

Individual Reflection

BMSW41010

University of Wales Trinity St. David

Employability Skills- Learning in the Digital Era

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Description

Referencing and paraphrasing was a convention that was alien to myself when I first began higher education. Referencing is to provide citations of sources (Merriam Webster) and paraphrasing is “to state something written or spoken in different words” (Cambridge Dictionary 2022). These skills are essential in the workplace especially within the digital era which is why I have decided to put an emphasis on becoming proficient in paraphrasing and referencing.

Paraphrasing is incredibly useful in the digital era as it can exhibit one's understanding of the topic, often in a more concise manner. Having the ability to articulate one point in a variety of ways can enable the writer to “maintain the flow of writing” (Jerman 2021) and is most effective with avoiding plagiarism in academic writing.

Referencing correctly can highlight one's attention to detail and their commitment to undertake this task. It allows the reader to be assured that the information before them has been harvested from the most accurate and reliable of sources and provides full disclosure to the writer's point of view. To reference accurately is imperative as “wrong, inappropriate, or unsuitable citations often blights the quality” of the academic writing (Santini 2018).

The skill which I have chosen to focus on is paraphrasing and referencing. I have chosen this skill as I have found weakness in it through my last few assignments. Improving this skill will aid my own and the readers confidence in my writing which is crucial.

Feelings

While gathering sources for the assignment I felt worried about how to reference as this was an alien convention to myself. I began gathering sources and found that those that were simple and relevant were not credible while the sources that were credible were lengthy and difficult to interpret. For this reason, paraphrasing also immediately was required, though I was unsure as to how to do this effectively. This anxious feeling lingered until I received a lot of guidance through lecturers, peers, and the internet.

While amidst the process of doing the assignment, I felt assured to have a large variety of resources to ensure that I am being as accurate as possible. I used many online guides as well as the content learnt in lectures to assemble the components of my assignment and I felt pleased to be able to do so. After the assignment was completed, I felt relieved to have accomplished it including very little plagiarism score and a cohesive reference list. However, upon further reflection, I feel that my assignment would be better if I had been consistent with the Harvard referencing and been more selective with the sources I had chosen. Being more selective with my sources would enable myself and the reader to verify the information presented and trust my point of view.

Evaluation

Throughout the process of completing the assignment, I found there to be many positive and negative experiences I could associate with academic writing. One negative thing was that many of the sources I had gathered would contradict each other so I would be unable to complete my point in a satisfactory manner. For example, I found a vast range of methods for Harvard referencing. This was difficult for me, and I think that an effective solution could have been to consult my lecture notes or even my lecturer themselves.

Additionally, I found that when writing the body of my assignment, paraphrasing the source directly was not remarkably effective. I found that many sources made similar points in hugely different yet equally accurate and insightful ways. I think that paraphrasing from a singular source doesn't exhibit any understanding in the topic as the writer is able to simply make use of synonyms. In order to be able to include all this insight, I decided to synthesise my sources. Combining my sources enabled me to paraphrase in a way which is cohesive, avoid plagiarism and incorporate a plethora of information in a concise way. In my opinion this method of paraphrasing was successful in broadening my understanding of the topic in hand.

Analysis

While completing this assignment, there were components that went well whereas other components were not successful the first time. One of the more successful components as mentioned above was my newfound ability in synthesising. I feel that this technique was beneficial to me as it allowed me to select constituent elements for the main body. This highlighted to the reader my understanding in the topic, it also allowed me to “test and validate hypothesis’, understand key processes make better research efforts” (Akasofu 2007).

A less successful component of the assignment was my use of Harvard referencing. Although I completed it, the overwhelming array to styles and methods made it difficult to identify which style was the correct one. I used one template for all of my online references and a separate template for my source which was a book. The different templates ranged in how elaborate they were, and I now understand that the most effective and efficient method may have been to consult my lecture notes, my lecturer or my peers who are also striving to complete the same assignment.

Another successful aspect of trying to improve my paraphrasing skills was that I achieved a relatively low plagiarism score which suggests that my paraphrasing skills were good enough to not be detected. Upon further analysis, I have found that understanding the topic at hand is crucial to be able to paraphrase in a seamless manner.

Conclusion

I have learnt that almost following a blueprint is not the most effective way to understand information and it is also not effective in relaying information. It is important to be able to paraphrase in a way which exhibits your point of view and your understanding of the topic. It is crucial to avoid relying on a singular source in academic writing and it is much more beneficial to make use of a plethora of sources, paraphrase and synthesise the information and then accurately cite the source.

These skills are imperative to possess when doing academic writing and also in the workplace. The work environment is constantly evolving, especially in the digital era. For this reason, a major goal of mine was to invoke trust in my reader by using reliable, credible sources and also presenting their information in a way which implies that I have a firm understanding of the topic and can be successful in educating the reader. Additionally, by being honest and transparent regarding the citations and where the information came from can make the reader feel as they were a part of the learning process alongside the writer.

In the workplace, properly paraphrasing and referencing shows a writer's commitment to fair practice, and ethical and professional standards which can positively impact one's professional reputation.

Action Plan

In the event which I should do this assignment once more my main priority would be to improve my referencing. This includes paying close attention to detail and being consistent with ensuring that I make note of all the sources I have used. I will study how to reference different types of sources such as online sources, books and sources which do not have an author or publish date. In regard to this I will also work on exclusively making use to the most up to date sources, written by reputable nonbiased websites or publishers and ensuring that the author is qualified to write about the topic at hand.

Although I have found a method of paraphrasing which has helped me convey information more clearly, I had to develop this method throughout the assignment process. If I were to do the assignment again I would do it much more systematically by gaining my own understanding of what I am reading before, I paraphrase. This will enable me to present ideas in a much more insightful way and once I have gained an understanding of the topic, I can explain it in a way where those who struggled with certain concepts can find a fresh perspective. Additionally, another thing that I would like to do if it were to undertake that assignment again would be to seek feedback so I can identify areas of improvement and ensuring that my paraphrasing and referencing meets the standard.

Reflective Video

[Recording-20230330_233743.webm](#)

Reference List

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