

**“BUILDING A CLASS LIBRARY”:  
EMPHASIZING SUMMARY IN TEACHING SOURCE USE**

**A Paper  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
of the  
North Dakota State University  
of Agriculture and Applied Science**

**By**

**Niles Andrew Haich**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS**

**Major Department:  
English**

**June 2011**

**Fargo, North Dakota**

North Dakota State University  
Graduate School

---

"Building a Class Library": Emphasizing Summary in Teaching Source Use

---

---

By

Niles Haich

---

The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

---

North Dakota State University Libraries Addendum

To protect the privacy of individuals associated with the document, signatures have been removed from the digital version of this document.

## ABSTRACT

Haich, Niles Andrew, M.A., Department of English, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, North Dakota State University, June 2011. "Building a Class Library": Emphasizing Summary in Teaching Source Use. Major Professor: Dr. Andrew Mara.

The study presented here is a qualitative study evaluating four objectives for teaching source use, ones I emphasized in my Spring 2011 classes with an assignment called the "Building a Class Library Assignment." I relied on two methods for evaluation: (1) process reflection, with audio recordings of one-on-one sessions serving as my data set; and (2) product analysis, with student-written profiles serving as my data set. In analyzing the profiles, as well as the interviews, it became obvious that my students fell short in the areas I wanted them to demonstrate an understanding in. However, it also became obvious that, because of the Class Library, the message that source integration means writing summary was one all of my students retained. Also successful was the structure of the Class Library, one that provided students with a recurring context in which to practice summary, and provided me with an additional setting in which to work with students on their writing. It is for these reasons that I argue that the Class Library, and the four objectives that are emphasized in the assignment, provide one answer to the larger, pedagogical question of how to improve instruction of source use.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My committee members: Dr. Andrew Mara, Dr. Amy Rupiper Taggart, Dr. Kevin Brooks,  
and Dr. Chris Whitsel.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background .....	4
CHAPTER 2. METHODS.....	10
Evaluation Criteria.....	10
Process Reflection.....	11
Product Analysis .....	13
Ethics.....	14
CHAPTER 3. RESULTS .....	17
First Objective: “Complexity” .....	17
Second Objective: “Confidence” .....	20
Third Objective: “Reading and Rereading” .....	32
Fourth Objective: “Accountability” .....	33
CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION.....	35
First Objective: “Complexity” .....	35
Second Objective: “Confidence” .....	37
Third Objective: “Reading and Rereading” .....	38
Fourth Objective: “Accountability” .....	39
Conclusion .....	40
WORKS CITED .....	45
APPENDIX A. “BUILDING A CLASS LIBRARY” ASSIGNMENT SHEET.....	47
APPENDIX B. COPY OF ORAL TRANSCRIPT .....	52

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

As an instructor of first-year writing, I tell my students that integrating sources means writing summary, not dropping quotes. This pedagogical stance is influenced by two studies. One is a 2003 study by Diane Pecorari in “Good and Original: Plagiarism and Patchwriting in Academic Second-Language Writing.” The other is a 2010 study by Rebecca Moore Howard in “Writing from Sources, Writing from Sentences.” Both studies make side-by-side comparisons of research papers, ones selected randomly from students at different universities, to the sources cited. Ultimately, both studies uncover incidences of plagiarism. And while Pecorari puts the blame for these incidences on definitions of the word *plagiarism*, Howard puts the blame on lessons on citation. The greatest limitations of those lessons on citation, according to Howard, are that they fail to teach summary, or the inventive act of writing about sources (188). Students are consequently left to interpret the process of working with sources to be the simple act of borrowing a quote or two, or a sentence or two, rather than the ongoing act of thinking about and responding thoughtfully to sources in such a way that they emphasize their own voices and are, consequently, more confident in writing from sources, not “sentences selected from sources” (Howard 187).

Howard’s study, which began in the spring of 2007, investigated college-level research papers (180). She modeled her study after Pecorari’s, randomly selecting 18 sophomore-level research papers from a university and then comparing each one to the sources cited (180). Her hypothesis was that students don’t summarize. They patchwrite, or replicate “source language with some words deleted or added, some grammatical structure altered, or some synonyms used” (181-182). Of the 18 research papers she analyzed, she asked five basic questions (181):

- Does the paper contain one or more incidences of patchwriting?
- Does the paper contain one or more incidences of paraphrase?
- Does the paper contain one or more incidences of summary?
- Does the paper contain one or more incidences of direct copying from sources?
- Does the paper contain one or more incidences in which direct copying is not marked as quotation?

Howard's findings are shocking. Of the 18 research papers she analyzed, she found not one incidence of summary, which Howard defines as "restating and compressing the main points of a paragraph or more of text in fresh language and reducing the summarized passage by at least 50%" (181-182). Furthermore, 89% of the papers she analyzed had incidences of patchwriting, which Howard defines as reproduction of "source language with some words deleted or added, some grammatical structure altered, or some synonyms used" (181-182). All of the papers in Howard's study likewise had incidences of paraphrase, which Howard defines as "restating a passage from a source in fresh language, though sometimes with keywords retained from that passage" but without there being "a significant reduction in the length of the passage" (181-182). Seventy-eight percent had incidences of direct copying, and 72% had incidences of direct copying where no quotation marks were used (182). Another interesting finding from Howard's study is that 94% of the papers she analyzed failed to mention, on occasion, where ideas that are not common knowledge had come from (182). Also, 78% occasionally credited sources for ideas that were not even in those sources (182).

Though her findings paint a grim picture of how students work with sources, Howard does not criticize student writers. She argues that student writers patchwrite because they don't know any better, and that patchwriting is not necessarily something that only the novice writer does. In *Pluralizing Plagiarism: Identities, Contexts, Pedagogies*, Howard indicates that "even graduate students don't always succeed in paraphrasing or summarizing" (94). In *Under Construction: Working at the Intersections of Composition Theory, Research, and Practice* Howard even argues that patchwriting is something "we all do, all of the time" (56-59). So the real question, according to Howard, is not whether everyone patchwrites, but "whether we do so clumsily, or with panache" (59).

In "Writing from Sources," Howard also raises the question of whether students understand what they are reading at all. And, no doubt, the ability to respond thoughtfully to sources and work with them intelligently hinges on a student's ability to first comprehend what his or her sources are saying. This ability further hinges on the time and attention a student is willing to devote to reading, reflecting on, and engaging critically with his or her sources. In "Writing from Sources," Howard further speculates that what students are actually doing when they work with sources is supplementing reading, reflection, and critical engagement with sources with "writing from sentences selected from sources" (187). After all, the latter is far easier; the former requires a significant degree of thought, discipline, and time.

Howard concludes her study in "Writing from Sources" by asking a series of questions about what composition instructors still need to know before they can move forward with helping students learn how to work with sources more effectively. One of the questions she raises concerns "approaches to instruction that might improve students' use



of sources” (189). Implicit in this question is one concerning objectives that instructors must emphasize when teaching source use.

### **Background**

The study presented here is an evaluation of an assignment I created, as well as four objectives I determined, for helping my students learn how to work with sources effectively. I teach two sections of English 120, College Composition II at North Dakota State University. Each section I teach has 22 students. The students come from all different backgrounds; but, typically, the students are freshman, or are between the ages 18-20, and come from the surrounding areas of South Dakota, North Dakota, and Minnesota. Comp II is part of their first-year writing program. Comp II is designed to help students develop skills in writing that will enable them:

1. To communicate effectively in a variety of genres for various audiences and situations
2. To integrate knowledge and ideas in a coherent and meaningful manner

To help my own students develop in these areas, I use three major writing assignments: (1) a rhetorical analysis, or critical analysis paper; (2) a commentary paper; and (3) a profile paper. Each one of the assignments, additionally, requires the integration of sources: At least 1 for the rhetorical analysis, 5 for the commentary, and 3 for the profile. When it comes to the students’ choice of sources, I don’t allow websites, or personal interviews. I require books or academic journals. Occasionally, however, I will allow video documentaries.

Of the three major writing assignments I teach, the profile paper is the one my students typically struggle with the most. And it makes sense. The profile poses an

enormous challenge to any writer. It requires writers to be creative, while also requiring them to think critically in terms of choosing and responding thoughtfully to their sources.

Deborah Dean's *Genre Theory* underscores my approach to teaching this genre. When my students write their profiles, I want them to appreciate the relationship between "reading and writing," and I want them to demonstrate an understanding of those "connections" (Dean 5). Additionally, as my students know from reading about profiles in their required textbook, *The Call to Write*, I want them to be able to create a "a particular and coherent sense" of the persons or places they want to profile (Trimbur 215). Doing so successfully, of course, requires thorough research of the persons or places they want to profile. Only then can they successfully write the 1,000-word profile that I require.

Because of how my students routinely struggle with the profile genre, especially with the part that requires them to integrate sources, I determined four objectives for teaching source use, ones I believed would help improve my instruction of source use:

- To show students that working with sources is far more complex a method than simply inserting a quote or two followed by a parenthetical citation
- To help students gain confidence in writing summary by having them practice writing summary on a regular basis
- To show students that reading and understanding sources is something that takes time, and should never be something that is done the night before an assignment needs to be turned in

- To hold students accountable for what they write by having them share their writing in what Kenneth Bruffee calls a “community of their knowledgeable peers” (652)

In emphasizing these objectives in my classes, I created an assignment called the “Building a Class Library Assignment” (see Appendix). In it, I communicated the same four objectives that I had determined for teaching source use. I reworded them only slightly for my students in the Class Library assignment sheet. The assignment, the “Class Library,” was inspired by the “research-based speeches” that Lesley Roessing introduces in “Making Research Matter” (50). My assignment, like Roessing’s, supplements individual research with in-class activities that are spread out over the course of a semester. More specifically, the Class Library is made up of a series of posts and in-class activities. The posts, comprised of 15 total summaries, must be on 13 journal articles and 2 books based on a research interest, or interests that the students have. Before posting, students are required to read the 13 journal articles and 2 books thoroughly, which includes *all* chapters in the two book sources if the books are not anthologies. Students are also asked to keep track of how they find sources by writing about their steps in an “observation log.” Students are further required to read one source per week, summarize it, and then post a citation and summary of it in a shared *Google Docs* document. Additionally, the Class Library requires students to break into groups two or three times a semester and then make outlines for potential papers based on a common interest, or interests that emerged from their research. Finally, students are asked to discuss topics, arguments, sources, and the relevancy of an argument based on the outlines sketched in class. I call this activity a “topic discussion activity.” It takes place in the actual class setting as a supplement to the

discussion board. Both the Class Library and the “topic discussion activities,” which are subsets of the Class Library, serve as models for students to follow in finding sources, responding to sources, and discovering their own voices on a given topic by actually talking about their sources and areas of interest. The whole Class Library activity, as I tell my students, serves a model for them to follow in properly working with sources, which means writing, talking about, and summarizing what others have to say in their own words, while giving credit where credit is due.

My students’ understanding of summary was based on the definition provided in their course textbook, *The Call to Write*:

Summarizing means selecting main ideas from the original and presenting them in your own words and sentence structure. Summaries can range from a sentence to a paragraph or more, depending on the amount of detail you need. (419)

Additionally, my students’ understanding of summary was based on the guidelines I provided in the Class Library assignment sheet. When writing summary, I told my students to remember the six W’s: Who? What? Where? When? Why? So what? More specifically, I told my students to remember the questions outlined in the Class Library assignment sheet, ones meant to guide them through the process of writing summary:

- Who, what, where, when, why, and so what?
- Who wrote the article?
- What is the article about? What is its central argument or main point?  
What does it find?

- Where was the article written? In what journal? Who reads those journals and why?
- When was the article written or study conducted?
- Why was the article written or study conducted?
- Why should your fellow classmates care about this source? How could it be of use to them?

At the outset of my project, I must make it clear that I was not trying to transform first-year writers into graduate-level scholars. I wholeheartedly agree with Howard and Pecorari that patchwriting should be seen as a natural part of student development (Pecorari 320). I am also aware that, as Ann Brown and Jeanne Day found in their 1983 article “Macrorules for Summarizing Texts: The Development of Expertise,” comprehension of sources, which precedes the ability to summarize sources, is something that even the most advanced college students routinely struggle with, and it is a skill that takes a lot of time to master (13). Additionally, I am conscious of, and receptive to existing guidelines for instruction on source use, ones Howard herself outlines in “Framing Plagiarism”: (1) provide students with a well-rounded understanding of how to work with sources, which should include an emphasis on “critical reading”; (2) rethink definitions of the word *plagiarism*; and (3) “create pedagogies of mentored engagement in course materials” (244). Howard’s more recent publication, *Research Matters: A Guide to Research Writing*, co-author Amy Rupiper Taggart, has likewise served as a model for my own assignment. The book, like the “Class Library,” is intended to help students recognize and appreciate the relationship between good writing and good research, and to understand the importance of writing summary.

Of all the advice Howard offers on the subject, the guidelines she provides in “Framing Plagiarism” are ones most related to my own project. The first two objectives in the Class Library, for example, mirror Howard’s first recommendation, which is to provide students with a well-rounded understanding of how to work with sources. The second recommendation she makes, which is to rethink definitions of the word *plagiarism*, is one that I have likewise considered. It is, therefore, not important to me to be the plagiarism police, but it is important to me to show my students what they should be doing when they are asked to integrate sources. The last recommendation Howard makes, which is to educate students about source use by creating collaborative environments conducive to helping students value each other as instruments of learning, mirrors the last objective in the Class Library. The final recommendation Howard makes is one recognized in the “topic discussion activities” of the Class Library, as well as the public nature of the Class Library itself.

As I move forward in my teaching, I want to know if the recommendations Howard makes, which are similar to my own objectives for teaching source use, will be effective. More specifically, I want to know:

- Do the objectives of the Class Library help, or not help students learn how to work with sources effectively?

I view my study as a formative evaluation. In other words, I want to learn how the goals set for my instruction of source use, as well as the Class Library, help or don’t help my students. If they don’t help, then I want to learn how they can be changed so that they do. If they do help, then I want to know how they can be improved.

## CHAPTER 2. METHODS

Before determining how to evaluate the Class Library, I had to first determine criteria for evaluation.

### Evaluation Criteria

With my study, I wanted to evaluate the four objectives I had determined for teaching source use:

1. To show students that working with sources is far more complex a method than simply inserting a quote or two followed by a parenthetical citation
2. To help students gain confidence in writing summary by having them practice writing summary on a regular basis
3. To show students that reading and understanding sources is something that takes time, and should never be something that is done the night before an assignment needs to be turned in
4. To hold students accountable for what they write by having them share their writing in what Kenneth Bruffee calls a “community of their knowledgeable peers” (652)

To know if I had accomplished my first objective, I knew it would be important to have my students describe for me what they thought source integration meant. I also needed to have my students show me in their writing that they understood that source integration is far more complex a method than simply inserting a quote or two followed by a parenthetical citation. To know if I had accomplished my second objective, I knew it would be important to have my students tell me what summary meant in connection with

the process of working with sources; and I also needed to have them demonstrate their understanding of summary by having them write summaries that followed guidelines outlined in the Class Library assignment sheet. To know if I had accomplished my third objective, I knew it would be important to have my students tell me that they now read their sources more thoroughly because of the Class Library; and I also needed to have them show me that they gave themselves enough time to read and understand their sources by having them prove to me that they used Class Library sources—ones they had previously posted on the Class Library—for their major writing assignments. To know if I had accomplished my last objective, I knew it would be important to have my students tell me that they wrote better summaries and did better work because they wanted their writing and their topics to fit in.

### **Process Reflection**

In order to hear what my students thought about the Class Library, as well what they thought they had learned about the process of working with sources, I held one-on-one sessions in the final month of the semester. I held one-on-one sessions with a student who consistently earned C's in my class, and a student who consistently earned B's. I also held one-on-one sessions with three students who consistently earned A's. I chose to speak with a student who consistently earned C's because I did not want to speak with only my best students. Doing so, I feared, might have yielded biased results. I also chose to speak with a student who consistently earned B's because, even while I did not want to focus only on my best students, I did want to hear what a student who performed slightly better in my class thought about the Class Library. And I chose to speak with three of my A students



because I wanted to contrast what the C and B student had said with what students who performed well in my class said.

I call the recorded interviews one-on-one sessions instead of interviews because the word *interview* suggests that an interviewee is having a conversation with the other. But I realize that students only tell their teachers what they think their teachers want to hear. Therefore, I think the label *one-on-one session* fits much better. The label *one-on-one session* suggests that one person exercises a little control over the other. The label *one-on-one session* suggests that, as Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin point out in *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, the interviewee is not participating in a conversation per se, one which requires a certain degree of reciprocity, or “mutuality” (83).

During the actual one-on-one sessions, I began by asking my students to talk to me about their high school writing experiences, as well as any college writing courses they may have taken before my class. The purpose of asking questions about my students’ past writing experiences was to get them to reflect more precisely on what they had learned about the process of working with sources. Once my students had shared their past writing experiences, I then posed a series of additional questions about my class, particularly the Class Library. I also asked a series of questions about what source integration meant to them.

When it came to coding my interviews, I simply focused on student responses, or the resulting themes that emerged, to four questions posed during the interviews:

1. Tell me a little bit about how you’re expected to work with sources in my class.

2. Has the Class Library helped you become more confident with writing summary?
3. Has the class Library forced you to read your sources more thoroughly?
4. Do you feel pressure to write a good summary because other students are reading your summaries?

The four questions correspond to my evaluation criteria: (1) The first question is one about options for integrating sources, specifically what options I covered in class; (2) the second question is one about confidence gained because of the Class Library; (3) the third question is one about taking time to read sources thoroughly; and (4) the fourth question is one about accountability.

### **Product Analysis**

In order to see what my students learned about the process of working with sources, I used a method similar to Howard's and Pecorari's. I compared student research papers to their sources. Unlike Howard and Pecorari's method, however, I focused my study on two students and two papers only, not 18 students and 18 papers. I focused my study on the student who consistently earned C's in my class, and the student who consistently earned B's. Once I had determined who I was going to work with, I then returned to Howard and Pecorari's study and used theirs as a reference once more. I compared each passage of student writing to the sources cited. In determining what to analyze, I focused my attention on how my students (the C student and B student) worked with sources in the profile assignment (one of the three major writing assignments that I have my students write). More specifically, I focused my attention on any incidences of direct quoting, paraphrase, or summary in the student-written profiles. If I found incidences of summary, I evaluated

those summaries based on the criteria outlined in the Class Library assignment sheet. That is, I evaluated the summaries based on how well the summaries answered the questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? So what?

Once I had collected the finished profiles, I located each one of the sources my students had cited and then read them carefully. Similar to Howard and Pecorari's study, this process took me up to 6 hours per paper (180). A major difference between my analysis of the students' papers and Howard and Pecorari's analysis was, of course, that the students I was working with were my own students. Therefore, because I was their teacher, I was already familiar with my students' work. Plus, I had been able to work with my students on their initial drafts. That being said, I had no more control over my students' writing than any instructor ever has, and I was genuinely surprised by the final drafts that my students did write.

### **Ethics**

In securing IRB approval for my project (#HS11154), as well as deciding whether to tell me students about my project in the first place, I had to make several additional considerations. The foremost consideration was whether to conduct the recorded one-on-one sessions with my students in the first place because of the student-teacher relationship that we shared. As I reflect back on my own experiences as an undergraduate, I can recall not one instance in which a teacher asked me to share my thoughts while that teacher recorded me. I therefore had no precedence for speaking with my own students under such a setting. However, I realize that conversations take place all the time between teachers and students that may, or may not relate to their classes. Realizing this, it quickly became less of a struggle for me to decide whether to conduct the one-on-one sessions.

In addition to the issue I faced with deciding on the one-on-one sessions, as well as whether or not to record them, I also faced the ethical issue of having to provide choices for my students. After working closely with the IRB, I realized that it would be crucial to provide my students with a realistic way to say “no” to the recorded conversation that they may have had with me, and to say “no” without there being a perceived effect on their final grade. In helping safeguard against this problem, the IRB proposed making the one-on-one sessions an extra credit opportunity, and to balance that extra credit opportunity with another, equal extra credit opportunity.

Yet another ethical issue I faced with the one-on-one sessions was the responsibility that I have to provide my students with the education they deserve. Because of this enormous responsibility, I realized that I had to make the one-on-one sessions an opportunity for my students to learn inasmuch as they were an opportunity for me to learn. I had to therefore make sure that the nature of my questions benefited my students inasmuch as they benefited me.

A final ethical issue I faced in preparing for the one-on-one sessions was the issue of keeping the recordings as safe as possible. What I did not want was for any of the materials to get lost, or misplaced so that others could get their hands on them. I had to therefore propose storing the recordings on one-password-protected computer only.

Besides the one-on-one sessions, I also had to make an important ethical consideration regarding my use of student materials. After working closely with the IRB, we determined that, since the student profiles would be posted on blogs, and I was going to keep my students’ identities confidential anyway, I would only need to remind my students that they were not simply writing for me, but were also writing for public audiences when

they wrote their profiles. My students therefore retained total control over what they decided to post, as well as if they wanted to attach their names to those posts or not.

## CHAPTER 3. RESULTS

I have divided the results from my study into four sections, one for each objective:

1. To show students that working with sources is far more complex a method than simply inserting a quote or two followed by a parenthetical citation
2. To help students gain confidence in writing summary by having them practice writing summary on a regular basis
3. To show students that reading and understanding sources is something that takes time, and should never be something that is done the night before an assignment needs to be turned in
4. To hold students accountable for what they write by having them share their writing in what Kenneth Bruffee calls a “community of their knowledgeable peers” (652)

I have further categorized the evidence from the one-on-one sessions, as well as the student-written profiles, under each objective.

### **First Objective: “Complexity”**

When I posed the question, “Tell me a little bit about how you’re expected to work with sources in my class,” each of the five students underscored the importance of writing summary. As the C student put it:

What I’ve learned, I mean, so far this semester, I would say the biggest thing is to summarize in your own words what you’ve read, I mean from the article. But you still need to put an author’s name or maybe page number, so you still cite that source in the paragraph, in the parenthetical citation.

This emphasis on summary, which is reflected in C student's response, is one I had made a point of connecting to the Class Library all semester long. I reminded my students throughout the semester that I required them to practice writing summary on a weekly basis because it is summary that they should be writing when they are asked to integrate sources. As one of my A students noted:

I think in previously research papers that I've done, it's never been stressed as much as it has in this course to summarize. It's always kind of been, 'This is their opinion, state it, then state your own.' Whereas with summary you can do it all in one motion and kind of collaborate the two. It gives the paper a better flow and gives the paper a better voice or tone.

Unlike the C and A student's response, however, the B student's response was less about process and more about knowing sources well enough to write about them knowledgably:

I feel like we're expected to know the source well enough to be able to summarize it, to the point where we don't use quotes because that takes away from the writer's voice. We can summarize it and put it in our own words, and use it to strengthen our own argument, rather than just stating the source's argument, using the sources in a way that basically prove your point.

The B student's response reflected a greater understanding of the process of working with sources because his response reflected a greater understanding of the complexity involved with the process. His response also mirrored the lesson on reading sources that is communicated in the Class Library assignment sheet:

READ YOUR SOURCE THOROUGHLY. Journal articles rarely have more than 20 pages. You should therefore be able to read a journal article thoroughly in about an hour. As for the 2 book sources you will be required to post on: Give yourself enough time to read through those books carefully. That means you should probably submit your posts on the books sources somewhere in the middle of the semester, or perhaps towards the end.

The response by one of my A students mirrored that of the C student, while the response by another A student reflected the emphasis I had made all semester long on citation guidelines available on the Purdue Owl website. As the second A student noted:

I feel like source integration is a bigger part in this class than it was in high school. I remember seeing the Purdue Owl maybe once in high school, but I saw it again in my speech class when we were working on some sources, but now it is kind of a main focus here and I like that. I don't remember using too many in-text citations other than writing about a book and citing a particular line from that book—when I'm quoting, that is.

The response by the third A student, in contrast to the others, reflected the emphasis I had made all semester long on chapter 13 of their course textbook, *The Call to Write*. Chapter 13 covers the basics of in-text citations, as well as full source citations. And all semester long I turned my students' attention to this chapter, especially when they struggled with citing sources properly and needed further guidance.

When I switched to analyzing the student-written profiles, I immediately noticed that my students avoided excessive quoting. In other words, both the C student and B demonstrated their understanding of the complexity of source use by shying away from



drawing excessive quotes from their sources. They wrote summary instead: 2 incidences of summary by the C student, and 5 by the B student. There were also 4 incidences of direct quoting in the profile by the C student, and 1 incidence of direct quoting in the profile by the B student.

### **Second Objective: “Confidence”**

When I posed the question regarding whether or not my students felt more confident writing summary because of the Class Library, all five students told me that they were more confident. As the B student noted:

Yeah. Definitely. I feel like I can summarize, not necessarily in less time, but I can get a better feel for the article. Rather than reading it three times, I can read it once and get the general feel of how it is, and then summarize it. And then when I want to go back in and use the source, specifically, I know where things are at; I know where I can go find it, and read more in depth, and summarize to another level.

When I switched to analyzing the student-written profiles, however, it quickly became obvious that neither the B student nor the C student could fully demonstrate their confidence by writing summary based on the criteria outlined in the Class Library assignment sheet. And even though there were 2 incidences of summary by the C student, and 5 by the B student, not one of those summaries was detailed enough to answer the questions outlined in the Class Library assignment sheet: Who? What? Where? When? Why? So what? In the first incidence of summary by the C student, for example, there were virtually no details. Below is the C student’s first incidence of summary, presented in the context of the original paragraph:

John Deere has become a known name all around the world in everything from all types of equipment all the way to a brand of clothing. If you can name it, it's almost a guarantee that there is one with the John Deere logo on it. John Pripps, author of the book *John Deere: Yesterday and Today*, states many good reasons as to why John Deere is what it is today. The public's passion for John Deere is apparent not just on the company's balance sheet, but also in the array of licensed consumer items available, such as clothing, toys, tins, signs, and clocks. But what most people don't realize is just exactly where the name John Deere comes from. Most people think it is just a brand name that was randomly started many years ago when John Deere first came around. Truly this is not the case.

The phrase "states many good reasons" could be applied to any text. What is missing, then, are details. Those details would have been there had the student applied guidelines from the Class Library assignment sheet.

Worse than the student's lack of detail in his summary, however, were phrases that signal patchwriting—or, worse, plagiarism. The phrase "The public's passion for John Deere is apparent not just on the company's balance sheet," for example, immediately raises suspicion. I failed, however, to locate that exact phrase in *John Deere: Yesterday and Today*. I likewise failed to find any specific phrases or words from the above paragraph in the other two sources that the student used for his profile: *The John Deere Way*, and *The John Deere Story*. I did, however, find several phrases and words from the above paragraph in an overview written for the book *John Deere: Yesterday and Today*. This overview, or book synopsis, was available on the *Barnes & Noble* website:

**[Original passage: Barnes & Noble website]** *John Deere: Yesterday & Today* is a comprehensive history of the uniquely American John Deere & Company—from its 19th-century beginnings to its position today as a global-manufacturing powerhouse. John Deere has been a major player in the evolution of industrialized American labor and large-scale agriculture. The company's tractors and other machines are used worldwide—on large and small farms, in forests, on construction sites, and even in suburban driveways. The public's passion for John Deere is apparent not just on the company's balance sheet, but also in the array of licensed consumer items available, such as clothing, toys, tin signs, and clocks.

**[Student passage]** John Pripps, author of the book *John Deere: Yesterday and Today*, states many good reasons as to why John Deere is what it is today. The public's passion for John Deere is apparent not just on the company's balance sheet, but also in the array of licensed consumer items available, such as clothing, toys, tins, signs, and clocks.

This incidence falls under the category plagiarism—not patchwriting, summary, paraphrase, or quoting. Nor is it an incidence of improper citation. The underlined phrase came directly from an outside website, not from the source the student tried to give credit to—and that is the key point. The student failed to credit the appropriate source. He instead tried to pass off the borrowed phrase as his own.

The second incidence of summary by the C student, like the first, lacked detail:

John Deere has been around for a very long time now. In David Magee's book *The John Deere Way*, many facts are stated about John Deere from

beginning to end. “Since blacksmith John Deere developed the first commercially successful self-scouring steel plow in 1837, the company has provided customers the right products at the right time” (Magee 26). From its trademark green and yellow tractors of all sizes, to the popular new and improved utility vehicles, the company is the leading provider of equipment and services for those who love and work the land, from farms and fields to golf courses to suburban backyards. The company has stood by four sustaining values throughout its life so far, quality, innovation, integrity, and commitment. Just as John Deere, the blacksmith, fashioned a polished-steel plow did when times were tough.

The C student’s second summary, like the first, fails to adequately address the questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? So what? Having confidence in writing summary should have made the student confident with writing *detailed* summary. Instead he wrote, “many facts are stated about John Deere from beginning to end.”

More disappointing than the C student’s second summary, however, was another incidence of plagiarism:

**[Original text: *The John Deere Way*]** Known as ‘an intense and thorough’ man, John Deere was a product of his times, part of the developing, rough, American frontier, and his charismatic personality was colored by a gruff, sometimes undiplomatic manner. But he was consistent in the tenets of business he preached throughout his 22 years at the helm of the company, insisting it never stray from the four core values he believed mattered most: quality, innovation, integrity, and commitment. (7)

[Student passage] The company has stood by four sustaining values throughout its life so far, quality, innovation, integrity, and commitment.

While this second incidence of plagiarism is far less severe than the other, since the student at least tries to credit the appropriate source in the paragraph, he still did not use the necessary quotation marks, or parenthetical citation to tell his readers exactly where he was getting his information from. The end result is that he once again tried to pass off the underlined words as his own.

The B student, like the C student, likewise failed to adequately apply the summary guidelines outlined in the Class Library assignment sheet: Who? What? Where? When? Why? So What? Here is the first incidence of summary by the B student:

The year is 1958 and the band known as the Quarry Boys was beginning to flourish in Liverpool, England (Spitz 131). The group was gaining popularity as it began to separate itself from other teenage bands in the area. In his book *The Beatles: The Biography*, Bob Spitz describes the time as a period when most British teenagers did not care much about songwriting; but Paul McCartney and John Lennon were not average teens. Many people who toured with the Quarry Boys recall instances where McCartney and Lennon pounded out songs like clockwork. Seemingly everywhere, the boys passionately wrote notes, rhythms, and lyrics.

While the student does answer the question regarding “who” wrote the article, and does seem to provide answers regarding the “why”—as well as the “so what,” the “where” and the “when”—the major piece missing is the “what.” The student drops a source title and author’s name, but readers are not given enough details to understand, for example,

exactly “what” the book *The Beatles: The Biography* is about exactly—that is, “what” it actually covers regarding the Beatles’ lives and careers. Their whole lives? The lives of each member? The whole text *The Beatles: The Biography* spans 983 pages. But the B student focused solely on the year 1958 and chapter 8, which is one covering the band’s first recording session and their subsequent rise to stardom.

However, when I compared the whole student paragraph to the source, it quickly became obvious that the student did not unintentionally, or intentionally for that matter, borrow words or phrases without citing them. I also checked websites, based on the issue I had encountered with the C student. Additionally, I checked the students’ other two sources: *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices*, and “‘Domestication’ of the Blues Notes in the Beatles’ Songs.” But I failed to find any of the student’s phrases there, either. And the sole parenthetical citation the student uses corresponds to the appropriate page (a citation used for the year 1958, which constitutes an idea that is not common knowledge).

But even though I was not able to pin down any exact phrases, I did find some major similarities between several phrases from the above paragraph and in *The Beatles: The Biography*:

**[Student passage]** Many people who toured with the Quarry Boys recall instances where McCartney and Lennon pounded out songs like clockwork.

**[Original text: *The Beatles: The Biography*]** A few years later, people who toured with the Beatles related countless stories about watching John and Paul bang out songs together on a crowded bus or plane or a van in the throes of backstage chaos—they could write anywhere and were apparently

unself-conscious about it—but by that time the formula was ingrained; they were cranking them out like piecework. (131)

The above passages, while they are different in wording, convey the same idea. The B student's passage, however, conveys the same idea using less words—which is summary, according to Howard's definition of the term, as well as the definition from *The Call to Write*: “restating and compressing the main points of a paragraph or more of text in fresh language and reducing the summarized passage by at least 50%” (Howard 181).

In the second incidence of summary by the B student, the student once again failed to apply the summary guidelines outlined in the Class Library assignment sheet:

McCartney and Lennon's songwriting abilities outran their technical skills for a while but it could not maintain its pace because as the boys became men, their musical talents also became more mature. In the years that followed, the Quarry Boys became the band that the entire world came to love: the Beatles. Clearly the Beatles had something special within their music. The notes played seemed to shine a light that had never been seen before, a luster that ears around the world approved of and begged for. When the Beatles broke through in the United States in 1964, a “British Invasion” was initialized (Fitzgerald 53). Jon Fitzgerald, in “Lennon-McCartney and the Early British Invasion, 1964-66,” says the time was one when American music was threatened by British guitar groups like it had never been before. Lennon and McCartney stole the show because instead of relying on American professional songwriters to write their music, like

many popular British groups of the time did, the duo performed and recorded original music almost exclusively.

When I compared the above paragraph to the source cited, I uncovered a clear incidence of paraphrase, which Howard defines as “restating a passage from a source in fresh language, though sometimes with keywords retained from that passage” but without there being “a significant reduction in the length of the passage” (181).

**[Original text: “Lennon-McCartney and the Early British Invasion.”**

***The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices*]**

The Beatles also represented a serious threat to the musical status quo by performing and recording a substantial amount of original material (mostly written by Lennon-McCartney) rather than relying on songs written by US professional songwriters. (53)

**[Student passage]** Jon Fitzgerald, in “Lennon-McCartney and the Early British Invasion, 1964-66,” says the time was one when American music was threatened by British guitar groups like it had never been before.

Lennon and McCartney stole the show because instead of relying on American professional songwriters to write their music, like many popular British groups of the time did, the duo performed and recorded original music almost exclusively.

This incidence is clearly paraphrase, and not summary, because the passage by the B student is virtually equivalent in length and word count to the original passage. More importantly, the student manages to “restate” the passage, and borrows only the words “relying on” from it (Howard 181).



In the third and fourth incidences of summary by the B student, the student yet again failed to apply guidelines from the Class Library assignment sheet:

Much of the Beatles' originality comes from the way the band used and almost specialized its use of blues notes and chords. In "'Domestication' of the Blues Notes in the Beatles' Songs," Naphtali Wagner characterizes the blues notes as strangely harmonic while having a sense of dissonance and a rough, angry personality. The Beatles liked to contrast the use of blues notes with other, non-dissonant chords. Wagner states that this combination of complementary chords can easily be heard in "I Feel Fine" when the harmonious refrain comes immediately after a strong blues verse. Nearly every Beatles' song is portrayed as rock 'n' roll but in reality, the unique nature of the Beatles' music comes from a blend of many other genres, especially disguised use of blues.

When I compared the above paragraph of student writing to the source in this instance, I noticed something very interesting:

**[Original text: "'Domestication' of the Blues Notes in the Beatles' Songs"]** Much of the Beatles' originality stems from the special way in which they handle blue notes. Blue notes, by nature, are alienated from their harmonic environment and have a dissonant relationship with them, giving the blues and all its derivatives a rough, angry character. (353)

**[Student passage]** Much of the Beatles' originality comes from the way the band used and almost specialized its use of blues notes and chords. In "'Domestication' of the Blues Notes in the Beatles' Songs," Naphtali

Wagner characterizes the blues notes as strangely harmonic while having a sense of dissonance and a rough, angry personality. The Beatles liked to contrast the use of blues notes with other, non-dissonant chords. Wagner states that this combination of complementary chords can easily be heard in “I Feel Fine” when the harmonious refrain comes immediately after a strong blues verse. Nearly every Beatles’ song is portrayed as rock ‘n’ roll but in reality, the unique nature of the Beatles’ music comes from a blend of many other genres, especially disguised use of blues.

The similarities between some of the phrases in the student’s passage to those of the source text are striking. And those similarities force me to classify the student’s paragraph as patchwritten. Once again, Howard defines patchwriting as replicating “source language with some words deleted or added, some grammatical structure altered, or some synonyms used” (181-182). The B student clearly borrowed the phrase “rough, angry character,” and he incorporated just one synonym: the word *personality* (changed from *character*).

Perhaps the most important observation I made regarding the B student’s patchwritten paragraph is that the sentence he was trying to summarize came directly from the very first sentences in the abstract of the article, and not from the article itself:

**[Complete abstract from: “’Domestication’ of the Blues Notes in the Beatles’ Songs”]** Much of the Beatles’ originality stems from the special way in which they handle blue notes. Blue notes, by nature, are alienated from their harmonic environment and have a dissonant relationship with them, giving the blues and all its derivatives a rough, angry character. Nevertheless, the hostility of blue notes toward the surrounding world may

be mitigated—“domesticated”—through consonantization. From this perspective, the present paper explains the formation of several of the harmonic idioms that shape the Beatles’ style. In broader terms, the paper attempts to uncover the blues affinities in the Beatles’ repertoire, even when they are latent and expressed ostensibly non-blues details. These affinities contribute to the unity of the repertoire despite its diversity and eclecticism. (353)

In moving onto the next paragraph in which the B student integrated sources, I found that he once again succeeded in summarizing some passages from the original sources, while patchwriting others:

**[Student passage]** Over the years, just like the name of the band changed, the general style of the music was transformed and reformed over time. Though the bluesy nature and original songwriting remained constant, many aspects of the Beatles’ music was altered. Guy Cook and Neil Mercer, in “From Me to You: Austerity to Profligacy in the Language of the Beatles,” categorize the Beatles’ songs into two periods: the “early” period from 1962 to 1965 and the “later” period from 1966 to 1970 (87). The early period was consumed with music that the band enjoyed playing live. It contained an arrangement of three guitars and one drum kit, usually containing a strong, catchy lead guitar riff. In addition, one of the more noticeable aspects is the fact that the subject matter was always romantic love. Songs in this era include “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” “Love Me Do,” “And I Love Her,” and “Yesterday” (Fitzgerald 55). Cook and Mercer then imply that the

Beatles began to take advantage of the resources presented to them as a result of their popularity. Most of the songs of the later era could not easily be played live because of the significant use of a diverse variety of instruments that included the harmonica, piano, organ, brass sections, and even full orchestras (Cook and Mercer 87). The subject of the music also included a much wider variety of topics. Everything from taxation to cowboy shoot-outs found its way into lyrics. “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” and “Let It Be” are characteristic of this period (88).

**[Original chapter: “From Me to You: Austerity to Profligacy in the Language of the Beatles.” *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices*] As others (for example, Inglis 1997) have suggested, the songs written and recorded by the Beatles can be divided into two periods: ‘early’ (1962-5) and ‘later’ (1966-70). The songs of each period differ in their suitability for performance, the instruments used, the nature of the music, and the range of subject matter. In the early period the songs could be—and were—performed live by the four Beatles with three guitars and a drum kit. A vocal melody with intermittent sung harmonies was imposed over a steady rhythm, usually prefaced, punctuated and rounded off with a lead guitar riff. The subject matter was *always* romantic love. (87)**

When I proceeded to view the B student’s summaries alongside the C student’s, it quickly becomes obvious that the B student managed to show a lot more confidence in writing with his own voice than the C student did. It also became obvious that neither

student showed much confidence in writing summary based on the guidelines provided in the Class Library assignment sheet.

### **Third Objective: “Reading and Rereading”**

When I posed the question regarding whether or not the Class Library had forced my students to read their sources more thoroughly, each one of my students indicated that the assignment had. As the C student noted:

I’ve come to the conclusion that you gotta read the source thoroughly, everything, especially if you’re going to summarize it. It’s pointless to use a source if you don’t look at everything. You can always go back and look at your sources again.

The B student’s response, while it also gave credit to the Class Library for having forced him to read his sources more thoroughly, indicated that he had always been a good reader anyway:

I feel like I've always done it anyway. When I was in middle school, I kind of struggled with reading things, and get four pages in, and I was like, ‘What, I don't know what I just read.’ So I was kind of forced to start reading things more thoroughly, and comprehending what I read, which I made a habit of. And it's not something I've been forced to do in awhile. So, I feel like the Class Library has kind of got me back in that mode, where I can read it once, and feel comfortable, and be able to tell someone what I read.

As I switched to analyzing the student-written profiles, I noted that the B student had clearly compiled his summaries before writing his profile. In other words, all three of

the sources from the B student appeared in the Class Library—and appeared weeks before he submitted his first draft of his profile. In contrast to the B student, none of the sources from the C student appeared in the Class Library—at all. Before looking at his profile, however, I had conducted the one-on-one session with the student. And during the one-on-one session, the student’s answers suggested that he knew the importance of reading and understanding his sources—he just hadn’t exercised that knowledge.

#### **Fourth Objective: “Accountability”**

When I posed the question regarding whether or not my students felt pressure to write a better summary because they knew other students were reading their summaries, not one of them indicated that it did add any pressure. All of them, however, noted that it was good to have other summaries to compare theirs to; all of them indicated that they felt the pressure to write summaries that fit in. As the C student noted:

Yeah. I’ve looked at others student’s posts, mostly for format. Not necessarily for exact wording. How should I say it . . . They’ll start it with, ‘This article was written by so-and-so in this journal in this year, this journal is known for this,’ and then they go on to summarize it. And then at the end of the article, they’ll say why it’s important. I’ve kind of found that that’s the best way to do it. And I definitely didn’t know that that was the best format. So it helped to look at others.

One of my A students noted that she paid more attention to her own summaries because she noticed grammatical errors in other students’ summaries:

I always want to write a good one anyways because I’m putting my name next to it. But, definitely. I’ve read a couple of them and it’s not

grammatically correct. I always read through mine and make sure it's something I want to put my name next to.

One of the more interesting responses to the question about accountability came from another A student. He noted that he simply did not view *Google Docs* as social media, and therefore saw no significance to the posts from his peers:

A little, but not a lot. Mostly because *Google Docs* is not really a social thing, but kind of an application. I rarely looked at other people's posts.

Despite the fact that all of my students downplayed the significance of the public nature of *Google Docs*, they did all acknowledge that they felt a little added pressure to demonstrate their understanding of how to write summary, as well as to cite their sources properly.

## CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

The evidence from my study suggests that my students learned that source use is more complex a method than quote-dropping. The evidence also suggests that my students had, although moderately, gained more confidence with writing summary because of the Class Library. Additionally, the evidence suggests that my students discovered, or rediscovered the importance of reading and understanding their sources. Finally, the evidence suggests that my students paid more attention to their writing because they wanted their writing to fit in. And, perhaps most importantly, the evidence shows that both the C student and B student tried to write summary, and knew the significance of writing summary, when they were asked to integrate sources—something that none of the students in Howard’s study seemed to know.

But even while the evidence from my study suggests that my objectives were met, the evidence also suggests that they were not fully met. The best evidence that my objectives were not fully met comes from the C student, who plagiarized. Plagiarism is something that I obviously do not tolerate in my class. But, unfortunately, the first time I saw my student’s profile, I failed to catch the incidence of plagiarism.

### **First Objective: “Complexity”**

Overall, I’m not fully convinced that my students understood the full complexity of the process of working with sources. Neither the C student, nor the B student seemed to realize that integrating sources is a written conversation that requires detail, a certain degree of specificity, and language that is 100% different from that of the original text if none of that language is set off with quotation marks and a parenthetical citation. In other



words, neither the C student nor the B student proved that he or she understood the full complexity of the process of working with sources.

But even though the C student and B student failed to provide evidence that they understood the full complexity of the process of working with sources, both proved that they understood the importance of writing summary—something that the students in Howard’s study seemed to miss. As Howard indicated, not one of the students in her study wrote summary when they were asked to integrate sources. In contrast, both the C student and B student wrote what they considered to be summary, even while it is clear that they did not follow the summary guidelines outlined in the Class Library. More importantly, both the C student and B student articulated the importance of writing summary during the one-on-one sessions:

**[C student]** What I’ve learned, I mean, so far this semester, I would say the biggest thing is to summarize in your own words what you’ve read, I mean from the article.

**[B student]** I feel like we're expected to know the source well enough to be able to summarize it, to the point where we don't use quotes because that takes away from the writer's voice.

The fact that no assignment can truly transform student understanding and behavior makes the Class Library seem particularly valuable. What it did manage to do was help the C student and B student appreciate the importance of writing summary in connection with the process of working with sources. It helped the students by shifting their focus from writing from “sentences selected from sources,” to actually writing from the whole source—something which the C student tried to do, and the B student did on at least one

occasion in his profile of the Beatles (Howard 187). More importantly, none of the students in my study equated parenthetical citation with source integration. Each student realized that there is far more going on with the process of integrating sources than just quotes and page numbers.

### **Second Objective: “Confidence”**

In addition to falling short in terms of what I wanted my students to learn about the process of working with sources, they also fell short in developing confidence with writing summary. More specifically, my students did not demonstrate confidence with writing summary by carrying over the summary criteria outlined in the Class Library assignment sheet—something that they would have done, arguably, had their confidence truly grown from writing summaries for the Class Library.

However, each one of my students expressed confidence with writing summary during the one-on-one sessions. As the B student noted in response to the question of whether or not he had gained confidence with writing summary:

**[B student]** Yeah. Definitely. I feel like I can summarize, not necessarily in less time, but I can get a better feel for the article. Rather than reading it three times, I can read it once and get the general feel of how it is, and then summarize it. And then when I want to go back in and use the source, specifically, I know where things are at; I know where I can go find it, and read more in depth, and summarize to another level.

To me, what was more important than having my students become more confident with writing summary, was having them become more confident in speaking intelligently about what summary is and how it fits into the process of working with sources. And I

certainly felt that the Class Library gave my students confidence in understanding, defining, and visualizing the process of writing summary in connection with the process of working with sources. The evidence is in the one-on-one sessions. Each one of my students described for me how summary fits into the process of working with sources.

### **Third Objective: “Reading and Rereading”**

That none of the sources from the C student appeared in the Class Library might be one reason why the student plagiarized. Reading and understanding sources takes time, and the less time a writer is willing to spend reading and understanding sources, the more likely the writer is to plagiarize because the writer is forced, consequently, to rely on “writing from sentences selected from sources” (Howard 187). During the one-on-one sessions, all of my students indicated the importance of reading and understanding sources, and they all pointed to the Class Library as being a major reason why they had grown more comfortable with reading their selected sources. Strangely enough, though, it was the C student who did the best job, in my opinion, of articulating the importance of reading and understanding sources:

[C student] I’ve come to the conclusion that you gotta read the source thoroughly, everything, especially if you’re going to summarize it. It’s pointless to use a source if you don’t look at everything.

Despite what my students told me about the importance of reading sources more thoroughly because of the Class Library, I don’t feel as if their words alone provide the evidence that the Class Library forced them to read their sources more thoroughly. However, when I consider the fact that my students were required to post sources in the Class Library before they wrote a paper in my class, as was the case with the B student,

then there is evidence to suggest that they did read their sources more thoroughly than they might have otherwise done. Of course, the C student was the exception, since none of his sources appeared in the Class Library.

#### **Fourth Objective: “Accountability”**

None of my students pointed to the public nature of the Class Library as being a major reason why he or she wrote better summaries. Also, none of my students pointed to the public nature of the Class Library as being a major motivating factor. Nor did my students talk a lot about *Google Docs*. Instead, they all seemed to view the assignment as just another assignment, with there being no special aspect to the public nature of the document.

However, at least one student (one of my A students) pointed out the motivation she felt to write a better summary because she knew other students were reading her summaries:

I always want to write a good one anyways because I’m putting my name next to it. But, definitely. I’ve read a couple of them and it’s not grammatically correct. I always read through mine and make sure it’s something I want to put my name next to.

Even though only one of my students indicated that she felt pressure to write a better summary because of the public nature of the Class Library, all of them hinted at the fact that it was helpful to have formatting guidelines, as well as summary guidelines. They consequently chose to write summaries that fit in:

**[C student]** Yeah. I’ve looked at others student’s posts, mostly for format. Not necessarily for exact wording. How should I say it . . . They’ll start it

with, ‘This article was written by so-and-so in this journal in this year, this journal is known for this,’ and then they go on to summarize it. And then at the end of the article, they’ll say why it’s important. I’ve kind of found that that’s the best way to do it. And I definitely didn’t know that that was the best format. So it helped to look at others.

Overall, I cannot escape the feeling that my students greatly downplayed the significance of seeing each other’s summaries in *Google Docs*. And I certainly feel that Student 3 said it best when she noted, “I always read through mine and make sure it’s something I want to put my name next to.” The fact that the student used the phrase “put my name next to” implied that she was fully aware of the fact that, at least at the outset, other students would be looking at her posts. It could be inferred, therefore, that she wrote specifically for that audience, and did so with a higher degree of attention than she might have otherwise paid to her writing.

### **Conclusion**

While it could certainly be argued that, based on the mixed results from this study, the Class Library failed to show students how to work with sources effectively, I think the evidence also suggests that my students showed a lot of growth when one considers their understanding of the importance of writing summary. By comparison, the students in Howard’s study did not seem to understand the importance of writing summary. They in fact failed to write summary when they were asked to integrate sources. And while I am certainly not thrilled with the summaries that my students did write, I view them as a starting point for my own progress in my instruction of source use.

As I reflect back on the semester and my use of the Class Library, I am confident that the assignment worked. It kept my students organized, focused, and challenged. It also extended the classroom, providing me with an additional setting in which to help my students develop their writing. I also liked how the assignment forced my students to plan ahead on their projects, to think about what really interested them, and to figure out how their own ideas fit into a larger picture. The writing process is a thinking process; the two are intertwined. To develop student thinking by immersing them in a higher level of thought and discourse, then, is the best way to help students develop their own thinking and, by extension, writing. I had immersed my students in that higher level of thought and discourse at the outset of the semester by requiring my students to not only think about the topics that interested them before writing a paper in my class, but to also read journals and biographic texts for the Class Library long before any major writing assignment was due. I also required them, on three different occasions, to talk about their ideas for their upcoming papers in my class during the three “topic discussion activities.”

My own critique of the Class Library lies in my lack of presence in the Class Library. As it is, I do not feel as if I did quite enough with the opportunity that had been available to me all semester long, one for commenting on student summaries, either in-class or in *Google Docs*. For example, I did not comment on the outlines my students wrote during the “topic discussion activities.” In retrospect, I would have liked to have done just a little more with complementing my students on areas of their writing that were strong, as well as encouraging them to expand on, or to focus their topics a little more so that they could have found articles more specific to their individual research interests. I would also have liked to have offered just a little more insight on my student’s ideas and thought

processes earlier on in their drafting and research processes. More importantly, I would have liked to have monitored more closely how much of my students' writing was actually their own, and how much they were borrowing directly from their sources.

My reason for not helping my students a little more was that, since I am a student myself, I was not able to devote as much time as I would have liked to them. I had to attend to my own studies as well. But I realize now that just a few more comments on my students' summaries, research processes, and thought processes would have gone a long way towards helping them develop more fully in their thinking and, by extension, writing.

Perhaps more important than my commenting on students summaries, however, would have been setting up a way for my students to comment on each other's summaries, which is exactly how Roessing offers her students feedback on their writing. In "Making Research Matter," Roessing's collaborative assignment, on which I based the Class Library, makes peer response a central part of the assignment by requiring students to meet outside the classroom and talk about areas of their writing that are clear, or unclear. Perhaps I could have, instead of merely assigning grades, made my students assign the grades to each other's. I could have used a small part of class time to have my students meet, based on a common research topic, and then assign scores to each other's summaries based on predetermined grading criteria. Parts of those grading criteria could have been requirements for each student to check each other's summaries against their sources to make sure that the student they were evaluating was actually stepping away from his or her articles or books and writing 100% in his or her own words.

Shortcomings aside, I'm drawn more to the positive aspects of the Class Library that I noticed. One positive was the challenge the Class Library issued to my students. It

gave each student the opportunity to engage thoughtfully with sources and hone critical thinking skills on a weekly basis. And as the teacher, it provided me with an ongoing sense of relief knowing that my students were practicing writing, researching, and summarizing on a weekly basis. It also gave my students a realistic example of good source integration, one that I could (and did) draw their attention towards whenever I taught a lesson on source integration. In other words, because of the Class Library, I was able to tell my students, very clearly, that I had them practice writing summary on a weekly basis because summary is what I wanted them to write when I required a source to be integrated into their papers.

The next step in researching and incorporating the Class Library in my classes will undoubtedly be to challenge my students just a little more by posting a greater number of comments in *Google Docs*, as well as setting aside class time for my students to grade each other's summaries. I will also need to respond in more detail to the "observation logs" that my students write because, even while the "observation log" is a part of the Class Library assignment that is less meaningful than the others, I do feel that the "observation log" can provide students, with help from the instructor, with a thorough lesson on how they need to focus their research on specific sources, as well as sources that they are truly interested in reading, rather than sources they read only because they have to complete an assignment.

On the same level as encouraging students to choose sources that they are genuinely interested in reading is encouraging students to read sources that may not necessarily end up in the Class Library. It is important to remind students that the papers they write ultimately dictate the kinds of sources they need to read and reference in their writing, and not the Class Library, or any other assignment. And while I certainly want my students to be structured and give themselves enough time to engage critically with their sources, I



certainly do not want them to plug sources into their papers, ones that may not relate logically to their own arguments. Doing so might be worse, in fact, than quote-dropping. Stressing a certain level of flexibility with the Class Library assignment is therefore a key responsibility that I have to my students, that and continually reminding them that the Class Library is there to show them that integrating sources means writing summary, not dropping quotes. It also means taking time to choose good sources, making sure sources fit the topics that are being discussed or debated, and engaging critically with sources until one is comfortable with speaking and writing intelligently about them in one's own words.

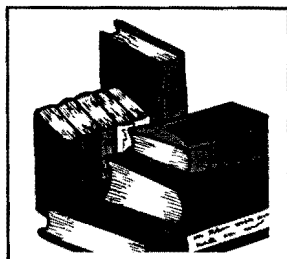
## WORKS CITED

- Brown, Ann L., and Jeanne D. Day. "Macrorules for Summarizing Texts: The Development of Expertise." *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 22 (1983): 1-14. EBSCO. Web. 2 May 2011.
- Bruffee, Kenneth A. "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind.'" *College English* 46.7 (1984): 635-652. JSTOR. Web. 27 Jan. 2011.
- Dean, Deborah. *Genre Theory: Teaching, Writing, and Being*. Illinois: NCTE, 2008. Print.
- Howard, Rebecca Moore. "Plagiarizing (from) Graduate Students." *Pluralizing Plagiarism: Identities, Contexts, Pedagogies*. Rebecca Moore Howard, and Amy E. Robillard, eds. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 2008. 92-100. Print.
- . "The Dialogic Function of Composition Pedagogy: Negotiating between Critical Theory and Public Values." *Under Construction: Working at the Intersections of Composition Theory, Research, and Practice*. Farris, Christine, and Chris M. Anson, eds. Utah: Utah State UP, 1998. 51-64. Print.
- . and Amy Rupiper Taggart. *Research Matters: A Guide to Research Writing*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010. Print.
- . Linda Adler-Kassner, and Chris M. Anson. "Framing Plagiarism." *Originality, Imitation, and Plagiarism: Teaching Writing in the Digital Age*. Caroline Eisner, and Martha Vicinus, eds. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008. 231-246. Print.
- . Tricia Serviss, and Tanya K. Rodrigue. "Writing from Sources, Writing from

- Sentences." *Writing and Pedagogy* 2.2 (2010): 177-192. EBSCO. Web. 26 Jan. 2011.
- Roessing, Lesley. "Making Research Matter." *English Journal* 96.4 (2007): 50-55. EBSCO. Web. 3 May 2011.
- Pecorari, Diane. "Good and Original: Plagiarism and Patchwriting in Academic Second-Language Writing." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12.4 (2003): 317-345. EBSCO. Web. 22 Mar. 2011.
- Roessing, Lesley. "Making Research Matter." *The English Journal*. 96.4 (2007): 50-55. EBSCO. Web. 22 Mar. 2011.
- Rubin, Herbert J., and Irene S. Rubin. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005. Print.
- Trimbur, John. *The Call to Write*. 2005. 5th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2011. Print.

## APPENDIX A. “BUILDING A CLASS LIBRARY”

### ASSIGNMENT SHEET



#### **Building a Class Library Assignment** **150 points**

**(3)Topic discussion activities**  
**15 points**

**(3)Observation Logs**  
**150 points**

The class library assignment asks you to carefully cite and summarize 13 journal articles and 2 books on 15 shared, *Google Docs* documents (see list of links below). The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to sources outside the typical realm of websites and magazines. The assignment is also intended to help you become more attentive to your research and source integration methods (e.g. proper MLA format for your sources). The assignment will also help you practice finding, summarizing, and synthesizing key information from your sources. Another purpose is to introduce your fellow classmates to potential sources that they could use for their research. Likewise, you should feel free to use any of the sources you find in the class library as references for your own research. Just make sure that the sources you do choose from the class library ARE RELEVANT to your research. A source on global warming, for example, would likely have little or nothing to do with a sports project.

**Objectives:** This assignment has several objectives:

- To help you understand that working with sources is far more complex a method than simply inserting a quote or two followed by a parenthetical citation
- To help you gain more confidence in doing summary by having you practice summary on a regular basis
- To help you learn that reading and understanding sources is something that takes time, and should never be something that is done the night before an assignment needs to be turned in
- To help you find your own voice on a given topic by having you practice writing and speaking in a “community” of your “knowledgeable peers,” according to Kenneth Bruffee

**Requirements:** You will be responsible for posting 15 sources (13 journals and 2 books) and 15 summaries of those sources on 15 shared, *Google Docs* documents—one post per week (see schedule). Each post must include: (1) your name, (2) an accurate MLA citation for your source in bold-face type, (3) and a 200-word+ summary of that source posted directly below it. Example:

Your Name

**Trimbur, John. *The Call to Write*. Brief 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2010.**

*The Call to Write* is a guidebook for beginning writers. It . . . .

**Choosing a Source:** You are responsible for choosing a source that hasn’t already been chosen and written about in the “Class library.” So you must pay attention to what sources

others have already used! If someone has already posted on your source, then you **MUST** choose another source. It's a first-come first-serve system. If you do choose a source that has already been chosen, then you will **NOT** be awarded any points for your post. Keep in mind that I will be able to see who posted what first. You will, however, be allowed to replace your source with another as soon as you realize that your source has been taken, but you must do so within one week, since I will be grading them exactly a week after they are due.

In addition to choosing a source that hasn't already been chosen, you will also be responsible for choosing a source that is **CURRENT**. Therefore, stick to sources that have been published in the past 10 years or so. Publications beyond the 10-year mark will likely receive no points.

A final note about your choice of sources: Do not choose inappropriate subject matter (i.e. inappropriate for this class). If you are unsure about what constitutes inappropriate subject matter for this class, just check with me first (quick questions after class, or simple emails usually work best). Sources on such topics as abortion, drug use, and religious topics I would typically consider inappropriate for this class. Conversely, I would encourage further exploration of such topics as finance, academic life, environment, music, different cultures, American culture, travel, gender bias, popular trends, movies, etc.

**Observation Logs:** In addition to posting your name, MLA citation, and the 200+ word summary of your source on the appropriate class library link, you will also be responsible for carefully documenting your research methods for **EACH** of your 15 sources. For this part of the class library assignment I'm looking for **ONE** Microsoft Word document—you will be required to submit that same document three times over the course of the semester, so check the schedule at the back of the syllabus for the exact due dates. Use proper MLA format for the document, which means page numbers preceded by your last name in the top right-hand corner (in the header), your name in the top left-hand corner followed by my name (in the actual document), then the class title and date of submission for your observation log. Give your observation log the appropriate "observation log" title as well. Finally, use subject headings (bold-face font) left-aligned that indicate what source you are referring to. For example, I would recommend using a subject heading that says something like: **My Research Methods for Source #1**. Etc. Under your heading, for each of your fifteen sources, answer **ALL** of these questions in **COMPLETE SENTENCES**:

- What search engine are you using for your search? Google? Google Scholar? EBSCO? JSTOR? Other?
- What words or phrases are you using for your search? Please list **ALL OF THEM**.
- What word or phrase brought up sources relevant for your research or met your expectations?
- How do you determine what sources are useful for your research (i.e. match your topic)?
- What kinds of sources did you find? Journals? Magazines? Books?
- What are the publication dates for the top three sources you found on your search?
- Do the titles of the sources you are looking through match their content?
- How many sources did you browse through before you found the one you were looking for? Be precise.
- As you read through the source(s) you chose, in what paragraph of the text does the most useful information in the source appear?
- What paragraphs in the text do you think you will paraphrase or summarize in your work?
- Provide a title and author's name for the article you finally settled on.

Please note that it would probably be most useful to you to have your observation log document open while you search for your sources. That way you can quickly answer the aforementioned questions as you do your search, rather than having to come back and answer the questions when you may no longer be clear about what your research methods entailed.

All of the observation logs will be awarded full points (150 total) if all of the questions are answered in complete sentences. If your answers are not in complete sentences, then they will be deducted points accordingly. Also note that when you submit your observation logs to me, make sure that you continue to add onto the same document over the course of the semester. You do not need to start 3 separate documents. I want all 15 entries to be submitted in one document each time. Therefore your entries should always move from Source #1 to Source #2 to Source #3, etc.

**Reading:** READ YOUR SOURCE THOROUGHLY. Journal articles rarely have more than 20 pages. You should therefore be able to read a journal article thoroughly in about an hour. As for the 2 book sources you will be required to post on: Give yourself enough time to read through those books carefully. That means you should probably submit your posts on the books sources somewhere in the middle of the semester, or perhaps towards the end.

**Writing:** You may go beyond the 200-word requirement for each post—but if you don't write 200 words or more in your post, then you will not receive credit for that post. It's as simple as that. You will likewise receive no credit for writing two or more paragraphs. Limit yourself to writing ONE LONG paragraph. In that 200-word paragraph, use the following questions to guide you—but don't simply answer them and then call it good! If you merely answer these questions and then call it good, your paragraph won't stand alone as a coherent paragraph. Instead, use these questions to think deeper about your sources before writing up your observations:

- Who, what, where, when, why, and so what?
- Who wrote the article?
- What is the article about? What is its central argument or main point? What does it find?
- Where was the article written? In what journal? Who reads those journals and why?
- When was the article written or study conducted?
- Why was the article written or study conducted?
- Why should your fellow classmates care about this source? How could it be of use to them?

**(3) “topic discussion activities”:** On 3 different occasions (see schedule and “topic discussion” heading) you will be asked to pair up with an appropriate group member (using the “post-it note” activity), or members in order to be able to compare your sources and findings on a given topic. These will be in-class activities worth a total 15 points (5 for each “topic discussion activity”). The “topic discussion activities” will come in the brainstorming stage of each of the three major assignments: rhetorical analysis, commentary, and MEMorial. The purpose of the 3 “topic discussion activities” will be for you to share your sources with a student (or students) who is (are) interested in the same, or similar topic as you. You will therefore be asked to not only discuss your sources from the class library in detail with another student or students, but to also identify questions that arise from your discussion. In addition to discussing your sources and identifying questions, you will also be asked to carefully sketch out an outline for the next major writing assignment that is due (starting with rhetorical analysis, then commentary, then MEMorial). You will need one outline PER GROUP MEMBER. Each outline should cover a different, unique idea—but there can be some overlap. **I'm hoping you use the “topic**

**discussion activities” as a way to get immediate feedback on an idea that you’d like to use for each of the 3 major writing assignments.** Each group member will be responsible for emailing me his or her questions, as well as his or her outline. The emails must be submitted by the end of each class period in which you will be asked to do the “topic discussion activity”. So when you see a “topic discussion activity” listed on the syllabus (3 total) come prepared—which means **BRING YOUR LAPTOP**.

**Revision:** You will NOT be allowed to revise any of your postings for the class library—so choose sources wisely! Also, try to do your absolute best writing the first time around. The only exception to the revision rule is when you realize that your source has already been chosen and posted on. Only then will you be allowed to replace a source—but you must replace that source within a week.

**Posting:** Each of your 15 postings **MUST** be pre-typed and then pasted in the required *Google Docs* document (one per week). The *Google Docs* documents will be organized into 15 pages (one page per week). You can access the appropriate *Google Docs* document by following the link on the class schedule (see back page of syllabus), or by following the link below (hold down on the control button and then click on the appropriate week to access the desired *Google Docs* document):

- [Week 1](#)
- [Week 2](#)
- [Week 3](#)
- [Week 4](#)
- [Week 5](#)
- [Week 6](#)
- [Week 7](#)
- [Week 8](#)
- [Week 9](#)
- [Week 10](#)
- [Week 11](#)
- [Week 12](#)
- [Week 13](#)
- [Week 14](#)
- [Week 15](#)

**Grading:** You will be able to receive full credit (5 points each) for the “topic discussion activities” by merely emailing those to me. Your observation logs (worth 150 points total) will receive full credit if they are complete (i.e. if they have accurately recorded the research steps for each one of your sources and also include **COMPLETE SENTENCES** in answering all of the guideline questions). Each post for the class library, however, will be worth 10 points each (totaling 150 points) and will be evaluated based on the following rubric:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
correctness, preciseness, accuracy of MLA citation					
summary is 200 words (or more)					
ONE well-written paragraph of summary (NO MORE)					
Paragraph stands alone as a coherent unit (one paragraph)					
accurately synthesizes central findings, main arguments					
formal academic style					
editing—few errors in word choice, sentence					

construction, and paragraphing					
appropriate subject matter (i.e. appropriate for this class)					

**Feedback:** Most of my feedback on your class library entries will come in class. For example, if I'm seeing a problem with the depth and accuracy of your posts, I will devote a lesson or two in class to helping everyone improve in that area. Although I will never single out a student, I will sometimes compliment a student or two on their summaries and citations. When I do this, I will use the "comment" feature in *Google Docs*. That way you will be able to see what the stronger entries look like, and you will subsequently be able to model those.



## APPENDIX B. COPY OF ORAL TRANSCRIPT

### *Oral Consent*

This is Niles Haich from the English Department at North Dakota State University. I am conducting research on how students in my English 120 classes work with sources. The identities of my students will be kept confidential. Only myself and Dr. Whitsel will be allowed to listen to this interview. The recordings will be stored safely on one password protected computer, and they will be deleted as soon as my study is complete. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you may stop at any time. Taking part in this interview is your agreement to participate. Let's begin.

### *Interview Questions*

- Tell me a little bit about yourself: where you're from, your major, where you went to high school, why NDSU, etc.
- Tell me about your writing experiences in high school.
- Tell me about a research paper you wrote outside of my class.
- Tell me about any writing you do outside of the classroom, if any.
  - What would you say your writing instructor was most interested in helping you learn?
  - What lessons did you learn that helped you in your writing?
  - What lessons did you learn that may have hurt your writing?
  - What do you remember about working with sources?
  - How were you taught to work with sources?
  - Did your teacher citation (e.g. parenthetical citation)?
  - Did your writing instructor emphasize proper research and summarizing sources?
- Tell me about your writing experience in English 110, or any other English classes you may have had before 120\*
  - What would you say your writing was most interested in helping you learn?
  - What lessons did you learn that helped you in your writing?
  - What lessons did you learn that may have hurt your writing?
  - What do you remember about working with sources?
  - How were you taught to work with sources?
  - Did your teacher emphasize citation (e.g. parenthetical citation)?
  - Did your writing instructor emphasize proper research and summarizing sources?
- Tell me about what you NOW know about working with sources.
  - Is what you now know about working with sources the same as when you came into my class?
  - OR has your understanding of what is meant by source integration changed?
  - How has it changed?
- BIG QUESTION: Walk me through your writing process. How do you begin a research paper, from brainstorming to final draft. Details. Details. Details.
- What do you think about the "Class Library" assignment?
  - Has it helped you to understand how to work with sources?
  - Has it helped you be more confident in summarizing sources?
  - How often do you look at posts from other students?
  - Do you feel pressured to write a good source summary because of the public nature of the Google Docs documents?
  - Do you feel as if you understand what good source integration means?
  - How has the "Class Library" helped you to better understand what good source integration means?

- How has the “Class Library” failed to help you better understand what good source integration means?
- What do you think of the observation log?
- What do you think of the topic discussion activity?

\*Disregard if student didn't take English 110

### ***Conclusion***

If you would like a copy of the recording, please let me know and I will make one available to you. If you have any questions regarding the research, contact me or the IRB here at NDSU.

Thank you again for your help.