

Skills for the Workplace Guides:

Applying Theories and Models to Workplace Examples

Table of Contents

Paraphrasing Theories and Models	2
Relating Theory to Workplace - Example	4
References.....	4

Paraphrasing Theories and Models

When it comes to academic theories or models, SfWP students are expected to read about the theory and then discuss it in their assignment, relating it to their *own workplace examples*.

So if a student had been learning about '*Trust in the Workplace*' in their classes for example, they would begin their research by finding some books or articles about this topic which have been written by people who are 'respected in their field' – i.e. they have conducted a lot of research on the topic themselves and have then written books and papers on the subject. These will have been read by other experts and will be said to be 'peer reviewed' and gain 'credibility' (other people think this person knows what they are talking about and will begin to use and test these theories to see if they actually work in practice).

When a suitable theory or model on 'trust in the workplace' has been found, it should be read to ensure that the model is fully understood and then a student should write '*in their own words*' a short summary of what they think the model is about, before '*applying it to a workplace example*' in their assignment. The summary of the model is known as **paraphrasing**. A good paraphrase shows your understanding and interpretation of the original passage.

So if you are finding it difficult to make a paraphrase, put the original away and write down what you think it says, or what you think it means. Then go back and check your writing against the author's. Out of this process you will find that you have a good, meaningful paraphrase, written in your own words.

In the example below, a theory/model has been 'paraphrased', 'cited' and then a workplace example has been provided which 'relates' the theory to a practical scenario in the workplace.

When a student reads an article in a newspaper or reads about a theory in a textbook and wants to talk about them in an assignment, they must not simply copy and paste the article or pages from books into the assignment, as this is still considered to be **plagiarism** – even if they have actually referenced the book or article. Plagiarism means '*passing someone else's work off as your own*' and is a serious academic offence, which could ultimately lead to a student being asked to leave university, if the offence is repeated.

It is crucial that the student reads the article and then paraphrases or summarises the contents in their own words.

After reading an article in a book, newspaper or journal, it is probably useful for students to note down the most relevant points of the article (perhaps in bullet points) and then to write *'in their own words'* the 'gist' (*'substance or general meaning of the text'*) of what has been read– going back to check that something important has not been missed out.

Any ideas, theories, opinions or any other information taken from elsewhere must be cited and referenced correctly.

The art of writing a good assignment is for a student to be able to develop their own academic style to weave together other authors' ideas and research results.

However, all the authors that have provided the student with this knowledge must be 'cited' and 'referenced' as the student did not come up with the theories or undertake the original research themselves.

In fact, students must use other people's research as a means to underpin the issues they discuss in their assignments, otherwise their discussion is merely 'opinion' and lacks credibility as well as academic rigour.

Please see the Referencing and Citation video and written guides on Moodle from University of Derby (2012) and SBS (2018), to ensure that all work that has been researched is correctly cited and referenced.

Relating Theory to Workplace - Example

Example of relating a theory to a workplace example.

Stephen M. R. Covey suggests that one of the signs of a 'great leader' rather than simply a 'good leader' is in their ability to be trusted. He asserts that there are a number of Trust Behaviours that can be learned and applied by any managers in order to generate trust throughout any organisation and thus achieve better results. He goes on to note that demonstrating a 'lack of trust' in employees can have a profoundly negative impact on a business which is likely to result in low staff morale, increased absenteeism due to stress related issues and ultimately lead to poor performance which can and will affect the 'bottom line' and the company's success (Covey, 2006).

An example of this in a catering company was when a new manager was appointed who appeared to view all their employees with suspicion and accused everyone of being lazy and 'not pulling their weight'. They then instituted a new regime of supervisory checks and micro-management designed to encourage everyone to work harder. Unfortunately this generated resentment and unhappiness amongst the staff who had felt they were already working hard and that they were now being 'spied upon' and were no longer trusted. This had the predictable result of generating a hostile, suspicious atmosphere amongst the staff, resentment of management, increased sickness absences and a very high staff turnover.

References

Covey, S.M.R. (2006) *The speed of trust: the one thing that changes everything* Simon & Schuster, New York; London.

SBS (2018) *School of Business Full Referencing Guide*, [online] available at https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/96074/mod_resource/content/12/SBS_Full_Referencing_Guide_2018.pdf accessed 12.04.18 (login required)

University of Derby. (2012), 'A Guide to Harvard Referencing' [online] available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDgqqPvMn0U> accessed 12.04.18