**Thoughts on turnitin.com:**

Finally, I wanted to provide a little discussion of what you need to look for when you see your report.  If you get your report back, and you’re nervous about your results from turnitin.com, read on...

First off, let's discuss the percentages. You'll get a percentage and a color (green, yellow, orange, or red). What this means is that turnitin.com has scoured the text of your paper and has matched every exact phrase you've used with other work out there. Most of it is going to match other student work because those other students all over the world have quoted the same books you have, so it's all in the system now.

If you are in the green, you're probably good. If you're really low (say 12% or lower?), you probably haven't used enough sources. I'd guesstimate that between 13% and 20% are ideal. If you get into the low yellow, low 30's say, you're probably cool, too. The key is, there is no magic number. Some students are in the green, and all of it is plagiarized because it has no citations. Some are in the high yellow, but the way the paper is done, it is totally cool. I look at each paper individually. The main thing I'm after is a complete high orange or red, way up there.

I'd love to see a paper that is in the green and has a lot of small hits. If you have a lot of 1% or 2% hits linking you to other student papers, and each of these hits has a citation next to it in your paper, that's perfect.

**What I'd like you to use the website for:**
1) Check for a really high or really low percentage of outside quotes. If you find that only 6% or 7% of your paper is a quote, you probably need to go back in and add more research. If you find that you're way up in the 40% or even higher, you need to paraphrase more and quote less (and you need a lot more critical interpretation of outside sources instead of so many quotes).

2) Use it to check your work for citations. That's the main reason I want you to submit a rough draft. Look at every single match that the site finds in your paper. Check each one to make sure you have introduced and given a citation for that material. It's a great way to ensure that you avoid inadvertent plagiarism and to make sure you didn't forget to use quotation marks around your quotes.

3) Use it to check your paraphrases. Remember, a paraphrase needs to put things completely in your own words. If you paraphrased something, and it comes back as a direct wording hit, you need to either reword it some more, so it's fully in your own words, or you need to just directly quote the whole thing.