PRINCIPLES OF CITATIONS: MLA

If you would like to familiarize your students with the principles of citation and MLA Citation Style, refer to:

- Why Citations Matter (Tutorial and Video)
- MLA Citation Style video (7th edition)
- MLA 8th Edition Citation Style Video
- MLA 8th Edition Citation Style Tutorial

DISCUSSION TOPIC

Citations

Before discussing the nature of citations and references, ask the students to come up with definitions of these terms. What are their current views? Experiences? Assumptions? Citations as puzzle pieces or clues in a mystery: If we view citations as part of the academic conversation, what part do they play?

How do citations and references help solve problems? How do they help when we're curious about a topic? How do citations help us prevent plagiarism? Is it as simple as using in-text citations and reference lists, or is it more complex?

Why should we acknowledge others' work? Why is it important to forwarding research and various academic fields?

Citing statistics: Why must statistics always have citations? Discuss the nature and creation of statistics. Citing statistics adds credibility and helps you avoid accusations of making statistics up.

Citing images: Why should images always have citations? Discuss the nature and creation of images. How can they be manipulated or used out of context? How do citations help clarify the original intent or message of an image?

Citation generators and organization tools: Some professors don't allow use of these tools; why do you think that is? Why might some professors consider these tools cheating? How does this relate to technological literacy? What tools do students already use? What would they like to learn about or see in the future? Brainstorm the "perfect" citation tool. Discuss human and machine error when it comes to citations: the importance of double-checking!

ACTIVITY

Breaking Citations Down

Develop a list of citations broken down by component (author, date, publisher, title, etc.). Type or write them on larger pieces of construction paper, cardboard, etc. utilizing a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. Have students work in groups to assemble the parts on pinboards, a wall with tape, magnetic boards, etc. This easily can be turned into a competition. It also leads to discussions about how and why students chose to assemble citations in a certain way and discussions about their reasoning for their mistakes.