ACADEMIC HONESTY

CIVILITY & RESPECT

The DVC catalog includes a Philosophy statement which identifies some important objectives and intentions. “The primary objective of Diablo Valley College is the development, growth and success of each of its students. At DVC student learning is paramount and comprises not simply the transference of knowledge and skills, but also a process of intellectual, artistic, political, ethical, physical and spiritual exploration. We believe that such learning is the mutual responsibility of the college and the student.”

“In fulfilling these objectives and principles, we affirm our intention…to provide students with opportunities for the development of values, ethical behavior, aesthetic appreciation, and a sense of civic responsibility (and) to enhance self-esteem and a sense of individual responsibility.” The Philosophy statement also includes a desire “to provide a campus climate that encourages tolerance, mutual respect, civility, and the free and open exchange of ideas” (2004-05 DVC catalog, p. 8). Students, faculty and staff must treat each other with dignity and respect in order to create an environment conducive to learning. Behaviors that are disruptive to learning will not be tolerated, and faculty members have the authority to remove disruptive students from class and to refer them to the Dean of Student Life for additional disciplinary action.

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Students are expected to be honest and ethical in their academic work. If students violate these expectations, faculty members may choose to assign a failing grade for the particular assignment (or the entire course) and report these incidents to the Dean of Student Life for additional disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty is defined as an intentional act of deception in one of the following areas:

- Cheating-use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids
- Fabrication- falsification or invention of any information
- Assisting- helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty
- Tampering- altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents
- Plagiarism- representing the words or ideas of another person as one’s own

Plagiarism: An Example of Academic Dishonesty

If you use another person’s words or ideas, you must give that person credit as the source. For example, assume you want to use the material from the following paragraph in writing a paper about English composition textbooks.

Since the book was written to be read, not merely consulted or assigned, I have attempted to make it readable for students to whom composition is not a feature attraction in the curriculum, but only a selected short subject. Although I disagree with those who believe that techniques can be intelligently discussed without technical terms, I have tried to avoid the deadliest sin of the textbook style: the proliferation of trade jargon. I have also tried to steer a treacherous middle course between the extremes of textbook tone: solemn omniscience and playful condescension. And I have not cluttered up the page with so many typographical “study aids” that there is no room for reading.

(William H. Watt, An American Rhetoric, New York, 1964, 5)

Acceptable Borrowing: Direct Quotation

In An American Rhetoric, Watt says, “Although I disagree with those who believe that techniques can be intelligently discussed without technical terms, I have tried to avoid the deadliest sin of the textbook style: the proliferation of trade jargon (5)

According to the Modern Language Association Style guide for writing English papers, if the author’s name had not been mentioned in the paragraph, the citation would have been: (Watt 5) indicating that the
material can be found on page 5 of Watt’s work. Material borrowed in any form should be identified in a “List of Works Cited.” The following would be a proper listing for some fields (consult the instructor for the form of citation proper to your field):


Acceptable Borrowing: Paraphrase with Some Quotation

In his Preface to An American Rhetoric, Watt, although admitting that some terms are necessary in a discussion of writing, says that he has “tried to avoid the deadliest sin of the textbook style: the proliferation of trade jargon” (5).

The source is cited, and that portion which is borrowed word for word is placed in quotes.

Acceptable Borrowing: Paraphrase

In his Preface, Watt indicates that he has tried to eliminate three of the most serious weaknesses in many composition texts: (a) an uninteresting and unreadable discussion; (b) an overabundance of terminology or a complete lack of it; (c) a vacillating attitude about the intelligence of the student (5).

The paraphrase is acceptable and needs only a citation. The paraphrase has not borrowed the wording, sentence structure, or general organization of the source, but it has borrowed the specific ideas. Contrast it with the unacceptable “paraphrase” which follows.

Unacceptable Paraphrase

Watt, although he does not agree with writers who hold that techniques can be argued intelligently without certain terms, has tried to avoid the deadly sin of most book styles: the propagation of trade jargon. He says he has also sought a middle passage between the extremes of textbook tone: omniscient solemnity, and condescending playfulness (5).

This is an unacceptable paraphrase despite the citation at the end. It does not borrow word for word perhaps, but it borrows word after word as it skips through the sentence substituting here and there. Furthermore, it borrows basic sentence structure and general organization.

Unacceptable Borrowing: Plagiarism

I do not agree with writers who hold that techniques can be argued intelligently without certain terms; however, I object to the propagation of trade jargon. I prefer the middle course between the extremes of textbook tone: omniscient solemnity and condescending playfulness.

This is an obvious attempt on the borrower’s part to claim another’s ideas. Besides hiding the source of the ideas, the borrower has used another’s sentence structure and general organization. Even if the borrower really holds these ideas, such use of another person’s work is plagiarism.

For information on documenting sources from the World Wide Web, see the following sites:

Modern Language Association of America: http://www.mla.org/style/sources.htm

American Psychological Association: http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html

Additional sites for guidelines on how to appropriately cite sources:

http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html

For more information about academic dishonesty, contact Bill Oye, Dean of Student Life, at (925) 685-1230 ext. 2445 or visit the web site at http://www.dvc.edu/union/TIPSACademicIntegrity.htm