# Tips for Preventing Plagiarism

- Frequently review your policy; explain it clearly to your students and enforce it consistently. Remember, the college will back up your decisions!
- Emphasize to students that at most four year schools, plagiarism is basis for expulsion. Similarly, plagiarism in the workplace could cause one to lose one's job.
- Don't assume that your students already know how to conduct research, write a paper, or do citations. Our students come from a broad array of educational backgrounds. They may or may not have been taught these skills, or they may not yet be proficient in applying them across disciplines.
- Teach them the skills they need to produce their own work:
    - Notetaking from texts, lectures, and research sources
    - Paraphrasing
    - Summarizing
    - Quotation
    - Citation in the format appropriate for your discipline
    - Research skills
    - Emphasize that students must cite both paraphrases and direct quotations.
    - Give practice homework and/or in-class assignments practicing these skills. Discuss what is and is not a successful piece of work.
- Provide students with examples of good work and bad work, so that they can see what they are supposed to do.
- Make very precise assignments requiring the students to use specific sources and answer narrowly defined questions. This minimizes the chance that they will be able to find a paper on the web that they can use.
- Make assignments that require more than one source.
- Discuss appropriate use of the web. Decide what types of web sources are appropriate for your classes and show students how to use these.
- Break large assignments into small parts so that that you can give frequent constructive feedback on different elements of the work. For example if you assign a research paper, have students turn in a proposal, bibliography, a thesis, an outline, and a draft before they turn in the final. If they have put in work on these small steps, they are more likely to write their finals themselves.
- Encourage students to contact you or other students if they have questions about grey areas or policies.
- If you suspect that someone has plagiarized, paste a suspect sentence into one of the search engines below. This will catch most papers downloaded off of the web.
    - http://www.google.com/
    - http://www.metacrawler.com/
- If you are certain that the student plagiarized, but you don't have conclusive proof, you can enforce your policy anyway. If the student wants to contest your decision, they can do so through the VPSS.