review of plagiarism scholarship on teaching and instruction in the field of rhetoric and composition since 1990. Through this review, I aim to demonstrate 1) the narrative, individualistic tradition that has pervaded this scholarship and 2) key concepts and influences in our current understandings of teaching plagiarism.

Although the ideas forwarded in many of the essays described here have been foundational to developing a critical perspective on plagiarism and have created discussions rife with important insights, instructive teaching strategies, and novel approaches to addressing academic dishonesty, much of contemporary scholarship on plagiarism has drawn only from narrative, lore, and personal experience to advance claims on this topic. I argue that we now require beliefs and practices based on polyvocal scholarship and transparency of influence to build upon these works – a methodology for plagiarism scholarship I call the ethic of collaboration.

This review only includes scholarship from the field of rhetoric and composition. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of our work, discrete disciplinary lines fail to determine who is and is not within the field. Accordingly, I regard as being within this field any scholarship on plagiarism and academic integrity which considers these topics as issues in the practice of writing, of literacy, and of the writing student. As Howard and Robillard remind us, “Plagiarism in indeed a form of writing” (2); likewise Kathryn Valentine argues, “Plagiarism is a literacy practice; plagiarism is something that people do with reading and writing” (89). While this is broad net, it still functions to exclude those scholars (such as Donald McCabe, Tricia Bertram Gallant, or Tracey Bretag) whose focus is the much broader issue of academic integrity and dishonesty in all of its forms. Additionally, I include in this review only works which may have had or would have higher visibility among composition and rhetoric scholars. As this reviews aims to offer a broad overview of the major discussions and inquiries which have informed the compositionist’s understanding of plagiarism, essays published in journals unfamiliar to rhetoric and composition scholars would do little to effect this purpose. Lastly, I have chosen to limit my review to scholarship within roughly the past two decades, as I believe Howard’s book Standing in the Shadows of Giants has already done well to review and synthesize understandings from most of the 20th century.

In what follows, I first hope to show these articles contribute to a growing lore – stories and feelings that inform what we implicitly believe about plagiarism, students and their source use, the way we teach academic integrity, and what works and doesn’t. Together with the focus on personal experiences, this creates a rather dense mythology about plagiarism in the field. I
then turn to pedagogical discussions in scholarship which explore how curriculum, coursework, or classroom instructors might address this topic with students. Finally, I offer examples of empirical research, what they have offered our understandings of student source use and plagiarism, and how they help to address the myths we have created, as well as highlight particular areas in plagiarism scholarship that would benefit from empirical studies.

**The Narrative Tradition in Plagiarism Studies**

Much of the existing plagiarism scholarship in the field of composition studies begins with a personal experience. These stories feature teachers and scholars in the subject position, relating an often difficult moment they encountered involving a tricky case of plagiarism. Take, for example, Rebecca Moore Howard’s 1992 article in the *Journal of Teaching Writing*, “Plagiarism Pentimento,” a landmark article on student source use, marking one of Howard’s first forays into the discussion of academic integrity and authorship. The essay has particular importance for first discussing and considering patchwriting – “copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in synonyms” (Howard, *Standing* xvii) – and its role in the writing process. After a short introduction framing her topic, she describes how she came upon the issues the article addresses: “In Spring 1986, while engaged in familiar task of responding to students’ papers, I encountered the loathsome apparition of plagiarism—or what at that time I believed was plagiarism. I believe, too that I knew the best way to deal with it” (234). These narratives quite typically eventually lead to introspection and eventually revelation. Howard reflects, “Yet, I could not lay the episode to rest. What did it mean, that one-third of the first-year students in a class at a prestigious liberal-arts college—the CEO’s of tomorrow—had blandly stumbled into plagiarism? …. [D]id it mean that I should search for a better paradigm for interpreting their textual strategies?” (235-236). And finally the lesson: “I embarked on the course of examining my own assumptions, and I emerge with deeply changed ideas about the composing strategy that in 1986 I classified as plagiarism” (236). These teacher narratives, relating the struggle of a teacher negotiating the treacherous terrain of academic integrity, plagiarism, and authorship, are ubiquitous in plagiarism scholarship.

In fact, it might even be fair to say that the narrative introduction is expected. Many of the essays include an opening narrative. Devoss and Rosati begin with several stories which foreground their personal experience and interest in plagiarism and the internet. Sean Zwagerman discusses his zealous “detective work” in catching plagiarism (even as he recognizes his use of the personal narrative as introduction) (677). Donald Murphy’s entire essay is a narrative reflection on the consequences of wrongful accusing a student of plagiarism. Sometimes the stories aren’t even the author’s. In her article on affective responses to plagiarism, Amy Robillard shares a discussion she had with her friend about her nephew’s plagiarism; Karla Saari Kitalong begins her essay on plagiarism and the internet entirely absent from the tale she shares of her student’s struggle with plagiarism and copyright. In her book, published seven years after “Plagiarism Pentimento,” Howard repeats the same story as above in her introduction (xvii). These are only a handful of examples, but they represent a larger practice and commonplace in this area of research. And while essays employing narrative frames have all offered valuable insights, composition as a field now needs to supplement such works with empirical, data-driven studies that will challenge, complicate, and advance our thoughts on plagiarism.
Pedagogical discussions particularly embrace the individual and personal experience. Review of the scholarship of plagiarism offers much advice about what one can do to prevent and teach against plagiarism in their writing assignments and classrooms; however, such articles rarely do more than recommend the author’s personal activity, assignment, or scaffold or suggest their own method as a way to address plagiarism (Desena; Whitaker; Adler-Kassner and Estrem; DeVoss and Rosati).

**Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Classroom Practice**

Effective strategies to discuss academic integrity and plagiarism in the classroom have long been sought after. I see two gaps evident in these works which future scholarship must address. First, these discussions do not attempt to understand what actually occurs in the most writing classrooms concerning instruction on plagiarism. Despite all the advice we receive, the scholarship discusses quite little what teachers actually do, instead focusing on what might be done. Second, many common recommendations concern themselves only on how to best avoid (opportunities for) plagiarism, but often, do not demonstrate primary concern with student learning. As Howard puts it, they “simply [try] to discourage the unethical” (*Standing* 161); Anson perhaps said it best: “Although these strategies do much to replace the popular system of plagiarism reduction based on…surveillance and threats…they are still often driven by a desire to stop cheating, not by deeper principles of…education” (“We Never” 140, emphasis added). Drawing from George Lakoff’s theory of frames, Adler-Kassner, Anson, and Howard argue persuasively why these strategies and their motivations are problematic:

Negating a frame…only serves to perpetuate that frame (Lakoff, *Elephant*, 3). The takeaway message…is not that carefully crafted and more creative teaching will lead to good writers and good writing, by that such pedagogy will prevent students from cheating. Invoking “better ways to prevent plagiarism” serves only to strengthen the assumption that students are looking to plagiarize. (235)

In other words, strategies employed primarily to deter plagiarism do more to perpetuate (stereo)typical views of student writing and plagiarism that to obviate it. In order to demonstrate how this view exists in our scholarship, it would be most productive to look at the many “best practices” which have been established for addressing and avoiding plagiarism in the writing classroom.

First, scholars recognize open and explicit discussion about expectations and policies concerning source use in courses as a necessary step in developing a classroom that values academic integrity and avoids plagiarism. White posits that without this sort of instruction, “we should all expect that much plagiarism will naturally occur unless we help students understand what all the fuss is about” (207). Accordingly, the CWPA statement calls for faculty to provide a written policy. Susan McLeod argues that students need to be taught that citation, appropriate source use, and academic integrity “are understood as part of the discipline of learning to write” (10). However, such discussions seem focused more on teaching students how to identify conventions (and violations of those conventions) than engaging students in conversations about academic discourse, academic values, and their relationship to them.

The CWPA statement offers a useful example. Under the heading “Best Practices,” the CWPA offers five recommendations that “make plagiarism both difficult and unnecessary.”
Already, the intent is clear: to make plagiarism a laborious endeavor not worth the trouble. Stating that “college writing is a process,” the five recommendations themselves are ordered according to the process of working with students on research writing; the order itself reveals an implied narrative of slow but sure transgressive behavior. The points are:

1. Explain Plagiarism and Develop Clear Policies
2. Improve the Design and Sequence of Assignments
3. Attend to Sources and the Use of Reading
4. Work on Plagiarism Responsibly
5. Take Appropriate Disciplinary Action (Council of Writing Program Administrators)

As sub-points underneath each recommendation make clear, the order appears chronological, beginning on the first day of class (Point 1) through their first assignments (2) to the gathering of source material (3). From there, it all goes downhill. In point 4, the student needs help to “distinguish between misuse of sources and plagiarism.” Students are then asked for “documentation,” specified to be “in-process work (such as sources, summaries, and drafts)” to determine whether or not they can demonstrate their work.² Lastly, in point 5, the standard has broken, plagiarism has entered the land, and discipline has become necessary. Nowhere among these practices do we find a moment to openly discuss plagiarism and academic culture with students. Instead, any talk of plagiarism continues what Jamieson earlier noted, a focus on the pejorative (80); when instructors talk with students about plagiarism, they speak of consequences, loss, injury, devaluation, and misuse.

That is not to say scholarship advocating for productive and honest discussions of plagiarism does not exist at all. Margaret Price advocates for engaging the complexity of originality, authorship, and plagiarism in a discussion with students and allowing them to help craft the course policy (107). Kathryn Valentine calls for instructors to explicitly discuss values of academic integrity in addition to expectations for academic discourse and what both might mean for students’ identities (105). In her chapter in Perspectives on Plagiarism, Candace Spiegelman suggests that, if we aren’t careful about the ways we represent writing and originality, we risk “deny[ing] the intertextual and communal nature of writing” (231). Accordingly, she advocates for peer writing groups and discussions about how knowledge and writing is made and changed in these groups. In short, we need to amend this best practice to align with these sorts of pedagogies and theories of authorship and intertextual writing. I argue that these scholars and their arguments perfectly exemplify the ethic of collaboration and intertextuality I discussed earlier – an ethic whose chief characteristic is transparency. In this case, it is transparency with students about the unstable nature of authorship, originality, and plagiarism.

Second, instructors should develop inquiry-based assignments that call for students to engage with new and individuated ideas and questions. Inquiry-based coursework is a critical part of the curriculum that Linda Adler-Kassner and Heidi Estrem have established at Eastern Michigan University. CWPA also recommends critical investigation, interrogation, and inquiry in writing assignments to help avoid plagiarism. The council differentiates this critical work from “recycl[ing] information” or as Laura DeSena puts it, “mere regurgitation” (4). Through these

² The similarities with immigration discourse are striking, wherein one is asked for her/his “papers” to legitimate himself in that area. Future scholarship might productively explore the overlap in these discourses.
more engaging assignments, Adler-Kassner and Estrem celebrate that “nowhere is there a conversation about plagiarism, or the poor quality of students’ writing and thinking” (130).

I again call attention here to the eschewing of discussions about plagiarism with students, and, indeed, on campus in general. Adler-Kassner and Estrem celebrate, “nowhere is there a conversation about plagiarism,” and it is indeed laudable that concerns about student plagiarism be allayed. Nonetheless, I would argue that universities campus require critical conversation about plagiarism. I am most concerned with the understanding of plagiarism students might have should we not engage them in any discussion about the topic. As Edward White notes, “When there is little attempt to help students understand the meaning and importance of plagiarism, the slippery ethical values of our commercial culture rest unopposed…” (207). Giving up our courses’ opportunities to acquaint students to the norms, values, discourse, and conventions of academic integrity and plagiarism, we yield the ground to whoever was already encamped there – notions of integrity and plagiarism that align with originality, autonomy, (male) authorship, and ownership received from popular culture and society. Dustin Edwards reveals the problematic discourse about plagiarism common in popular culture through his remix of YouTube videos (“Playing”). Even high school descriptions of plagiarism and ethical writing may be a source of concern as “traditional schooling reinforces private and individual student activity with a goal toward autonomous originality” (Spiegalman 233). I am not comfortable with leaving student understanding of plagiarism and academic integrity up to such chance.

A third best practice emphasizes the process of writing. To avoid opportunities for students to plagiarize, instructors should build much scaffolding into each of their assignments, check-in points where students must constantly be developing new materials at different stages and the instructor intervenes. CWPA describes this as “notes, drafts, and revisions that are difficult to plagiarize.” McLeod too, in her nine “obvious” strategies for guarding “the program’s integrity,” lists three points which stress the process of writing, such as requiring multiple drafts, bibliographies, outlines, and substantial revision between drafts (9). White puts it, “When a writing assignment attends to the writing process, plagiarism becomes almost impossible” (208). Once more, concern tends to methods of making plagiarism too troublesome. And while I wholeheartedly agree with an emphasis on process in writing pedagogy, I don’t believe these sort of strategies, which emphasis the negative and associated consequences, should dominate our pedagogical responses to plagiarism.

Fourth, scholars argue that not only is it important to teach students how to cite and integrate sources but also students need space to practice these moves and strategies. The Council of Writing Program Administrators too recommends “teaching students the conventions” and providing opportunities for practice. It also suggests that teachers discuss with students strategies for evaluating, integrating, and documenting sources and common challenge they might face. I absolutely agree with need for practice, naturally, but I would argue to extend the word practice in particular, to moments where students are allowed to try on new discourses, to perform new roles and identities, and possibly fail without risking their identity. I draw this argument from Kathryn Valentine, who recognizes that instructors and administrators often don’t provide “the space [students] need to be given to practice performing the identity that will allow them to get being a student ‘right,’ especially in regard to plagiarism” (105). It is this sort of practice that I believe Howard turns to when she recognizes “patchwriting” as not a form of plagiarism but rather as an essential strategy of writing: “I believe that [patchwriting] is the basis
of all writing from sources. There is no corrective, no more advanced stage; there is only more sophisticated, more polylogic patchwriting” (Standing 141). For Howard and many others, obvious patchwriting has now come to mark writers who are learning and adapting to academic discourse, while experienced writers engage in “sophisticated” patchwriting. Such practices come closer to the concepts of imitation and mimesis found in traditional Western rhetorical training. Nonetheless, both Howard and Valentine recognize the need for practicing not just citation and paraphrasing but discourse and identity in order to learn and adapt to academic contexts and conventions.

While there are many other recommendations concerning ways to teach about source use plagiarism, these “best practices” have much consensus in the field and are common. Of course, these practices are now changing as the result of digital composing and new media, which particularly trouble traditional notions of originality and authorship. Danielle DeVoss, Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Stuart Selber, James Porter, Rebecca Moore Howard, and others explore ways that digital technologies and composing practices are shifting and how composition pedagogy must shift along with them. Johnson-Eilola and Selber forward the idea of assemblage, “texts built primarily and explicitly from existing texts in order to solve a writing or communication problem in a new context” (381). Assemblage as composing practice reflects current theories of authorship as well as the professional practice that Anson described: “Assemblages do not distinguish primarily between which parts are supposed to be original and which have been found and gathered from someplace else; assemblages are interested in what works, what has social effects” (380). However, DeVoss and Porter note that most definitions and policies on plagiarism are solely based on print and strictly alphabetic texts (197). They argue that common approaches to plagiarism in pedagogy “align well with approaches to information as owned, controlled, and carefully distributed” (198) and warn, “we must renegotiate our personal and institutional approaches to plagiarism. If we don’t do so, we will flounder in the face of digital possibilities…” (197). Accordingly, they advocate supplementing “punitive” discourse on plagiarism with the teaching of a “positive ethic of sharing” (202). Indeed many new pedagogies of assemblage, remix, and remediation perform the renegotiation which DeVoss and Porter call for and create new spaces for challenging traditional notions of authorship and originality.

While all these recommendations have some (if not great) merit, it is important to recognize them as exactly that: recommendations. They offer pedagogical strategies, curricular structures, assignment designs, and classroom policies that one might use to address plagiarism in the classroom. They do not offer any information about what more than one instructor does in his/her classroom. In this way, such scholarship rarely offers any substantial evaluations through data or research about these recommendations. In order to make meaningful claims and arguments about plagiarism, authorship, student source use, and teaching, research and scholarship has begun to toward empirical evidence to build upon the foundational work from earlier scholars. It is to this scholarship that I now turn.

The Empirical Turn in Plagiarism Research

Recent scholarship in plagiarism and student source use has begun employing empirical research to advance these discussions and cut through lore to provide a data-supported understanding of what actually occurs in classroom and student writing. As Jamieson and Howard persuasively argue,
As scholars and administrators we need to base our claims about what students do on solid data. The contemporary obsession with plagiarism is possible because those who report and repeat it are working from experience, anecdote, and over-generalized claims about students integrity…. Without meaningful data, anecdote and beliefs about students will continue to dominate the conversation (113).

Sean Zwagerman suggests a similar critique when he questions (quite literally, as his subheading “The Rising Tide?” includes a question mark) whether current claims about an increase in plagiarism are actually as widespread as they are made to sound: “Yet for all the feat and research devoted to the rising tide [of plagiarism], it remains unclear how widespread academic dishonesty really is” (677). Such critiques are actually quite damning to composition scholarship as a whole. While we advance many claims about how to teach or address plagiarism, we do so from personal experience and the stories of colleagues (published and unpublished). We do not yet have an understanding of what actually is occurring when students engage with writing or what instruction they receive concerning source use, plagiarism, or academic integrity in their writing courses and assignments. However, empirical studies offer exactly this strength, and the results of those empirical studies already done or being done reveal their productive contribution to plagiarism scholarship. I offer in this section a brief review of some of the empirical studies found in contemporary plagiarism scholarship and what such studies have offered.

Perhaps the most well-known and most impressive, Sandra Jamieson and Rebecca Moore Howard’s Citation Project features a multi-institutional study that performed textual analysis on 174 student essays, more than 800 pages of student writing. Using citation analysis in a multi-institutional study, these authors have a tremendous and convincing amount of data that offer new insight and valuable knowledge about how students use sources, which they report in a chapter in McClure and Purdy’s The New Digital Scholar. Analysis of over 1900 citations drew the following conclusions:

- Students employed quotation, patchwriting, or paraphrasing 93% of the time. More importantly, this suggests that only less than 7% of the time, students work above the sentence level of the source (120). At the paper level, only 40% “showed evidence that the student had ‘digested’ any of the ideas of the source by summarizing them” (125).
- 77% of citations were drawn from the first three pages of sources used. In other words, one-fourth of the time, students don’t draw on any information beyond the first three pages of a source (122).
- At least 15% of the papers reviewed contained source use practices that are commonly described as plagiarism at many institutions (123).

Based on these findings, Jamieson and Howard conclude:

When 93.72 percent of citations in 174 students’ researched writing papers from 16 disparate U.S. colleges and universities are working only with sentences from the sources and are drawing those sentences from pages 1 or 2 of the source 69.49 percent of the time, we can conclude that these papers offer scant evidence that students can comprehend and make use of complex written text. Maybe they can; but they don’t. (127)

Drawing from a considerable data set, Jamieson and Howard arrive at new knowledge about how students actually use source, which is hard to refute. And while this study does have its limitations – namely in that it only examines final texts and cannot speak to student learning,
improvement, or intention – this study affirms and details a common belief in current thoughts about plagiarism. Though our lore about student writers may have had similar beliefs about students disappointing work with sources, not until such a study have we known how exactly ineffective source use practices manifested. From these results, Jamieson and Howard find renewed reason to emphasize summary (rather than paraphrasing) as the most effective mode of source use and the most important pedagogical outcome for teaching source integration (128).

McClure and Purdy’s entire book offers many chapters with similar approaches to understanding the research and writing practices of students in the digital age. Janice Walker and Kami Cox, for example, describe the LILAC Project, which investigates the ways students find sources through student survey and interviews, screen captures, and “research aloud protocol” (356). Presenting limited findings from only 2 of the students in the study, Walker and Cox (Cox actually being one of the students in the study discussed here) find students engaging with Google and Wikipedia but also find critical moves to evaluate sources and consider the library databases and resource (358). Mary Lourdes Silva, Ruth Mirtz, and several other contributors also engage in empirical research to begin to understand students’ researching habits.

Likewise, Amy Martin’s critique about the CWPA statement and Carol Haviland and Joan Mullin’s edited collection draw on survey and interview data respectively to support their arguments about diversity of plagiarism and source use among disciplines. While such claims about disciplinary understandings of plagiarism are a truism among plagiarism discussion, Martin’s survey data allows her to demonstrate empirically her point, as described much earlier in this essay. The authors in Haviland and Mullin’s Who Owns This Text collectively employ data from over 60 interviews to show the complexity and nuances of these disciplinary understandings, such as in Bergmann’s chapter on administrators’ attribution practices.

Review of scholarship on plagiarism and pedagogy reveals a tradition that values personal encounters with, strategies for, and approaches to discussing, teaching, and addressing source use and plagiarism. These essays – often single-authored – feature reflection and revelation of the individual teacher-scholar as the standard for producing new knowledge on plagiarism. They typical offer worthwhile insights and useful recommendations. However, as recommendations, they offer very little in terms of understanding the actual practice of composition teachers and their work negotiating plagiarism in their classrooms. Howard and Watson note, “Such scholarship has established the field of plagiarism studies, but it contributes little to the goal of producing data-driven research that replicable and agreeable and that can be therefore used to influence decision-makers” (121).Scholarship offers an abstract and undetailed picture of actual conversations, actual strategies, actual negotiating as it takes place in the space of writing course. What is needed now is what Anson’s calls a “[Brigg’s] Level 3 approach” to plagiarism, which focuses on “what faculty and instructional staff do in their courses, those educational spaces where students produce most of their work” (“We Never” 153).

I argue that such an approach can only be supported by data-based research, from empirical studies such as my own that observe and learn such things from the classroom. Earlier scholarship based in lore and anecdote has led to difficult questions and, at times, pessimistic myths about plagiarism, student source use, as well as the nature, pedagogy, and policy of plagiarism. Data-supported studies build from these questions to challenge, complicate, revise, and even confirm the beliefs commonly held in rhetoric and composition. There are many areas
that I believe are in desperate need of empirical work to advance our understanding of plagiarism, for example:

- Student understanding of policy: What messages do students receive from institutional and in-class policies about plagiarism? How does this influence the way they approach research and writing? How do these policies align with or complicate their own definitions or understandings of plagiarism?
- Incoming students’ understandings of plagiarism: What concepts about plagiarism do new student bring with them to the university? Where do those concepts come from? How do those beliefs manifest in students’ practice of writing?
- Digital and textual definitions of plagiarism: Do conversations about plagiarism shift depending on the mode? Does intellectual property or copyright become the dominant metaphor of transgression in multimodal assignments? How do discussions of intellectual property and plagiarism in the same classroom complement/contradict each other? Do composition teachers feel more comfortable unpacking contemporary theory of originality, intertextuality, and authorship with one or the other?
- Pedagogy and policy: How does administrative discourse on plagiarism complement or contradict the pedagogy of attribution and source use students receive in the writing classroom? Do student experience a difference in this discourse?
- Classroom practice in composition: What conversations (if any) about plagiarism occurring in the composition classroom? How are teachers discussing source use, plagiarism, academic integrity, and authorship with students? What messages are students receiving?

My study aims to answer in part this last question (classroom practice in composition) through empirical and research, which I believe can address this concern and do so in a way that reflects an ethic which contemporary authorship theory drives us to adopt. My next chapter describes this ethic – the ethic of collaboration -- and how I employ it as a methodology through the design of my study’s methods.
Chapter 3: Methodology and the Ethic of Collaboration

The critical lack of empirical studies on plagiarism within writing classrooms requires that the field of composition and rhetoric move to address this gap. My own work uses a data-driven approach to help address the call Jamieson and Howard offer (113). In particular, my research hopes to offer a better picture about what happens in writing classrooms concerning plagiarism. Following my earlier critique, rather than prescribe a particular pedagogical move to address plagiarism, I want to know more about what teachers are already doing. What are their policies? What activities do students do? How do they describe plagiarism to their students? What are student actually taught about plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use?

Through my work, I hope to build upon the foundation which previous scholarship has established. Each contribution from these scholars offers wonderful thoughts, techniques, and discoveries that are worth reading. Nonetheless, I find Jamieson and Howard’s call most important to advancing the scholarship of plagiarism. Accordingly, my project study aims to fill a gap I see in the literature—descriptions of classroom activities regarding plagiarism—through data-supported research methods to offer my own contribution.

Methodology: The Ethic of Collaboration

My study enacts what I am calling an ethic of collaboration, an ethic which acknowledges the always already influenced nature of writing and the necessity of those multiple voice to the development of new theory and practice. As a field, we are moving toward the understanding of writing and source use that theories of intertextuality and influence offer: that there is no purely original writing and no “genius” author (See Porter; Barthes; Howard, Standing). In other words, we cannot do much longer with academic values that hold originality (and all of its regulatory metaphors) as the standard.

In contrast to this intertextual understanding, however, scholarship on source use and plagiarism pedagogy predominantly engages in single-authored scholarship that suggests the “genius” of the individual teacher-scholar. If we are to embrace the view that all writing is influenced and reject the author-function that values the genius, independent, isolated writer, our scholarship must reflect that through engaging multiple voices. More bluntly, single-authored essays on plagiarism that build from personal encounters, reflection, reading, and revelation cannot be the standard. The commonly-seen narrative introduction reveals the particular nature of plagiarism scholarship as being largely rooted in the lore, anecdote, and personal experience – in what the individual scholar-teacher does, experiences, or theorizes. At times, these stories supplant other forms of evidence or support, which instead solely comes from personal ideas and stories. Joe Kraus’s article, for example, cites only two other authors in fifteen pages on what plagiarism tells us about students. None of this invalidates the contribution; Howard’s “Plagiarism Pentimento” came out of her personal experiences and has been fundamental to our understanding of student source use.

Nonetheless, such essays contradict our understanding of writing as always already being influenced, collaborative, and intertextual. As Howard notes in her essay “The New Abolitionism Comes to Plagiarism”: “Although contemporary critical theory asserts that all writing is intertextual and/or collaborative, composition scholarship’s treatments of collaboration characteristically assume the possibility of an autonomous writer and depict collaboration as an
option that the autonomous author may elect” (“New Abolitionism” 88). Although this quote focuses on collaboration, I would argue the same is true about plagiarism scholarship. Accordingly, I would remix Howard’s statement in this way: Although contemporary critical theory asserts that all writing is intertextual and/or collaborative, plagiarism scholarship’s tradition of publications and essays based in the individual experience contrarily suggests the possibility of an autonomous writer and depict collaboration as an option that the autonomous author may elect.

I argue that the single-authored essay grounded solely in personal experience is not an option for plagiarism and authorship studies. As Howard and Robillard note, “Plagiarism is a complex, unstable issue that must be considered from a variety of viewpoints and at a variety of sites” (3). That is to say, the individual’s perspective must be complemented by other perspectives, in order to establish an ethic and methodology of plagiarism research consistent with theories of authorship and writing. I call such a methodology the ethic of collaboration. This ethic is characterized by two key features: transparency and polyvocality. To be transparent means to be open and direct about authorship as a complex and unstable concept, about the ways our policies attempt to stabilize the very unstable concept of originality and textuality, and about the ways we are influenced in our scholarship, research, and teaching. To be polyvocal is to engage a plurality of voices in our research and scholarship. Collaborative efforts allow more than one voice or perspective to participate in the building of new knowledge about plagiarism.

I offer two particular ways scholars might employ this ethic:

1. Collaborative Works: While I recognize the institutional difficulties that are often associated with collaboratively-written publications, I nonetheless argue that a first and necessary step in plagiarism scholarship is to ensure multiple perspectives, experiences, and people are involved in the developing new knowledge in the field. This does not necessarily mean articles with two or more names on the first page. Recent years have seen many edited collections on plagiarism published, a medium which I believe might best effect the work I hope to see. Buranen and Roy’s Perspectives on Plagiarism, Howard and Carrick’s Authorship in Composition Studies, Howard and Robillard’s Pluralizing Plagiarism, and Haviland and Mullin’s Who Owns this Text? are excellent examples of ways that multiple voices might contribute to one text and offer diverse perspectives and voices. Future collections might seek to encourage and sponsor more connections across chapters and more cohesion among the texts to avoid chapters that are more individuated than collective.

2. Empirical research: Person-based empirical research begins with a clear premise: I cannot learn about this practice or idea without the help and input of others. In many ways, empirical research has the potential to engage and represent the most voices possible. In this way, data-supported studies eschew the exclusive genius of the solitary and independent writer and instead support scholarship that is collaborative and influenced, as well as being entirely open about the ways other voices and text have contributed and shaped any work.

I offer my own study as an example of this ethic for plagiarism scholarship. Employing empirical, person-based research, my study allows for multiple views and voices that transparently and collaboratively inform and construct new knowledge about plagiarism instruction in first-year writing classrooms. The multiple perspectives of the participant instructors contribute to the
polyvocality in this study, as they collaborate, combine, and converge to create new knowledge about plagiarism instruction. I designed this study to best engage these voices through the following methods.

Methods

This study seeks to provide polyvocal, empirical insight into instructor discourse and strategies concerning plagiarism and academic integrity in first-year writing courses. Using classroom observations, instructor interviews, and textual analysis of classroom artifacts, I aim to answer the following questions:

1. How do first-year writing instructors position plagiarism and academic integrity in their discourse and interaction with students in their classrooms?
2. What kinds of messages do instructors convey about plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use in first-year writing classrooms?
3. How do instructors perceive their own attitudes towards plagiarism and to their pedagogical practices on plagiarism, and how is it reflected in their classroom practice?

The answers to such questions, I believe, will be useful not only to compositionists but also to all who utilize writing assignments within coursework, as well as administrators who address issues of academic integrity in policy and adjudication. Following the ethic of collaboration, I employ empirical methods that draw upon multiple voices and views to answer these research questions and to be transparent about the influenced and intertextual nature of my research. In what follows, I describe the location, selection of participants, data collection, analysis, and limitations of this study.

Research Site

All instructors, observations, and artifacts are rooted in the curriculum and structure of the composition program at Miami University, a Midwest public ivy school serving approximately 15,000 undergraduate students on its main campus in Oxford, OH, where this study was conducted. Two courses comprise the compulsory first-year writing program at Miami, ENG111 – Composition and Rhetoric and ENG112 – Composition and Literature. My study focused on ENG111 courses. The composition program’s website offers the following description of the course:

ENG 111 is a writing course focused on principles and practices of rhetoric and composition useful for producing writing that is effective for its purpose, audience, and context. ENG 111 focuses especially on helping students learn and apply rhetorical knowledge, methods, and strategies; analyze and construct arguments using rhetorical inquiry; understand, refine, and improve their composing practices; and develop the intellectual and analytical skills necessary to produce effective writing at the college level. The course emphasizes rhetorical invention: planning, analysis, research, and

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3 This term “position” is dense with meaning, which I unpacked more thoroughly in chapter 1: “What messages about plagiarism and academic integrity might writing instructors convey to students in first-year composition courses? How do writing instructors position plagiarism in their teaching: what framework do they use; how frequently is plagiarism discussed; when during the course is it discussed; who should care about plagiarism; who or what does plagiarism violate?” (see p. 2)
development of ideas for a particular academic or public audience. It also teaches principles of effective organization and style and strategies for revision, editing, and proofreading. A key purpose of the course is to teach students to deliver writing in a variety of contexts, including digitally networked environments. (Composition at Miami University).

The course employs an inquiry-based standard curriculum divided into five major assignments or “inquiries”: a narrative reflection, a rhetorical analysis, a researched argument, a digital remediation, and a final reflective essay. Focus on rhetoric anchors much of the discussion and is a consistent theme throughout the whole course.

ENG111, and analogous courses at other institutions, serve as important sites for inquiry and research on academic integrity, plagiarism, and student instruction in these matters. First, these courses service an overwhelming number of students each year. In the Fall 2013 semester, ENG111 enrolled approximately 64% of incoming freshman in 114 sections, with an average of 20.5 students in each section. Nearly two-thirds of all new students in 2013 took ENG111 in their first year. Second, due to ENG111’s position as an introductory course to writing and its researched writing component, it can be reasonably expected that source use and citation are commonly discussed at some point in the course. These discussions are likely to include questions or instruction about plagiarism, academic integrity, and ethics of writing and source use. These two facts coupled together reveal the critical importance of such first-year writing courses to studies such as mine. For nearly two-thirds of Miami’s class of 2017, ENG111 may serve as an introduction to collegiate expectations about source use, citation, appropriation, and plagiarism – an introduction that is likely to inform their experiences and attitudes about researched writing throughout their education. Accordingly, this study focused exclusively on writing instruction in ENG111 in the Fall semester of 2013.

Participants

Following IRB approval, in the summer of 2013, I issued an email to the listserv of Miami University composition instructors, asking for volunteers to help in my study. Four instructors indicated willingness to participate in the study, referred to in this study by a pseudonym I assigned or one selected by the participant. The participants included a female M.A. student in creative writing, a male Ph.D. student in literature (who had taught in the same program as an M.A.), a male Ph.D. student in literature, and a male Ph.D. candidate in composition and rhetoric. So all participants were in at least their second year teaching in Miami’s first-year composition program. While not a representative sample of the range of instructors who teach first-year composition (at Miami or elsewhere), this group of participants does represent a common type of instructor the first-year composition student might encounter at Miami University. Unfortunately, no faculty or adjunct instructors volunteered for the study, leaving these groups unrepresented. Furthermore, though many sections of ENG111 are taught by first-year M.A. students in Miami’s English graduate program, none were invited to participate in the study, as many lacked any prior teaching experience.

Participants had varying amounts of experience teaching, but all had received training in teaching composition in Miami’s specific ENG111 curriculum. As graduate teaching assistants, all participants enrolled in ENG731 – Theory and Practice in College Composition, a three-week intensive pedagogy course taught by the director and assistant directors of the composition
program, before their first semester teaching at Miami. They also participated in a year-long teaching practicum during their first year teaching, wherein they received continued support and instruction on pedagogy.

**Data Collection**

To understand best the ways these instructors discuss and teach issues of plagiarism and academic integrity in their classroom, this study employs three forms of data collection: observations of participating instructors’ first-year composition courses, interviews with those instructors, and textual analysis of artifacts from those classes.

Classrooms observations occurred at two distinct times in each classroom: on the first day of class and on any days where source use, plagiarism, or academic integrity was an important topic of discussion and instruction. Most instructors devoted only one day for the latter topic, though one participant had three. Each observation lasted the length of the class meeting, and students were made aware of my presence and reason for observing in all cases. Students were welcomed to object to my presence if it made them uncomfortable, and the instructor was welcome to ask me to leave at any time. I took notes during the observations of the classroom activity, as well as filling out a data grid for analysis, which will be discussed in detail later. Observations were not voice-recorded so as not to inhibit students’ participation in the classroom. Likewise, my notes focused exclusively on the instructor and the activities in the classroom rather than students, for similar reasons.

Instructors participated in two interviews. Each lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and was done in private, either in my personal office or the instructor’s. The first interview took place after the observations on the first day of class. This interview focused on understanding the instructor’s policy and pedagogy on plagiarism and academic integrity, its role in their classroom, and his/her goal on the first day of class. A list of these interview questions is available in Appendix B. The second interview took place at the beginning of the Spring 2014 semester. This interview was more reflective; questions probed how satisfied the instructor was with his/her instruction in plagiarism after the course’s end and what changes s/he might make next year. These questions may also be found in Appendix B. Participants had the option to skip any question or end either interview at any time, but they were all gracious enough to answer all of the questions. Each interview was voice-recorded and then transcribed.

As described in the previous chapter, though they are sparse, empirical studies on plagiarism are not at all absent from present scholarship. In fact, some of the most revealing and challenging scholarship utilize qualitative methods – primarily interviews – to generate new knowledge on these topics. Interviews are a particularly helpful method for because they “are particularly suited for studying people’s understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world” (Kvale 105). In this case, specifically, Lise Ede and Andrea Lunsford’s *Singular Texts/Plural Authors*, Carol Peterson Haviland and Joan Mullins’ *Who Owns This Text?*, and Susan D. Blum’s *My Word! Plagiarism and College Culture* employ interviews of students, instructors, and professionals to explore how authorship, collaboration, originality, intertextuality, and plagiarism are all enacted and understood from their varied disciplinary and social perspectives. All three dialogue with students, scholars, and professionals through interviews. From their probative surveys and in-depth interviews, Ede and
Lunsford uncover practices of collaborative writing and textual authorship that challenge the “romantic image of writer” (Porter 34). Instead, two models of collaboration, the hierarchical and dialogic, emerge from their findings (67), alongside models and beliefs of authorship and writing that are constantly collaborative and in flux across careers and disciplines. Likewise, Haviland and Mullins’s *Who Owns This Text?* reveals disparate disciplinary practices in pedagogy, scholarship, and art. Administrative discourse, computer coding, and art and architecture among others recognize employ different standards concerning acceptable collaboration, boilerplate text and code, pastiche and homage, and role and responsibilities of authors. And Susan Blum’s extensive interviews with college students suggest the diverse variables and values that influence student views of plagiarism and their willingness to plagiarize. These studies demonstrate the nuance and quality of knowledge interview data might provide a study exploring issues of plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use.

Lastly, the instructors also shared various textual artifacts related to plagiarism instruction. These varied from instructor to instructor but often included course syllabi, Powerpoints, and handouts. I also include the textbooks used in the course, if any. I collect these documents particularly because they provide students information or instruction on plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use in tangible and readily accessible forms.

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) makes a persuasive case for attention to this sort of written language. Their study, led by leading academic integrity researcher Tracey Bretag, examined the academic integrity policy statements of 39 Australian universities and derived important understandings of the ways Australian institutions define academic integrity and its importance for students (Bretag et al.). In particular, they found that: “51% (20) of the policies had ‘misconduct’ and ‘plagiarism’ as their key terms. 41% (16) had ‘academic integrity’ as a key term. Despite this focus on ‘misconduct,’ there is a focus to instill scholarly values than focus on punitive elements,” among other conclusions. Bretag et al. argue that these policies contain several mixed and inconsistent messages addressing academic integrity as both punitive and intrinsically valuable. While these researchers focus exclusively on overall university policy, this study demonstrates the critical insights that close attention to these documents, including syllabus policies or textbook language in classrooms, can reveal about the messages students might receive about academic integrity and plagiarism.

**Analysis**

All observations, interviews, and classroom artifacts were analyzed and coded using a qualitative data grid (Figure 1). The grid allows me to separate into various categories the ways that plagiarism and academic integrity are discussed, positioned, or represented at each point of data collection. These categories are binaries that other scholars (see Bertram Gallant; Bretag et al.; Valentine; Howard, “Plagiarism, Authorship”) and I find commonly comprise discussions of academic integrity and plagiarism. However, I do not find these binaries to be mutually exclusive. Instructors were not placed only in one category or the other at any time; rather, if instruction and discussion included features of both categorical items, I marked both on the grid. Alternatively, there were times where neither item was marked because discussion did not sufficiently suggest one or the other. Additionally, these binaries are also neither exhaustive nor comprehensive. I recognize the limited nature and usefulness of binaries, but building from previous scholarship, I believe these binaries will be productive starting points for further discussion and exploration. Once completed, a data grid will provide snapshot of representations
of plagiarism and academic integrity in the classroom, how those messages align with ways instructors speak about their instruction and perspectives in interviews, and how those ideas are represented in the textual artifacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Absolute/Contextual</th>
<th>Product/Process</th>
<th>Extrinsic/Intrinsic</th>
<th>Specific/General</th>
<th>Punitve/Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Day 1 Ob.</td>
<td>Day 2 Ob.</td>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>#2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Qualitative data grid for analysis of instructor discourse.

The first binary, absolute/contextual, asks a deceptively simple question: Are the standards of academic integrity constant or is there any variation of standards? A message of academic integrity and plagiarism as absolute argues that, regardless of the (rhetorical) situation, the standards remain the same; there is no context in which one act would be acceptable and another unacceptable. Or as Rife and DeVoss have put it, such policies “assume that the concept of plagiarism applies in blanket form across all writing contexts and regardless of any given writing purpose or tool used” (89, emphasis in original). By contrast, a contextual view of academic integrity suggests that standards change depending on the situation. Authorized collaboration in ENG111, for example, may be unacceptable in an introductory biology lab or vice versa. Contextual descriptions recognize such variation.

Second, emphasis on process or product is a well-worn binary in our field, but one that is all the more critical in discussion of plagiarism. Views of plagiarism driven by product are concerned primarily with a completed Works Cited and thorough in-text citation; mistakes and errors are moments for which there is no remedy as the product has been completed. Process-oriented views of plagiarism, however, emphasize the security to make mistakes and learn. Rather than focus on an appropriate end result, motivation and effort weigh more heavily in instances of improper source use.

Third, many scholars argue for careful consideration of the distinction between an intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for academic integrity. Extrinsic motivators include audience values and institutional policies and consequences. In other words, the expectations of others motivate attribution and integrity. On the other hand, the intrinsically-motivated follow these rules of their own volition because they themselves hold those values. Tricia Bertram Gallant’s Academic Integrity in the Twenty-first Century, for example, compares the extrinsic “rule compliance” strategy, wherein institutions position academic integrity as a function of obedience to a set of standards, and the intrinsic “integrity” strategy, which positions academic integrity a value worth pursuing for its own sake (36). This binary is particularly relevant to this study, as scholars such as Nan Johnson, Debra Hawhee, and George Yoos have traced such positions back to the writing of Aristotle and Cicero, whose writings on rhetoric suggest a performatve, extrinsic value of virtue, and Plato and Quintilian, who argue for an intrinsic virtue. Because of its emphasis on rhetoric, ENG111 is a prominent site for examining uses of this dichotomy.
Fourth, I took note of the sort of examples (if any) that instructors employed in discussing plagiarism: were specific or general examples used? A more practical and pedagogical measure than other categories, examples not only revealed instructor’s experience and perspective on what plagiarism is but also communicated to students simplicity or complexity about this issue of plagiarism and academic integrity.

Fifth, the negative/positive binary frames academic integrity by its relationships. Is academic integrity described in terms of negatives and consequences: not plagiarizing, not lying, not cheating, or else? Or is it associated with positive values: honesty, ethics, community, morality? Academic integrity scholars such as Donald McCabe and Tricia Bertram Gallant argue that academic integrity should not be defined primarily by its opposite and are concerned by many definitions and descriptions which do so. Sandra Jamieson also expresses concern for exclusive focus on the pejorative and negative when discussing source use. I seek to learn how this binary functions in first-year writing classrooms.

I recognize that there is tremendous overlap between these categories. For example, the punitive and positive category and the intrinsic and extrinsic value categories share many of the same characteristics. However, rather than being repetitive, I see this overlap as a strength. The commonalities across the categories contribute to my ability to see how instructors emphasize a particular view of academic integrity or to see how students may receive mixed messages.

The close attention to language and discourse that this data grid enables follows the example of several other scholars, as described in the last chapter. Rebecca Moore Howard’s critical article on metaphors for plagiarism “Sexuality, Textuality: The Cultural Work of Plagiarism” reveals how particular and common formations of plagiarism encourage a male-dominant view of writing, wherein women are unintelligent, unoriginal, and unable to write. Likewise, Kathryn Valentine finds that common configurations of plagiarism in policy and pedagogy can limit and appropriate student identities. Both these works speak to the ways language and discourse of academic integrity and plagiarism can affect identities of writers and student-writers in particular. In this same way, I believe that close attention to the discourse of academic integrity and plagiarism found in first-year writing classrooms can reveal much about the messages and beliefs students receive in those courses and carry with them as they continue as writers in the academy.

**Participant Involvement**

As a methodology, the ethic of collaboration drove me to have these four instructors to be as much collaborators and contributors to my work as possible. Following the observations and some initial data analysis, the second interview included some time dedicated to discussing the tentative findings of my study thus far. I told instructors not only of what I believed the data suggested about their own class but also of what data from other instructors revealed. We engaged in conversation about these findings, as instructors responded to my analysis of the data. As the write-up of this project neared completion, instructors were sent copies of this document and asked to respond to it if they wished. I received no responses, but that may have been due to unfortunate timing. I sent instructors this document at the end of May, when these instructors were quite busy with summer projects and preparing to move onto to the next phase of their programs or to new places.
Limitations

Each form of collection and analysis in this study is subject to its limitations, most obviously in their generalizability. All data collected reflects only the curriculum, instruction, and environment of Miami University’s Oxford campus. While study of these four instructors can provide a productive starting point for conversations about writing pedagogy and academic integrity, naturally, the classroom activities that I describe later and the conclusions I draw may only apply to those classrooms. Furthermore, as I was the sole investigator in this study, all observation notes and data grids reflect only my reading of the classroom. While the instructors speak about these observations in the interviews, the self-reported nature of interview also limit the usefulness of this information. Each interviewee contributes his or her own perspective and beliefs in response to each question. Interviews alone provide no way to corroborate or confirm the account of an interviewee. However, I believe that the observations and textual analysis help to address this limitation. Lastly, while my observations confirm the use of some classroom artifacts, such as PowerPoints or handouts, I also include the textbook in my analysis although I have no way of knowing the students actual involvement with the textbook. As any teacher knows, despite reading assignments or recommendations, student reading of or engagement with textbooks and other readings vary wildly. Some students may never have read any of the information on plagiarism or academic integrity in their textbooks. However, as these books were required texts for the course and commonly available to students seeking to learn more, I include them in my analysis.

Through this study, I hope not only to contribute to current discussions of plagiarism not only a documenting of the actual practices of composition instructors as they teach plagiarism but also an example for transparent and polyvocal scholarship. I consider the ethic of collaboration to be essential for future plagiarism scholarship, as a way to recognize the instability of originality and authorship and to reflect the same beliefs we often describe to students – that the “genius” author is not the standard for writing. Many other scholars (as noted in chapter 2) have already begun employing such an ethic through empirical and/or collaborative research and scholarship. They influence, inspire, and motivate this work.

The following chapter describes the findings of this research. I pay particular attention to description and documentation of these instructor’s practices, while being careful and intentional as I often include their own voices in my discussion. I also document through my qualitative data grid the messages which instructors convey to their students. In this way, my study addresses the lack of knowledge in the field concerning the teaching of plagiarism in first-year writing courses and the messages delivered therein.
Chapter 4: Results – Instructors’ Approaches to Teaching Plagiarism and Source Use

Though current plagiarism scholarship includes many recommendations for pedagogical strategies and values for instruction in avoiding plagiarism and using sources effectively, very little scholarship moves beyond personal story or lore to describe the actual practices of college writing instructors. To do so, I argue that plagiarism scholarship should engage in empirical studies that engage multiple voices and perspectives in order to build upon, affirm, extend, or challenge current beliefs about student plagiarism found in our scholarship. Accordingly, this chapter reports the findings of my semester-long case studies of the practices of first-year composition instructors when addressing plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use in their courses, drawing from interviews with four composition instructors, observations of their classroom, and analyses of related texts.

Two major goals drive the following discussion. First, in this chapter I aim merely to document the observed practices of composition instructors as they discuss plagiarism and source use with students. Such documentation is a necessary first step for future studies and discussion of plagiarism instruction. Furthermore, descriptions of these instructors’ strategies may be of use to other composition instructors, as they wrestle with such instruction in their own courses. Second, I aim to gain a critical awareness of messages instructors convey about plagiarism through the discourse of their instruction. The typical role first-year composition as compulsory calibration to college writing expectations makes it one key space where students are likely to receive their first salient experience with definitions of and policies about plagiarism and university standards for academic integrity and source use. As such, it is important to understand the ways instructors discuss these standards and explain to students the nature and significance of plagiarism.

I do not intend through my analyses of these instructors and their classes to argue for an ideal pedagogy that redresses plagiarism or a most effective method for teaching source use and citation. That is beyond the scope of the present study, as I engaged in no assessment or evaluation of these instructors’ practices. Furthermore, comparison across and among instructors has been deferred to the next chapter to allow for more detailed discussion of each instructor individually.

In what follows, I describe the activities and instruction each participant offered in their courses, supplemented by the instructor’s thoughts from his or her interviews in order to accomplish the goal of documentation discussed above. I include much quotation from the instructors herein not only to allow them to speak for themselves but also to engage in the polyvocality my methodology calls for. Descriptions of the classes are complemented by the qualitative data grid for each instructor. Instructors’ completed grids reveal the dominant messages which instructors communicate and believe about plagiarism and the consistency of those messages. Ultimately, I believe these results will enable new critical discussions about plagiarism and pedagogy.

Four instructors participated in my study: Ashleigh, T. Winters, Henry, and Abraxas. All four instructors were graduate students in Miami University’s graduate English program, serving as graduate assistant instructors. They all graciously allowed me into their classrooms, offered

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4 As mentioned in chapter 3, all instructors were either assigned a pseudonym or chose one for him/herself.
insight through interviews, and offered me materials (e.g., syllabi, handouts) from their classroom. Each instructor demonstrates a unique approach to discussing plagiarism and source use with their students and offers valuable insight into ways composition instructors may approach similar discussions in their own classrooms. I am indebted to each of these wonderful instructors for their insights and for their participation in this project.

**Plagiarism and Community Values (Ashleigh)**

In fall 2013, Ashleigh began her second year of teaching ENG111 as a second-year master’s student in Miami University’s creative writing program. As she discussed plagiarism and source use in her course, Ashleigh situated the proper use and acknowledgement of sources as an essential value for participation in an academic community. She welcomed me into her classroom twice throughout the semester, on the first day of class and during a day specifically devoted to source use. Community was emphasized both during my observations and in the structure of the course.

While I had intended for my first-day observations to focus on the introduction of plagiarism policies, Ashleigh’s first day demonstrated from the outset the value for community that would drive her course. In our interview, she described her goal on the first day: “I really want to lay the foundation for the kind of classroom that I like, and [that] is sort of community-based, it’s discussion-based. It deals with students as members of…I’m thinking community, community-building, participating in the world.” In my observation, community recurred as the primary value throughout her course policies, major projects, and assignments in the course. Weekly assignments called for students to read the student newspaper and write about select articles each week in order to engage more with the local university community; Ashleigh described the need for attendance as respect for classmates, so as not to degrade their experience in the class by leaving the classroom empty. While I cannot speak to the way community functioned in the rest of the class, the first day seemed to establish community as a central concept for the course.

Ashleigh’s introduction to her plagiarism policy began quite empathetically by asking students what they thought about plagiarism and sharing her own account of academic dishonesty. She asked, “Has anyone plagiarized before? [Students offer no response.] I did once – when I was in sixth grade.” As a sixth-grader, Ashleigh invented a poem to perform for class when the assignment called for her to find one. She elaborated on the transgression of her act, “I made up a source; I didn’t steal someone else’s words … It suggests that I did research, that I did my work…” She had betrayed the one of the academy’s “most sacred values” (Robillard, “We Won’t” 20): academic integrity. While academic integrity can mean many things to many people, Amy Robillard succinctly summarizes the virtues commonly associated with academic integrity, especially as it pertains to writing instruction: “Sacred values include those associated with work—honesty, struggle, ethics—and those associated with authorship—originality, autonomy, morality, and proprietorship. Plagiarism insults our values as a members of the academy…[it] is an institutionally recognized insult” (“We Won’t” 20). Ashleigh’s personal example draws from these same values, which Robillard links intimately with the academic community. As the conversation continued, Ashleigh emphasized honesty and ethics, particularly in source use, as key virtues for members in the academic community, as she describes in our interview: “It’s something that you do because you’re now an active member of a community that values the source of things. And if you do not value them, your role as an academic writer is going to be
short-lived.” She also discussed with her students plagiarism as a disservice to one’s self and one’s learning, again drawing on the values associated with struggle and autonomy. Finally, she distinguished between intentional and unintentional incidents of plagiarism, noting that the latter is “fix[ed] in drafting.”

I returned to Ashleigh’s class nearly two months later, during a unit in her class that prepared students for a research-based argument paper. This particular day set aside approximately 45 minutes to help students understand plagiarism and source use, followed by some time for freewriting. Students read two chapters from Andrea Lunsford and John Ruszkiewicz’s textbook *Everything’s an Argument* addressing source use and citation; these chapters were very practical, describing how to evaluate and integrate sources and providing a resource for MLA citations. This class demonstrated the continued emphasis on community in Ashleigh’s classroom, as her teaching strategy on this day was incredibly collaborative and based in communal discussions, rather than top-down instruction from the front of the class. Students divided into groups of 3-5 and discussed a series of questions relating to source integration (e.g., “How does one paraphrase?”) and plagiarism (e.g., “What is a working definition for plagiarism?”), recording their discussion using Google Docs. In this way, Ashleigh’s class not only positioned community as the virtue for academic integrity but also used the classroom community and collaboration to learn about and understand plagiarism and academic integrity.

Students’ responses were quite traditional, as one might expect after reading a textbook chapter on these issues. In the conversation that followed the group work, Ashleigh aggregated each group’s definitions of plagiarism which are as follows:

- Plagiarism can be defined as using someone else’s intellectual property as your own idea without giving them the proper credit.
- Using someone else’s work without proper citation.
- Using someone else’s words/ideas without giving them proper credit and using them as your own.
- Claiming the words, research, or creative work of others as your own; or stealing.
- To use someone else’s words or ideas and claim them as your own.

Ashleigh responded to these definitions, stating, “I think [these definitions] would be very solid. … I like this definition. I don’t know that I would add anything to it.”

After this discussion, Ashleigh posed a new question, specifically about how academic integrity had already been intimately linked with the students’ enrollment at Miami University – their academic community: “How do [academic integrity, source use, plagiarism] relate to the pledge you were asked to take upon enrolling in this school?” This pledge, Miami’s “Code of Love and Honor,” is a short collection of statements that describe the ways students should act as members of Miami’s community. The pledge begins, “I am Miami,” and continues with several first-person statements that affirm Miami’s ideals, such as “I believe that a liberal education is grounded in qualities of character and intellect,” and “I welcome a diversity of people, ideas, and experience.” Ashleigh highlights three of these statements for discussion: “I stand for honesty, integrity, and the importance of moral conduct”; “I respect the dignity, rights, and property of others and their right to hold and express disparate beliefs”; “I exercise good judgment and believe in personal responsibility.” These statements exemplify well Robillard’s description of
“sacred values”; the pledge recognizes honesty, integrity, proprietorship, and autonomy and ties them intimately to being (a part of) this academic institution (i.e., “I am Miami”).

While she would not disagree with the pledge itself, Ashleigh critiqued the pledge’s motivations in our interview: “Any school that emphasizes liberal arts education should have an honor code that isn’t fake…This whole ‘Love and Honor’ thing is fake… and I don’t feel that kind of culture exists on campus.” Here, Ashleigh tied the pledge discussion to a larger conversation about university honor codes. Her undergraduate institution had its own honor code, which she argued established a sort of what McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield might call a “culture of integrity” (“Cheating,” 167). In their review of scholarship on honor codes and cheating, McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield find that research suggests, “Students at honor code schools view academic integrity in a very different way from their noncode counterparts. The code students were less likely to cheat, were less likely to rationalize or justify cheating…and were more likely to talk about the importance of integrity” (226). Ashleigh reported a similar phenomenon from her “honor code” undergraduate institution in our interview: “Professors would give you exams, and then they would leave and no one would plagiarize. No one would look at another student’s blue book.” Despite her misgivings, Ashleigh used the “Love and Honor” pledge to introduce to students a link between being a university student and academic integrity in much the way an honor code might. As members of this academic community, students must uphold these values.

From these interviews and observations, as well as analysis of Ashleigh’s plagiarism policy and the assigned readings from *Everything’s an Argument*, I created the following qualitative data grid:

| Ashleigh |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Classroom Policy | Absolute/Contextual | Product/Process | Extrinsic/Intrinsic | Specific/General | Punitive/Positive |
| Day 1 Ob. | x | x | x | x | x |
| Day 2 Ob. | x | x | x | x | x |
| Textbook | x | x | x | x | x |
| Interviews | #1 | x | x | x | x | x |
| #2 | x | x | x | x | x |

Figure 2. Ashleigh’s Messages about Plagiarism and Academic Integrity.

The grid demonstrates that Ashleigh spoke about plagiarism in a very consistent way both in her classrooms and in our interviews. She viewed and described plagiarism in ways that are complex, contextual, and multi-faceted. She emphasized the process of source use rather than the product of plagiarism. Her focus on community contributed to an intrinsic value for academic integrity, where one follows the community’s values because it is the good thing to do as a member. Likewise, she described academic integrity through positive ideals of honesty, ethics, and integrity. What is perplexing, however, is the plagiarism policy. In many ways, the policy seems to contradict her entirely. A closer examination of her policy will reveal why this is.

While she did not read it word-for-word in class, her policy (from her course syllabus) reads as follows:
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

The work you produce for this class will be your own. To copy someone else's writing without acknowledging that use is an act of academic as well as professional dishonesty, whether you borrow an entire report or a single sentence. The most serious forms of academic dishonesty are to "buy" an entire paper; or to have someone else write an assignment for you; or to turn in someone else's entire paper (or significant portions of an existing piece of writing) and call it your own. These forms of dishonesty constitute serious breaches of academic integrity. If you have doubts about whether or not you are using your own or others' writing ethically, come talk to me. For further details about Academic Integrity at Miami University — including a detailed list of examples of academic dishonesty and procedures and penalties for dealing with instances of academic dishonesty — see http://www.muohio.edu/integrity/undergrads.cfm.

First, it is important to note that Ashleigh did not, in fact, write this this policy statement; it comes directly from standard syllabus language the composition program offers its instructors. Ashleigh described her policy as “pretty straight-forward; pretty obviously boilerplate. I mean, I use the university’s language for it.” Ashleigh’s use of boilerplate is quite interesting. Linda Bergmann describes administrative boilerplate in her chapter on plagiarism and attribution among higher education administration: “Boilerplate was considered available for general use, particularly in repetitive and/or low-stakes situations” passed down from person to person (144). In much the same way, Ashleigh receives her plagiarism policy from the composition program, despite its contrariness to Ashleigh’s instruction on plagiarism. It associates “academic integrity” – the policy’s title – more often through descriptions of dishonesty than the “positive spirit [which] would focus on what is right rather than what is wrong” which Davis, Drinian, and Bertram Gallant emphasize (168). And it appeals for academic integrity through no other virtue other than plagiarism and dishonesty as transgression of university policy.

The dissonance between the policy and Ashleigh’s own beliefs and instructions is not surprising, as Ashleigh herself admitted in our interview that she feels her instruction differs from her perception of the university’s approach. She elaborated on her perception that Miami lacks a culture of integrity like her undergraduate institution. Her disagreement with the university’s approach to academic integrity manifests itself directly in the clash between the plagiarism policy and her instruction and beliefs.

While the policy established an extrinsic, absolute stance on plagiarism, Ashleigh aimed to bring a bit of her undergraduate university’s culture to Miami’s students through her emphasis on community in first-year writing, particularly in regards to plagiarism. She emphasized ethics and honesty to students. In her classroom, academic integrity and source use were essential values for students because it legitimated the student as members of Miami’s academic community.

Civility, Harmony, and Plagiarism (T. Winters)

The second instructor in my study, T. Winters⁵, also emphasized community in his course, but he chose “civility” and “respect” as his operative terms over the explicit word “community.”

⁵ His self-selected pseudonym.
In his third year of teaching in Miami’s program and his first year of Miami’s doctoral program in literature, Winters’ first day aimed to “create a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere [on the first day]…this atmosphere of civility I think is important.”

When discussing his plagiarism policy, Winters took time to emphasize it by reading it word-for-word. Like Ashleigh, Winters drew from the composition program’s standard policy, but because the director of the composition program differed when he first taught in the composition program, the standard policy he received was slightly different. He also had expanded it to include some of his own language and values. His use of university language in his policy drove him to emphasize academic integrity in his discussion: “Academic integrity is something I focus on, because it’s something I directly take from university policy as much as I can.” In contrast with Ashleigh, consistency with the university was important to Winters: “I try to borrow as much as possible from university policies…we’re presenting a unified front, since I’m a ‘steward of the university.’” He even explicitly stated this philosophy to his students, saying, “My policy comes from the university policy; I’m just saying what they say.” He told his students, “Academic dishonesty is an ugly, ugly thing that just drags everybody down.” He ended his talk on plagiarism by telling his students, “Don’t make it happen; just don’t do it.”

In our interview, Winters said he avoids “the scared-straight thing on academic integrity…on the first day” because he wants to create a “welcoming environment.” However, he did describe his approach to his plagiarism policy as “more firm” than when describing his other policies, such as attendance and late papers. His firm attitude derived from his concern for his students’ future: “But academic integrity…has such major consequences on the students’ subsequent academic career, right? It’s important to emphasize that this is a policy I can’t waver.”

He returned to the topic of plagiarism again later in the semester during instruction in research and source integration for a researched argument essay. Most of this class dealt with the component parts and techniques of source integrations, namely signal phrases, when to cite, how to quote and paraphrase, and how to cite in MLA. However, Winters allocated 20 minutes to plagiarism and academic integrity toward the end of this instruction. The PowerPoint presentation for this class day turned to why academic communities value citation and provided the rationale for attribution: “The real reason for [citation] is so that we can maintain a harmonious community of scholars all working toward a greater sense of understanding.”

The following slide elaborated on this point and was entitled “Remember the Civility Policy from our Syllabus?” This policy –the “Respect/Community (aka ‘Don’t be a Jerk’) Policy” – discussed the need to respect peers in the classroom, situating the course as a space safe of discrimination for “race, class, gender, sexuality, or ability.” The policy featured a harsh consequence: “In extreme cases of disrespectful behavior, you will automatically receive a zero for participation for the entire semester” or 10% of the grade. In this day of instruction, Winters extended this policy to describe the need for source attribution with the following three bullet points from his PowerPoint:

- Citations act as a sort of civility policy – or a “don’t be a jerk” policy – in higher education.
- It ensures that each person’s work is given the respect and attribution which they are due.
- When we don’t do this, it’s called plagiarism.
Winters described plagiarism to his students not only as a failure of attribution but a transgression of a community code, a central value that binds the community together, its "civility policy."

Following discussion of this PowerPoint slide, Winters asks students to take time to freewrite about their thoughts and experiences with plagiarism. While Ashleigh’s group discussion on plagiarism tended more toward definition, Winters’ group discussed personal experience as well as students’ struggle with the complexity of plagiarism. Winters’ students were quite shrewd, as they brought up issues of representation of other’s work, disciplinary expectations, intent, and even intertextuality and the anxiety of influence (see Howard, *Standing* 84). He ends the discussion by turning to his final PowerPoint slide, which reasserts attribution as glue for the academic community: “plagiarism…violates that harmonious scholarly atmosphere. You’re essentially enacting intellectual vandalism.”

From these observations and our interviews, Winters’ qualitative data grid is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T. Winters</th>
<th>Absolute/Contextual</th>
<th>Product/Process</th>
<th>Extrinsic/Intrinsic</th>
<th>Specific/General</th>
<th>Punitive/Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 Ob.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2 Ob.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3. T. Winters’ Messages about Plagiarism and Academic Integrity.**

The grid demonstrates that Winters consistently described academic integrity as an intrinsic value, as something worth pursuing for its own sake. In Winters’ class, this value was called “civility” or “respect,” that which was valued by the community and held it together. In this same way, academic integrity was described positively through association with these positive values. On the first day alone did he deviate from this approach, discussing academic integrity as an extrinsic value motivated by consequences and associated more with dishonesty and punishment, which is unsurprising as he approached this day by reading his plagiarism policy taken from the program’s administrative policy.

The grid also shows a difference between what Winters expressed in his interview and his instruction to students. In our interviews, he characterized plagiarism as complex and contextual, as he recognized the disciplinary and social nature of what is acceptable and transgressive. Furthermore, he expressed more concern for process in his interviews. In Winters’ classroom, however, he presented a concrete idea of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, as well as a more product-based approach that was concerned with creating a correct integration and citation styles.

Winters was concerned about this presentation of plagiarism in his classroom in our exit interview after the semester ended. Soon after his instruction in source use and plagiarism, his students began worriedly contacting him, asking for feedback on writing to ensure no plagiarism had occurred. Winters explained that in the future, he wanted to separate source integration
instruction from talking about plagiarism, as he worried that introducing both topics hand-in-hand did present plagiarism as an absolute and as solely a product-based issue.

**Professional Ethos for Source Use (Henry)**

As a doctoral candidate in composition and rhetoric with extensive teaching experience, Henry is quite comfortable in the classroom. He took a very different approach to instruction in academic integrity and plagiarism. Rather than appeal to community, Henry described to his class the need to appeal to audience through source use as a form of ethos. I visited Henry’s ENG111 course four times during my study, on the first day and during three days that included source use instruction.

Unlike the other instructors in this study, Henry’s first day of class did not feature any discussion of plagiarism. He went through his syllabus in the most general of fashions. In contrast to Winters, who read his policies to his students, Henry focused his discussion of the syllabus to the main takeaways and what students need to know at that moment, such as what to expect in the class and the need for attendance. He then assigned his students to read the syllabus (including the plagiarism policy) carefully for homework. I asked Henry why he did not discuss his plagiarism policy during this day. His response follows:

I don’t think the first day of class is the time to discuss potential cheating issues. I think my assumption is that students know to certain extent what is right and wrong.… I just don’t feel that creates an invitational experience. Like, “Hey, welcome to class. Well, here’s my policy: if you get caught cheating, you’re going to face x, y, z.” That’s not productive – Is that a learning moment or is that a threat? … I just don’t find that encouraging inviting or productive… Why not address it when it’s more timely?

While he did offer students the opportunity in the second class meeting to ask questions about the policy, this semester’s students did not ask any. Henry suggested they likely skimmed it and assumed they knew what it would say.

If student did read the policy, they would find one completely different from Ashleigh’s or Winters’ policies. Although he does derive his policy from “standard language,” Henry came to Miami before both Winters and Ashleigh and may reflect different administrative language and policies. Henry’s policy on plagiarism is divided into two headings: Academic Dishonesty and Consequences of Academic Dishonesty. The former section begins: “Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is the unauthorized use of assistance with intent to deceive.” The latter section succinctly describes the English department’s procedures for addressing academic dishonesty.

There are several points to be aware of in this policy. First, rather than focus specifically on plagiarism, Henry preferred the broader term of academic dishonesty because it is “[more] that just plagiarism…it covers issues like cheating” although he does concede the term can be vague. Second, while the policy explicitly defined cheating and linked it specifically to intent, a definition of plagiarism was not included here. Examples of cheating followed after the text quoted above but did not include what would be traditionally considered plagiarism. And although cheating includes intent, the policy did not describe the role of intent in determining
and adjudicating plagiarism specifically. However, our interview revealed that, for Henry, “intent is key.” He stated:

We have to realize these are people who are trying to acclimate to academic conventions. So, if someone unknowingly [forgets] an in-text citation from a sentence, is that plagiarism? Technically, yes. … but I would never pursue action against a student if I understood that it was not intentional and that it doesn’t indicate deception. So, I think the intent to deceive is key in my determination.

Henry acknowledged the student is learning, acclimating, to the conventions of the university and held that process above an unintentionally plagiarized product; without intent, the student merely demonstrated his struggle to conform to the necessary conventions.

Instruction in source use and plagiarism later in the semester emphasized the purpose of source use as a pragmatic strategy. Henry aimed to convince his students of why source use and citation are necessary rather than teach the mechanics of integration. He shared his strategy during our interview: “My first step when I teach source integration is to actually have a conversation on why we need to learn these things. … You need to sell them on why this matters to you.” In Henry’s class, the purpose of source integration is to gain credibility with your intended audience: “My solution is to focus on professional identity and building credibility, building your reputation as a writer, so that you demonstrate competency and that you’re informed. I think that makes students more interested…in what citation is about.”

To teach students how to use sources effectively in order to gain that credibility and demonstrate that competency, these discussions occurred simultaneously with instruction on logical fallacies. Henry aimed to teach students how to use sources in an argument rather than how to integrate sources into a text through citation mechanically, which Henry described as the “most boring thing you could do to a student,” and as “take[ing] away from the bigger picture of why someone should care about this.” Throughout the three days of instruction on source use, students often saw and discussed examples of source use and their logical or fallacious arguments based on that source use. Henry enacted these beliefs throughout the three days of source use instruction.

During the first day of instruction on source integration, Henry asked students to imagine entering a new job and to “make a list of things you would do to show your credibility to your new [co-workers]… What would you say? What would you do to make yourself credible to your new team? How would you specifically present yourself? How would you talk?” Students’ answers discussed professional dress, eloquence, behavior, and language. Following their discussion, Henry elaborated on the point of this exercise:

“Whether you like it or not – It doesn’t matter what you do after these four years – but while you’re here you have to show your credibility as an intellectual. You have to learn how to speak the language of the academy, and the academy values citation… This is the language of the academy; this is how you will appear credible to your professors, how citation directly affects your ethos. That’s why you give a damn about citation! If you don’t take citation seriously, people won’t take you seriously. Just like if you don’t walk into your business dressed right, talking eloquently, you won’t be taken seriously. Citations and ethos go hand-in-hand.”
The class then moved to discuss why academic communities value citation, building a collective list of reasons including building credibility, including references as a resource for others, and finally avoiding plagiarism. Henry had his own list for why students need to cite, which he displayed in a PowerPoint slide entitled “Citation = ethos.” His list follows:

1. Build credibility.
2. Show you know the conversation already going on – Shows that you are informed.
3. You know the trend and you can to it. You have things to contribute.

While the group list considered aspects of building and improving the academic community, Henry’s list exclusively considered what citations and sources demonstrate about the writer. He concluded this day with this final thought: “Just to wrap up, I want you to think of citation and source integration as something that affects your ethos; that’s why you give a damn, instead of a plagiarism issue.”

While I did observe two other full classes, reviewing them fully would only reiterate the above, but there is one more point I want to touch on from those other observations. On the second day of source use instruction, Henry asked students, “Where and how do people make knowledge and deliver new information to those in the field for the following professions: business, law, medicine, science, and the university?” Student answers all pointed to professional publications and venues, such as periodicals and conferences. Henry used this discussion to inform students about gaining entrance to new and different professional communities: “They use discourse communities to think about different ways people disseminate information. As a student you need to think, ‘How can I enter these communities, so I know what’s going on? I’m not a part of these communities; how do I gain entrance to these communities?”

While discussing how to gain access, a student responds that good sources help one gain entrance, which Henry immediately commends: “Yeah, sources! Citation becomes your ticket into these communities. That’s why you give a damn, because you’re trying to gain entrance into a community that’s kind of elite, and part of getting into that community is to do the citation.” This description of community is quite opposite of what Ashleigh and Winters described in their courses. They suggested to students that they were already members of the community, and using citation demonstrated that the student was a good member. For Henry, students should be seeking access into the community. Citation is a “ticket,” granting access once performed.

Based on these observations, interviews, and his course materials, Henry’s qualitative data grid is as follows:
Figure 4. Henry’s Messages about Plagiarism and Academic Integrity.

Henry’s instruction on academic integrity, plagiarism, and source use is quite consistent with three main emphases. First, Henry conveys that source use and attribution are motivated extrinsically, its main purpose being to gain entrance and acceptance from the audience. As outsiders, students use academic integrity and citation to enter into communities. Second, Henry describes the why and how of source use through emphasis on the process of writing and argumentation. Location, evaluation, and integration of source help students to discover, invent, and revise arguments, as demonstrated in one of the assigned readings, which states, “Working with sources can inspire your own ideas and enrich them… Sources can help you develop and deepen your ideas as early as the brainstorming and drafting stages” (Yale College Writing Center). Third, source use as a tool to gain ethos is contextual, dependent upon the community students try to access and persuade. Henry’s activities constantly asked students to consider different professional and academic contexts and how to achieve ethos in those communities, recognizing that academic source use and attribution practices may be persuasive only in academic communities and that each community may have different expectations in order to establish ethos.

**Source Use, Readability, and the Cost of Plagiarism (Abraxas)**

The final instructor in my study, a second-year Ph.D. student in literature, asked to go by the name of Abraxas. His instruction in source use and plagiarism employed a third frame. However, while his colleagues’ framed these issues mostly through discussion of communities and values, Abraxas rarely engaged with any of these ideas during our interactions and my observations. Instead, Abraxas chose to emphasize what plagiarism would cost students and that good source use was a more effective tool for writing.

During the first class meeting, Abraxas used a friendly but formal tone with his students, describing the persona he puts on as “savvy, intellectual, kind of an authoritarian figure.” His greatest goal on this day, as he puts it in his interview, was to “make it clear that I’m trying to look out for their best interest… I try to get on a real and personal level with them.” In this way, Abraxas tried to be firm but personable as he establishes his policies and tries to build a relationship with his students.

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6 Observation one has no marks as Henry did not discuss these issues at all during the first day of class.
Abraxas reflected this focus on a relationship through understanding his students in his plagiarism statement and the discussion of the policy on the first day. He opened the discussion empathetically, stating that he knew that students know about plagiarism and even understood why they might want to do. Our interview repeated this moment: “I understand why [students] would want to plagiarize. I understand that it comes down to not understanding material or not feeling like you can create an adequate draft with the resources you have. [I am] just showing that I understand those problems and can help [students] solve them in a better way.” Following this empathetic moment, Abraxas cut straight to his main message on plagiarism: it is not worth it to plagiarize because you will not get away with it. The policy made this point succinctly: “It is very difficult to successfully plagiarize in my class. In fact, I guarantee it is easier to write an essay yourself than attempt plagiarism.”

Abraxas elaborated on this statement to his students in class and to me in an interview in two ways: plagiarism deterrence through scaffolding and through appealing to students’ values to make plagiarism unattractive. First, Abraxas explains how the scaffold for each assignment deters students from successfully plagiarizing. Students constantly turn in smaller check-in assignments for each project, share with the class current ideas and recent developments, and write about their projects every day in class. He stated, “The assignments are so much engrained and embedded so much in what they do in class. I just don’t think there’s any way [for a student to plagiarize].” And indeed, this strategy is exactly what scholarship on plagiarism suggests for instructors. As noted in my earlier review, many common recommendations for instructors aim “to discourage the unethical” (Howard, *Standing* 161). The use of scaffolded assignments is one such move. Much like Abraxas, Edward White argues, “When a writing assignment attends to the writing process, plagiarism becomes almost impossible” (208).

Abraxas realizes, however, that this might not be the most effective way to persuade students not to plagiarize. Instead, he appeals to them through “their values,” as he puts it:

[I speak] to something that is really practical and that they value – how to write efficient work. Because I think that’s the bottom line of what freshman see...they think it’s easier, more simple to plagiarize and they will get a better grade. It’s very difficult to plagiarize and get away with it, and in that way, I appeal to their value of actually having to do more work to avoid plagiarism and assuming a much higher risk for your grade.

Abraxas emphasized this risk directly with students assuring them that the chance of being caught is very high and will cost them. The plagiarism policy directly states, “Save yourself a lot of time, money, and academic probation, and please just ask for help.” In class, he admonishes his students to just “write the paper.” On this first day, Abraxas communicated this message clearly.

While the first day focused mainly on deterring plagiarism, the second day of instruction that I observed took a completely different tone, focusing instead on explicit instruction on how to integrate sources into papers. Because of the wide variety of interests Abraxas encounters in his first-year writing course, he chooses to emphasize “portable rhetorical skills” that students can transfer to other contexts. This is especially true in his instruction in source use. In our interview he described this emphasis as being “on solutions” and “on skills and not content”—skills such as source location, evaluation, and integration in this case. Thus, this day featured explicit instruction on how to integrate sources into a paper through quotation, paraphrase, and
citation. Abraxas uses this approach because he sees plagiarism as occurring mostly because of students’ inability or anxiety to locate and integrate source properly: “My theory of plagiarism is that students just [are confused] about where to get good quality sources and how to integrate them properly without too much stress. I feel they just don’t know how to use sources; they just think they’re some sort of burden.” During this day of instruction, Abraxas described the key goal of these integration strategies was to “distinguish your voice from other’s works,” and citation had as its “most basic reason” to avoid plagiarism. Abraxas offered descriptions of quoting and paraphrasing, along with examples culled from his own writings. He offered students the strategy of the “citation sandwich,” wherein writers “introduce, use, cite and then analyze [the] source.” As a closing note on the topic before transitioning to a different activity, he admonished his students, “You have to make sure you distinguish your voice. That’s so you don’t get accused of plagiarism.”

Abraxas describes this focus on clarity and correctness in integration and attribution as “making it easy on the reader” in our second interview – easy to distinguish between voices, easy to locate other sources, and easy to understand arguments. “This is a theme throughout the whole semester,” Abraxas states, “How do you make your document readable, accessible, and friendly? Something that someone actually wants to read? … I want them to think in terms of efficacy, rather than just rules.” Through his source use instruction, Abraxas aimed to teach students how they could integrate sources in a way that was accessible for the reader.

Based on these interactions with Abraxas, I created the following qualitative data grid:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abraxas</th>
<th>Absolute/Contextual</th>
<th>Product/Process</th>
<th>Extrinsic/Intrinsic</th>
<th>Specific/General</th>
<th>Punitive/Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 Ob.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2 Ob.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Abraxas’ Messages about Plagiarism and Academic Integrity.

Abraxas’ grid reveals a focus on extrinsic motivation and an emphasis on final product. First, Abraxas emphasizes outside motivators to establish the need for citation and source use. In his class, the most basic motivation for attribution is to avoid plagiarism, and the loss and consequence of transgressive behavior serve as the main plagiarism deterrent. Student plagiarism risks “time, money, and academic probation,” as the policy states. Additionally, source use and attribution are tools to allow readers to approach the text easily; it is the audience’s need for clarity that motivates use of citation and correct integration. Abraxas believes these motivations appeal to students best. Second, Abraxas emphasizes correctness as a key skill that students can transfer to other contexts. Correct citations and integrations provide clarity and readability. Accordingly, he focuses instruction on the correct mechanics of paraphrase and quoting. Students were taught very explicitly how to integrate sources into the paper correctly. In this way, Abraxas demonstrates a focus on the end product, seeking to guide students into the expected standards for writing at the university.
However, I should note that in our second interview Abraxas did demonstrate a concern for allowing students to be a part of an academic community through his instruction. While he did not suggest whether students were already a part of or seeking access into these communities, he hoped that through the skills he emphasized, students would “make them feel empowered…and confident…to participate and succeed.”

Ashleigh, T. Winters, Henry, and Abraxas offer tremendous examples of the variety of approaches that students encounter concerning instruction in source use, academic integrity, and plagiarism in their first-year writing courses, as well as the variety of views to which students are exposed as they begin their college careers. Each instructor demonstrates a unique perspective on and strategy for discussing plagiarism, teaching source use, and appealing to students. Although these data do not allow me to make broad generalizations about instructor practices, they do suggest a few general concepts which teachers might use to frame instruction in source use, academic integrity, and plagiarism. In the chapter that follows, I synthesize the instructional practices and qualitative data grids of each instructor to examine more directly these concepts, as well as the differences among these instructors, and to elucidate what such framing devices suggest for instruction in academic integrity, plagiarism, and source use.
Chapter 5: Framing Plagiarism: Community, Ethos, Correctness, and Loss

The four instructors in this study displayed many diverse beliefs about effective instructional practices for negotiating plagiarism and source use, employed unique activities in their classrooms to engage students in that conversation, and described the need and nature of attribution through various appeals. Despite the small number of participants, I believe my data is rich with insights that not only document these instructors’ actual, observed practice but also suggest a few greater themes for instruction in plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use, which may be useful in any context where source use and attribution is discussed.

As I spoke with each instructor, observed their classes, and read through their policies and assigned readings, I began to see a few central, recurring ideas which instructors used to frame their discussions concerning plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use. While engaging with students and discussing their practices and the beliefs that informed their practice, instructors consistently appealed to certain constructions of integrity, student positionality, and transgressive source use. These ideas became something of a central theme at various times in my observations and conversations with instructors. I refer to these ideas, constructions, and themes as “frames.”

To deploy the idea of frames, I draw particularly from the work of George Lakoff, whose work in cognitive sciences and linguistics has brought crucial insight into the way language, narratives, and metaphor organize human understanding of the world (see Lakoff and Johnson). Lakoff describes frames as systems including “semantic roles, relations between roles, and relations to other frames” (“Why it Matters” 71). He often makes references to hospitals and elephants as example (see Lakoff, Don’t Think). Invoking the term hospital also invokes ideas and words that describe, inform, and define the hospital, such as doctors, patients, surgery, and emergency. These terms organize and make sense of hospitals and determine how we think about them. Frames are activated through particular language, and “a single word typically activates not only its defining frame, but also much of the system its defining frame is in” (“Why it Matters” 72). Lakoff has uses frames to deconstruct political language (Lakoff, Moral Politics; Lakoff, The Political Mind); other scholars have made use of frames to analyze ideology in video games (Bogost) and MOOCs and writing courses (Porter, “Framing Questions”). Linda Adler-Kassner, Chris Anson, and Rebecca Moore Howard too have employed Lakoff’s theory of frames to study naturalized representations of (student) plagiarism in media. I now employ frames to analyze the instructional practices of the instructors in this study.

A “frame” for plagiarism instruction is exactly as the name implies – a system which organizes and makes sense of the concepts of plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use. The frame is the system in which these concepts reside, and the perception of system can vary from agent to agent. My four participants each invoked particular systems of terms and assumptions to discuss plagiarism and source use with students. In this case, frames determined the answer to questions such as why should I use sources, why is plagiarism wrong, who is affected by plagiarism, and what should I do to avoid plagiarism. In other words frames demonstrated the ideology and axiology of plagiarism and attribution at work in instructors’ practices. In this chapter, I identify four frames which I believe the instructors in my study employed through their plagiarism instruction and discuss the use of frames for other writing instructors. I suggest that close and reflective attention by instructors to the ways they use (these
or other) frames can serve as an excellent heuristic device for developing effective and consistent instruction in plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use.

A few notes inform my descriptions of these frames. First, it is important not to conflate frames with the instructors that employ them. I do not mean to suggest that the particular use of a frame by one instructor demonstrates the only possible manifestation of that frame. Rather, associations between frames and instructors are meant as examples of how these frames might manifest in classroom settings. Second, instructors are not necessarily limited to only one frame (as Abraxas will demonstrate shortly). Third, although I identify four frames here, this discussion is by no means exhaustive or comprehensive. I am sure there are many other frames which may be employed to attend to plagiarism and attribution in writing classrooms. My discussion only address what my study revealed, and I leave it to other scholars and instructors to expand upon this initial list.

This chapter identifies and describes four frames which this study’s participants demonstrated through their instruction: the frame of ethos, the frame of community, the frame of readability, and the frame of loss. I outline these frames one at a time, in each case unpacking the assumptions of each frame and providing examples from my data of how these frames operate in classroom settings and in instructor beliefs. I conclude by discussing how the concept of frames for plagiarism and attribution discussion might be useful for writing instructors as they seek to improve their own practice.

The Frame of Ethos

I do not believe it is uncommon for instructors to describe source use as evidence and support for arguments. Such descriptions posit that sources offer credibility and validity to a student’s writing and thesis. My research with first-year writing instructors saw one instructor who slightly revised this approach to frame his discussion of source use and academic integrity with students. In Henry’s course, source use offered the writer credibility rather than the writing. I refer to this approach as the frame of ethos. Ethos as a guiding frame assumes the following values throughout instruction in source use, academic integrity, and plagiarism:

- Student-writers attempt to earn access to a (professional) community.
- Source use is a rhetorical practice intended to establish that credibility and gain access.
- Appropriate and ethical source use reflects the audience’s values in order to gain audience approval and engage the audience.
- Transgressive source use fails to engage or persuade the audience.

I suggest Henry’s teaching as an example of a frame of ethos. Henry’s classroom instruction demonstrates how these values operate through his approach to enact a frame of ethos that in his first-year writing course.

As detailed in the previous chapter, Henry’s instruction focused on the idea of a professional ethos. He described source use to his students as “professional identity and building credibility.” His instruction emphasized citation and source use as establishing ethos, entwining this teaching with discussion of logical fallacies and rhetorical awareness. In this way, source use and attribution was linked to rhetorical knowledge and practice used to appeal to audiences and make persuasive arguments.
The influence of rhetorical theory reached especially to his instruction on the need for citation and sources. In Henry’s class, students were outsiders seeking access to academic and professional communities. Citation was a “ticket into these communities,” and failure to “take citation seriously” resulted in others “not taking you seriously.” This configuration placed students on the outside of the communities they wished to enter or affect, as they “are trying to gain entrance into a community that’s kind of elite.” Students employed sources and citation as a move to gain access and to be taken seriously. The frame of ethos and its description of citation align well with Aristotelian theory on virtue in rhetoric.

In fact, in the Rhetoric, Aristotle discusses virtue as a part of ethos, which includes the speaker’s *arete* or “moral character” (213). The *arete* of the Rhetoric is described with the Greek word *dynamis*, meaning a capacity or potential. Through this word, Aristotle identifies a rhetorical virtue meant for persuasion (Yoos 245), wherein the rhetor recognizes what demonstrates virtue according to the occasion and constructs himself as possessing that virtue. Nan Johnson suggests that, for Aristotle, “it is the speech itself, not the speaker’s reputation, that creates credibility. The speaker must make ‘his own character look right’” for the particular audience (101). Accordingly, Johnson concludes that Aristotle’s ethos is best defined as “a pragmatic strategy” wherein the speaker “tempers his character according to the subject and the audience” (103).

Aristotle’s *arete* as it pertains to rhetoric and ethos then might be described as follows: the constructing of the speaker’s self as submitting to the audience’s cultural values. Debra Hawhee notes that *arete* “functions as an external phenomenon, depending on outside reception and acknowledgement for its instantiation” (187). *Arete* is not internal to the speaker but assigned to the speaker by the audience, who rely heavily “on visibility” (187). Because *arete* is instead external, the rhetor casuistically constructs his character through his speech according to cultural values to make visible the (appropriate) virtues so as to receive the acknowledgement of *arete* from the audience, establishing his ethos and enabling persuasion. This is what Susan Blum has called the “performance self,” which “focus[es] on knowing what the expectations are in particular contexts and are adept at meeting those expectations” (64). These performance selves value the “integrity that is gained from the respect of others in society” (65).

To summarize, Aristotle’s theory of virtue exactly articulates the concepts which inform the frame of ethos for instruction in plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use. Like Aristotle’s virtue, academic integrity and attributions are rhetorical virtues that are external to the rhetor. That is to say, the rhetor himself does not necessarily possess virtue; rather, the audience must recognize and assign virtue to the rhetor in order for persuasion to occur. Citation as a virtue is a performance. It is part of the persona which the student-writer puts on. Or as Kathryn Valentine has said: “Rather than achieving an ethical morality through following rules, individuals must continually question what is moral depending on the relationship and context in which they are acting” (106). The writer recognizes citation as the necessary virtue for the situation and in his text uses sources and citation in order to persuade his audience. Students appeal to their audiences through citation, which demonstrates the virtues of credibility and competence, to gain approval and access into those communities.

The frame of ethos suggests that source use is a pragmatic, rhetorical strategy to engage and persuade certain audiences. Source use demonstrates credibility and competence and establishes ethos in order to gain access to professional communities. Such a frame considers...
source use and academic integrity as extrinsic values that are put on to gain acknowledgement and respect from the audience. And that, according to Henry and this frame, is why students should “give a damn.”

The Frame of Community

References to community recurred as a central concept in my interactions with instructors. Two instructors especially, T. Winters and Ashleigh, appealed to students for the need for attribution and academic integrity through reference to academic communities and their values in a way that contrasts quite emphatically from Henry’s use of community. As opposed to frame of ethos which seeks entrance into a community through source use, these two framed plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use with community to establish academic integrity and attribution as an intrinsic and essential attribute for membership in an academic community and to emphasize integrity, ethics, and honesty over plagiarism and consequence. I refer to such an appeal as the frame of community. This frame assumes and conveys four particular values about students’ positions as writers and the value of source use and citation.

- Students are always already members of an/the academic community.
- Academic communities value source use from their membership.
- Appropriate and ethical source use demonstrates that the writer is a good member of an/the academic community and maintains the values of the community.
- Transgressive source use betrays the values of an/the academic community.

These values came through clearly in Ashleigh’s and T. Winters’ classroom instruction.

Both Ashleigh and Winters communicated to students a concern for community. In Ashleigh’s class, community was both local and global, as her students engaged with Miami’s local values for its academic community through the “I Am Miami” pledge and with the global (generic) academic community through their discussions about source use. Throughout her instruction, she emphasized honesty and integrity, drawing from her own experiences in an institution that employed an honor code. Students were to value academic integrity as “good members of the community,” she stated. Winters likewise sought to convey to students the importance of academic integrity and attribution for communities. Respect for the works of others, demonstrated through citation, maintained the civility and harmony of the academic community. In his own words, T. Winters suggested, “The real reason for [citation] is so that we can maintain a harmonious community of scholars all working toward a greater sense of understanding.” The students’ role as members of the academic community was to work in concert with other scholars, which could only be achieved through attribution and academic integrity.

Through these discussions, Ashleigh and T. Winters suggested to students that they were already part of the academic community. Whereas Henry conveyed to students the need to gain entrance, these two instructors assumed their students had already become members, such as Ashleigh’s comment that, “[Citation is] something that you [students] do because you’re now an active member of a community that values the source of things.” As members, they now needed to respect and internalize the academy’s “sacred virtues” (Robillard “We Won’t” 20) in order to legitimate their membership and work with(in) the community. This internalization also distinguishes Ashleigh and T. Winters from Henry, who suggested an Aristotelian virtue-as-

As opposed to Aristotle’s externalized *arete* virtue, Quintilian argues that virtue must be an internalized part of the true rhetor, defining rhetoric as “the art of speaking well” (*benedicendi scientia*), a very clever description which evokes two meanings: to speak effectively and to speak virtuously. Whereas the end of Aristotle’s rhetoric is persuasion, Quintilian describes the goal of rhetoric as “to speak well” (*benedicere*) (389). Speaking well is an end unto itself. To speak well, the rhetor must be “a good man (*vir bonus*).” That is to say, the rhetor must possess virtue in order to legitimize his identity and speech.

Accordingly, the whole of Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* concerns itself with how to raise and become “a good man” [sic] ⁷, including the education the aspiring good man should receive. The role of teacher as instructors of these morals is paramount: “Since…virtue…requires notwithstanding to be brought to maturity by instruction…[for] no man will ever be thoroughly accomplished in eloquence, who has not…formed his moral character on the precepts of others and his own reflections.” The good man learns morals from others and internalized it as his own.

Quintilian’s theory of virtue offers a few key concepts which inform the frame of community. First, virtue is an internal, intrinsic part of any rhetor or writer. It legitimizes the identity of the writer. In the case of the frame of community, source use and academic integrity legitimize the writer’s place as a member of the academic community. A person without virtue lacks the qualifications for a member and loses the right to speak, or as Ashleigh put it, “And if you do not value [academic integrity], your role as an academic writer is going to be short-lived.” Second, virtue is an end unto itself. That is, we should pursue academic integrity and attribution for its own sake. Unlike the frame of ethos that performs these values, the frame of community upholds academic integrity because it is right. Lastly, the instructor can play an important role in developing these virtues, instructing student writers in academic integrity so that they may then internalize them.

T. Winters and Ashleigh’s frame of community for their instruction in plagiarism suggests that academic integrity is an intrinsic value essential to the (academic) community to which these students belong. As members of the academic community, students are tasked with being good members, who pursue the positive values of attribution, respect, and civility for their own sake. Plagiarism violates those values, disrupts the work of the community, and marks transgressive members, who lose their legitimacy as part of the academic community.

**Frame of Correctness**

While the previous frames concerned themselves with critical notions of student ethos and positionality and community values, many texts espouse much more practical approach to discussing source use and plagiarism with students. In the preface to their *Critical Conversations about Plagiarism*, Donelly, Ingalls, Morse, Post, and Stockdell-Giesler identify several instructional texts for students that “continue to focus on avoiding plagiarism” through explicit

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⁷ The blatant sexism found in classical works on rhetoric, featuring and respecting only the male, has been well documented. See Miriam Brody’s *Manly Writing*, for example.
instruction in source integration (i.e., how to paraphrase, how to cite, how to use index cards). Texts with titles like “Avoiding Plagiarism” and “Cite It Right” demonstrate to students that plagiarism is dealt with primarily through mechanical and technical skill. Susan Blum describes these approaches as “treat[ing] academic integrity, especially the mandate to cite sources as a set of academic skills to be learned” (165). As I worked with Abraxas in this study, he added to this approach with a frame that defined the need for such mechanical correctness. I have come to call this approach the frame of correctness. Correctness as frame assumes the following:

- The function of citation is to distinguish between student voice and other voices.
- Students need to learn the skills of source integration, such as how to correctly paraphrase or include quotes and correctly cite sources, for this purpose.
- Lack of this skill causes student plagiarism.
- Proper distinguishing between voices makes source use clear, accessible, and readable.
- Proper distinguishing between voices defends against accusations of plagiarism.

These points are very straightforward in contrast to the previous frames that theorized student-writer positionality and relationships to communities and audiences. Abraxas’ exemplifies the use this frame during the second day of instruction that I observed.

During this day, Abraxas focused his discussion almost exclusively on how to integrate sources, what he considered “portable rhetorical skills.” I observed as he walked students through a tutorial on the “citation sandwich” and on “source stitching,” practices for integrating and synthesizing sources respectively. He offered students examples from his own writing as he explained the proper use of sentence-length quotes and block quotes. This instructions purpose was to provide students with strategies for source integration and to give them confidence with using sources. Abraxas believed plagiarism occurred because students experienced much anxiety about source use. “My theory of plagiarism is that students just [are confused] about where to get good quality sources and how to integrate them properly without too much stress,” he explained during his interview. His focus on broadly applicable integration strategies for quoting and paraphrasing, for example, were meant to address this stress and thereby prevent plagiarism.

As did so, he explained to students the need for correct attribution and citation – an emphasis he described as “readability” – as “making it easy on the reader.” The focus on clear source integration and citation was justified by a need to distinguish one’s writing from a source’s borrowed text. And the failure of this distinguishing was made clear: “You have to make sure to distinguish your voice…so you don’t get accused of plagiarism.”

In this way, Abraxas used a common approach for teaching source use and attribution but complemented it with a frame of correctness. The added frame gave justification for the intricate source integration lesson and sought to appeal to values Abraxas believed students held. In this view, attribution makes writing approachable and defends against plagiarism. Students should seek to learn the skills and mechanics of source integration in order to best distinguish their voice and contribution from other authors and avoid accusations of plagiarism. Abraxas used this frame to address what he sees as the main reason students plagiarize, a lack of confidence or ability about finding and using source.

The Frame of Loss
Abraxas, however, was an interesting participant in that he employed more than one frame during my observations with him. As noted in the previous chapter, his second day of instruction departed from his emphasis during the first day of class. The first day instead conveyed to students that plagiarism was a risk and that students would not get away with it. He aimed to deter student plagiarism by describing what students would lose if they plagiarized. I argue that this focus constitutes its own frame: the frame of loss. This frame emphasizes the consequence of plagiarism and what students (potentially) lose by plagiarizing. The following messages are conveyed when a frame of loss is employed:

- Plagiarism is a transgressive act that will be punished.
- Plagiarism always causes the student to lose something – grades, learning, time, effort, good standing, or more.
- Students should abide by academic integrity because the consequence is too great.

Not unlike the frame of correctness, these points are rather limiting in their representation of source use and plagiarism (and indeed the frames of correctness that emphasizes precision and the frame of loss that emphasizes consequence for failure would seem to complement one another). Though all instructors at least briefly alluded to this view of plagiarism, review of Abraxas’ first day will best demonstrate how a frame of loss influences classroom discussions of plagiarism.

As Abraxas described his plagiarism policy on the first day of class, he told his students very frankly what would occur if they attempted plagiarism: “It is very difficult to successfully plagiarize in my class. In fact, I guarantee it is easier to write an essay yourself than attempt plagiarism… Save yourself a lot of time, money, and academic probation, and please just ask for help.” This description makes clear what students lose through plagiarism: time, money, and academic good standing. Plagiarism in Abraxas’ class is a risk that will never return the investment. Matthew Woessner shares a similar idea about why students might plagiarize; he argues that “a decision to commit plagiarism is motivated by two primary considerations: grades and time” (314). Woessner likens plagiarism to gambling, and relies upon economic models of utility, risk, and reward to suggest that, if the punishments for cheating are not strict enough, the reward of plagiarism – less time investment for better return on grade – may often be worth the risk. Abraxas made clear that, in his class, such a gamble never pays off.

This strategy for plagiarism deterrence closely resembles what Tricia Bertram Gallant describes as a “rule compliance” strategy for academic integrity; in rule compliance, “the focus is on ensuring that the cost of engaging in undesirable behaviors is higher than the rewards” (36). Rule compliance strategies, according to Bertram Gallant, emphasizes the punishment for transgressive behavior over pedagogical alternatives and aim to conform students to the institutional regulations and expectations (36-37). McCabe, Butterfield, and Trevino argue that a “strict ‘deterrence approach’…begins with the assumption that students will cheat and that only fear of serious penalties for breaking rules will reduce cheating” (“Cheating” 143). The frame of loss (though here only applied in one day in my observations) attempts to discourage plagiarism by making the cost too high and forcing students into the appropriate behavior.

This frame stands in stark contrast to other frames. It seems to position students in yet a third way. The frames of ethos and community put students in a position of agency. In the frame of ethos, students were able to freely put on identities and community values to interact with
their desired community. Community emphasized to students their ability to be a part of and contribute to a community through their actions. Loss, however, communicates the student’s lack of agency: what will happen to them if they plagiarize. Students do not hear of a way to positively impact their identity. This constitutes a second way that loss stands apart from other frames. There is no reward or good outcome for not plagiarizing; there is only punishment for transgression. Ethos and Community, in some way or another, typically allow for some positive outcomes for students who succeed, whether that be membership, community acceptance and respect, or persuasion. With the frame of loss, there is no success to be had concerning academic integrity or source use.8

Loss frames academic integrity and attribution as an absolute rule which must not be transgressed. Violation of these academic standards bears various costs which are meant to deter students from plagiarizing. This frame associates academic integrity more with the negative – with academic dishonesty and consequence – and values the punishment and product over pedagogy or process.

Based on these four frames – ethos, community, correctness, and loss – I now turn to a few more general concerns that these frames suggest for discussing plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use with students, as well as the teaching of writing more generally. These concerns come out of particular concepts which these frames negotiate in various ways.

What kind of community?

The frame of ethos and the frame of community both relied upon the idea of “communities” to frame plagiarism but in quite different ways. The frame of ethos assumes a multiplicity of professional and academic communities which students seek to enter, persuade and influence. Community, however, assumes a more generic notion of the academic community and elides the existence of professional communities and its implications for academic integrity. Such a difference leads me to ask how if we as writing teachers are mindful of such a construction of communities. This conversation has its kin in discussions about audience (see Porter, Audience and Rhetoric) and about publics (see Warner, Publics and Counterpublics). As an instructor, careful reflection on community compels to consider my own teaching. In what ways am I describing academic community to my students? Am I presenting communities as already existing entities or as formed through address, discourse, and circulation? Am I presenting community as a singular entity or as plural entities? Am I suggesting to students that they conform to communities or seek to enact change in them or both? Am I allowing for academic, professional, and even other social and personal communities in my classroom through assignments and discussion? Reflection upon such questions may help instructors to construct and inform new frames for source use and academic integrity as well as their classrooms.

What kind of student?

The frames of community and ethos place students in very different positions in relation to academic institutions and academic and professional communities. Ethos assumes students are

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8 Abraxas, perhaps, addressed this by shifting to a frame of correctness later in the class to give students some agency and to identify a positive outcome for source use, accessibility and readability for the readers.
outside of these communities and attempt to gain access; in the frame of community, students are always already members of the community. Again, ruminating on the frames brings me questions about my approach in the classroom. I am compelled to wonder: what I am communicating to students about their own positionality? Am I suggesting they are within or outside of academic or professional communities? Am I suggesting they are authorities in their arguments, must gain authority, have no authority? Am I suggesting to students that they have blank identities whose previous and current positions have no bearing on their arguments? Such questions have important implications for the ways students understand and approach argumentative writing. While we often ask student writers to consider the audience, its context, its knowledge, and its values, I do not know how often we ask students to examine where they exist in relation to these audiences.

As a final note, I reiterate again that, although these four frames are certainly important, they are only first steps towards articulating the strategies, approaches, and practices of writing instructors. I believe there are many other frames that instructors might employ. For example, if one were to apply a frame that drew heavily upon the ethic of collaboration I have outlined earlier, a frame of collaboration that sees source use as a collaborative effort between student-writers, scholar-authors, and published texts. Or a frame of intertextuality might emphasize the influenced nature of writing and seek to disrupt singular authorship and “independent” writing through assignments that call for collaboration and transparent influence from scholarly, popular, social, and cultural sources. I encourage instructors not to adopt the frames presented here but to reflect critically on the values they assume and convey to students through their instruction in order to identify articulate their own frames. And in so doing, they might revise their frames to suit their own pedagogical goals and beliefs about plagiarism, academic integrity, and student source use.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

The figure of the solitary author cannot and should not be sustained as the organizing principle of composition’s representations of authorship.

Rebecca Moore Howard, Standing in the Shadows of Giants (169)

I cannot help but agree with Howard’s provocative statement. As composition studies continues to seek new insights into the ways students compose with sources and with each other, it is imperative that we begin to unseat the solitary genius author as much as possible, both in our classrooms and in our scholarship. Such a shift cannot be accomplished through scholarship that relies solely on personal experiences and singular voices. Instead, we must begin to complement our own experiences with empirical work to challenge or revise the lore and mythology of plagiarism and to work collaboratively with other authors, texts, and instructors through research and scholarship.

I have offered my own study as an example for such work. My empirical study sought to understand approaches already being taken in first-year writing classrooms to help students understand plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use. As I documented the practices of these four instructors, I encountered diverse and various approaches to such instruction. Collaboratively authored definitions of plagiarism, group discussions that negotiated the complexities of plagiarism, source use instruction entwined with instruction on rhetorical argumentation and logical fallacies, top-down mechanical instruction – each instructor employed unique activities with a dedicated purpose. Ashleigh hoped her students would internalize the idea of academic integrity and take part of their local and academic communities. T. Winters described to students their role as contributors to the academic community and the need for attribution to maintain its civility. Henry wanted students to use sources as a way to demonstrate competence and gain entrance into academic and professional communities. And Abraxas sought to give students confidence and facility with integrating sources so that they could write effectively and efficiently. With each instructional approach came a series of ideological and axiological assumptions and values – messages about the purpose and value of source use and attribution, about expectations for and positionality of student-writers, and about the consequences of plagiarism.

Together these messages and approaches comprise what I have called the “frame” for plagiarism instruction. “Frames,” as a distinct pedagogical tool, offer a new way for scholarship and research to discuss and describe instruction in source use and plagiarism beyond particular activities or scaffolds. Instead, frames detail what we hope to communicate to students about academic integrity and attribution in addition to what technical or mechanical skill students may learn or what typical stumbling block for source use student might learn to negotiate. This study encountered four such frames: ethos, community, correctness, and loss. Ethos emphasized the need for students to use sources in order to gain entrance into communities to which they did not currently belong. Community recognized students as members of academic communities and source use as a community value which members were expected to uphold. Correctness cared most about the readability and efficiency of student source use and sought to teach students how to do it best. Loss positioned plagiarism as an absolute transgression of policy which was met with consequences that should dissuade any student from attempting plagiarism.
Such diverse activities and frames suggest the diversity of views and messages which students are exposed to and may come away with after their first-year writing courses. While many might assume that students receive the same instruction in all writing courses, like other issues of writing, how source use and plagiarism are broached varies by instructor. While I cannot speak to how much students internalized the instruction to which they were exposed, it is again worth noting that first-year writing courses offer students one of their first salient experiences with (what they may perceive to be) the university’s expectations for student ethical behavior in writing. In this study, all students were told that plagiarism was something to avoid. Some, however, received top-down, absolute mandates and warnings against plagiarism, while others were taught that plagiarism was a rhetorical failure of performance. Others still learned that plagiarism threatens academic communities with discord or that it exposes dishonesty and a moral failure. As these students enter their second year of college, as well as disciplinary and major coursework, their beliefs and expectations about source use and plagiarism, if based on these instructional approaches, may vary not only from their future instructors but also from their peers and from university policies.

I do not advocate necessarily for the creation of standardized approach for teaching plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use at each institution. In fact, as an advocate for multiple perspectives and voices in developing knowledge about plagiarism (that is, my ethic of collaboration), I rather prefer the variety of perspectives such disparate instruction might encourage and the conversations that may result. However, I do suggest that all instructors who assign writing in their coursework do take time to discuss their particular expectations for source use, attribution, plagiarism, and consequences and to be reflective and deliberate about the underlying values they might communicate to students during such discussion.

The concept of frames for plagiarism instruction may be most helpful for instructors in the pursuit of reflective and deliberate instruction in plagiarism. I hope that by documenting the practices of these instructors, I have offered useful models and understanding of what instructors actually do in their writing classrooms. But, while ethos, community, correctness, and loss already offer some interesting perspectives and values for instructors, I encourage instructors to use these frames heuristically to examine the messages and values they convey in their writing courses. I would also call for these instructors to develop and share more frames for plagiarism instruction that might serve new and necessary purposes in teaching students how to engage with sources.

I also acknowledge my study’s own limitation of scope. Most obviously, my findings are limited by the number and kind of participants in my study. These case studies only examine the instructional practices of four instructors, all of whom were graduate students at various points in their degrees and with various but mostly limited teaching experiences. However, as it is not the point of this project to make an analytical argument that I attempt to generalize, I do not see this as necessarily detracting from the points I have presented thus far. Rather, such a small focus, while allowing for deep interaction with these instructions and rich insights, excludes insights from other critical sites for inquiry.

Accordingly, this study leaves many unexplored sites for me to build upon this work. A follow-up study would seek to expand the number of participants and to study a more diverse sample that includes full-time and adjunct faculty and international and second-language student-writers. Case studies with experienced faculty, I would suspect, might
reveal more nuanced and deliberate practices as well as more confident and articulate discussion of their goals and purposes. To include courses which address primarily second language writers would open discussions to negotiations of cultural and societal differences. Several scholars have explored and documented what universities in other countries and what second language writers believe or experience concerning plagiarism and recommended approaches for discussing plagiarism with these writers (see Valentine; Norris; Yamada; Heitman and Litewka; Thompson and Williams), but again, little is known about typical approaches instructors commonly employ or about the messages which ESL instructors convey to their students beyond lore and anecdote. A follow-up study that includes second language writing courses and examines the frames employed and the values convey would offer much to this gap in our knowledge.

My work also suggests several other topics for empirical research that I could not broach in this study. First, my study completely excluded any observation or discussion of instruction in working with digital and multimedia source materials. Such instruction would yield an interesting site for discussions about plagiarism as they become entangled with issues of copyright and fair use (see Martine Courant Rife’s *Invention, Copyright, and Digital Writing*). I suspect that copyright and fair use tend to dominate these conversations, and plagiarism may not feature as prominently in these discussions.

How frames change or continue to operate in digital and multimedia instruction also deserves attention. Second, as my study only focused on first-year writing classrooms, future research might also explore how these conversations occur (if at all) in other disciplines. Several works, such as Haviland and Mullins’ *Who Owns This Text*, have explored how different disciplines approach authorship, collaboration, and ownership in their own works, but they have only begun to understand how these approaches manifest when teaching writing in disciplinary coursework. Such studies might uncover dramatic differences in the messages instructors convey in disciplinary classrooms – messages that align more with their particular discipline rather than the general policies of the university or that of English and writing scholars. Third, future studies might move out of the classroom to examine discourse and messages in other spaces where students encounter information about plagiarism. I am particularly drawn to messages conveyed during adjudication of plagiarism cases. How do these conversations differ from or match the messages which students received in their writing courses? Orientations and online tutorials about plagiarism also offer students important information about institutional beliefs and expectations concerning plagiarism and academic integrity and would benefit from critical examination.

Inquiry into any of the above would best advance current knowledge about plagiarism and pedagogy best if informed by an ethic of collaboration. Much scholarship on plagiarism has relied on single-authored, “essayist reflections” (Howard and Watson 123) with a few notable exceptions (see Jamieson and Howard; Pecorari; Haviland and Mullin; Blum). I argue for a methodology that calls for empirical, person-based research and/or collaborative authorship: an ethic of collaboration. This ethic demands of us as scholars, teachers, and researchers to be transparent about our influences and the instability of authorship and plagiarism. It also encourages us to engage with multiple voices through collaborative authorship and through vocal participants who are very visible in our write-ups. It was my
intent through my study to demonstrate how such an ethic might be enacted in a research project.

As I describe in my own section on methodology, this stance calls for collaboration in the research either with other co-authors or with human participants in a study. Collaborative works should adopt two or more perspectives and experiences to develop new theory about authorship and new approaches to pedagogy and administration. Research studies likewise should seek to incorporate many diverse views on plagiarism, academic integrity, and source use and feature these voices heavily. I hope that my own study might demonstrate this quality. I hope that my own write-up has thoroughly included the voices of my participants as they contribute to our knowledge of plagiarism and pedagogy and have transparently traced the influence of these participants and of other scholars upon this work.

Such an ethic might also be adopted in other areas where plagiarism and academic integrity are negotiated. As administrators, an ethic of collaboration challenges absolute, concrete, and stable definitions and expectations for student behavior and writing concerning source use and plagiarism. Instead, we should seek establish policies which are transparent about the difficulties presented by plagiarism, source use, and intertextuality. As Howard argues, “revision of plagiarism policy will not stabilize the indeterminacy of authorship in the academy. But it can acknowledge the conflicted terms of contemporary authorship” (Standing 157). Her particular revision of plagiarism policy begins by acknowledging student writers as authors, that student writing is “a subject not an object formation” (163). While I recognize that administrators often bear the responsibility of speaking for or representing their institutions and programs, the policies we create can institutionalize and reify certain constructions of authorship and plagiarism that limit how instructors and students work with texts in classrooms. An ethic of collaboration would also compel administrators to seek much input and feedback to allow as many voices as possible to influence policies.

As teachers, an ethic of collaboration calls for honest and transparent discussions with students about authorship, plagiarism, and source use. Kathryn Valentine and Margaret Price have persuasive argued for ways we might include deeper and more nuanced conversations about plagiarism into our classroom through discussion of student identity and inclusion of student ideas about plagiarism in our policies. I add to their suggestions by calling for more explicit discussion about the messiness of authorship, intertextuality, influence, and citation. Instructors may even put collaboration at the center of the course structure. While all writing courses engage in peer review, an ethic of collaboration might push beyond just peer response. After all, Howard has demonstrated that typical models of peer response “may very well assume in the invention stage an autonomous writer” (Standing 37). Instructors might require group work at every stage of writing or feature group assignments with attention to negotiating collaboration and responsibilities.

I hope that my project might encourage such reflection for new approaches to research, administration, and teaching concerning plagiarism. As slippery and unstable a category as plagiarism is, student-writers meet this challenge daily in their coursework. Their time in our courses is fraught with negotiations about their (new) position in academic institutions and as college writers. It is imperative that we know what we present to these students, what messages we convey, and what beliefs we establish about plagiarism and academic integrity both within and outside of our classroom. Likewise, it is imperative that
our research reflect our beliefs about authorship and plagiarism. If the genius author is a myth, then let’s do away with reflective essays on plagiarism that present a genius author-scholar and his/her personal recommendations. Instead, our scholarship should embrace what we believe about writing: that is collaborative, intertextual, and influenced. Let’s embrace the many voices that influence our research, teaching, and administration, and be transparent about those influences. Let’s embrace collaboration as the standard for plagiarism scholarship.
Epilogue

When I began to seek participants for my study, many colleagues let me know that they were interested in my project but did not think they would be good participants. I don’t really talk about plagiarism, many people told me. I wouldn’t provide any useful data or insight, they said. I was fascinated at these comments, not because I believed that these instructors offered no commentary on plagiarism but rather because they believed that they did not. I am certain (and all the more so after this study) that they convey to students certain messages, values, and beliefs about plagiarism and academic integrity – even it is only a brief warning in the plagiarism policy or on the first day of class.

I would like for my study and my arguments here to compel these instructors and other members of academic institutions – research, administrators, and students – to reflectively examine teaching, policy, and behaviors for these messages, values, and beliefs. But most of all, I hope that I have encouraged and engendered a conversation about how students learn about plagiarism and source use and how writing instructors may be more mindful, purposeful, and collaborative in that pursuit.
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Appendix A: Interview Questions

First Interview:

1. What is your goal for the first day of class?
   a. What kind of classroom environment are you trying to create? How do you do this?
2. How would you describe your plagiarism policy? How did you come up with it?
3. How do you approach discussing your policy on the first day?
4. Have you had any previous experience addressing plagiarism in your classroom?
   a. If so, how has this affected your policy and/or teaching about plagiarism?
5. Do you feel you emphasize academic integrity (vis-à-vis plagiarism) in your classroom? How?
6. When else in your class schedule do you devote time to discussing these kinds of topics?
   a. How do you approach these discussions?
7. How do you feel your policy and teaching aligns with the university’s policies and discourse?

Second Interview:

1. How would you describe the success you encountered discussing academic integrity and plagiarism in your classroom this semester?
2. Has anything about your general approach to teaching and discussing plagiarism changed after this semester? Have your beliefs about plagiarism changed?
3. Are there any particular successes you would highlight as important moments for your class in regards to academic integrity or plagiarism?
   a. Any difficult moments?
4. Are there any other moments wherein plagiarism and academic integrity were discussed when I was not present to see it?
5. Will you change your plagiarism policy for next semester/year?
   a. If so, in what ways?
6. Were there any relevant semester-end evaluation comments from your students?
7. + Additional questions based on classroom observations with each instructor.