**Avoiding and Correcting Patch-Writing**

**Due: February 21**

**The Problem with Patch-Writing**

Patch-writing is a common error students make as they learn to paraphrase and summarize sources. In patch-writing, the writer directly copies sentences from a source and then alters the original text by omitting or adding some words and replacing others with synonyms. These changes are deceptive for the reader: it seems as if the passage is written by the student when truly the passage maintains the overall structure and ideas of the original source. It is important for students to avoid and/or correct patch-writing for two reasons: 1. Although students who patch-write sometimes intend to correctly paraphrase material, professors usually view patch-writing as plagiarism, which can lead to serious consequences like receiving an F on an assignment, an F in the class, or referral to the Student Integrity Office. 2. Patch-writing tends to inhibit a writer’s ideas and make the essay less effective. A writer who uses extensive patch-writing often pieces together someone else’s ideas and information without responding and without demonstrating the relevance of those ideas for the writer’s own argument. This leaves readers unsure of the purpose or point of view of the student’s essay.

**How to Avoid Patch-Writing**

* Never look directly at a source while composing your essay unless you are transposing a direct quote (in quotation marks and properly cited).
* Never copy and paste text from an Internet source into your paper unless you put quotation marks around this text and cite it correctly.
* If you would like to summarize a source, read it carefully and then put it aside while you try to sum up its main argument or idea. Introduce the source as soon as you begin summarizing it and mark the end of the summary with a parenthetical citation.
* If you would like to paraphrase a sentence or group of sentences, read that passage from your source and then put the source away; try to put the idea entirely in your own words. Once you’ve written your own sentence, check it against the original to make sure you haven’t used any of the same words. Mark the beginning of your paraphrase with the author or title of the source and mark the end with a parenthetical citation.

**How to Correct Patch-Writing**

As you read a draft of your essay, look for places in the essay where you use language from your sources. If you find patch-written passages in your essay, take time to correct them.

* Compare your passage with the original and use a highlighter to mark words or phrases in your paper that are the same as those in your source.
* Review the highlighted words. If the exact words are important, put quotation marks around them and document them properly. If the exact words aren’t important, use the techniques suggested above to provide accurate summaries or paraphrases.
* Whether you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing, always introduce your source with the author’s name or title as soon as you begin using it and mark the end of your use with a parenthetical citation.
* After each quotation, paraphrase, or summary, write a few sentences that explain how that information is important to your argument or purpose. Explain why the ideas from your source are important, accurate, inaccurate, problematic, interesting, etc. This will help you to highlight your own ideas and reveal your purpose to readers.

**Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Patch-Writing Activity**

1. Locate the original source of the patch-written passage below by searching google for phrases (pro tip: don’t try searching with whole sentences—instead, look for specific phrases) used in the paragraph. What is the web-address for the original source?

Type / copy-paste it here:

1. Use the Word highlighter function to mark all words and phrases in the paragraph below that are the same as the original source.

The way their lives work shapes how they deal with a teacher’s detailed essay comments. Both at their jobs and as students, they are ever so familiar with transactional exchanges. Their jobs or school are often at big organizations. Maybe they meant to express something by how they handled their returned papers.

In the face of all that, I didn’t know what to do. However, I was pretty sure that commenting on essays wasn’t working. I wanted to replace my notes on their papers by using more process and dialogue. These are what English professors spend a lot time preaching when it comes to writing.

1. After you’ve found the piece, found the section your professor stole from, and highlighted the words from the original source, read the whole piece. Then please summarize the WHOLE article and revise the above section to eliminate patch-writing by including ethical paraphrasing and actual quoting with adequate explication. This revised section should go somewhere within your summary, so that the whole thing will read like a few sentences of summary, then a few sentences of focus on the specific section, then back out to summary, sort of like this:

> /\ <

Summary section summary

3-5 sentences 4-7 sentences 3-5 sentences

1. **Submit** this worksheet in the appropriate assignment folder in iCollege (Patchwriting Exercise—Project 2). *This is a graded assignment.*

* Introduce the original source with the author’s name and appropriate signal phrases
* Briefly summarize the piece *in third person*
* Correct the patch-writing to instead use summary, paraphrase, and/or quotations.
* Use accurate parenthetical citations that comply with MLA style.

4. Answer this question in 2-3 sentences below your summary and correctly revised paragraph: Are you convinced by this author’s thesis? Why or why not?