



RESEARCH SKILLS AND REFERENCING: WHY THESE MATTER FOR STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Students who want to write high-quality academic work must have strong research and referencing techniques (UWTSD, 2023, p. 3). Students with good research abilities can find, assess, and use information from a variety of sources, including books, journals, websites, databases, and other printed materials (Castillo-Martínez and Ramírez-Montoya, 2021, p. 8). Referencing is the process of citing the information, arguments, and supporting materials that students can access in their work (UWTSD, 2023, p. 3). In-text citations, which identify the source of a paraphrased or quoted piece within the text, and references, which list all of the sources' information at the conclusion of the work, are all examples of referencing (Prashanth et al., 2020, p. 2). Paraphrasing is the act of conveying a source's meaning in one's own words (UWTSD, 2023). This essay will describe and demonstrate the significance of research skills and referencing for students in terms of academic integrity, critical thinking, communication, and learning.

BODY

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

One of the key reasons why proper referencing and research techniques are crucial for students is that they support the preservation of academic integrity. Avoiding plagiarism, cheating, and other types of misconduct is part of maintaining academic integrity, which is the ethical value of honesty and fairness in academic work (Perkins et.al, 2020; Vardi, 2012). A person who presents another person's ideas or work as their own without giving them proper recognition conducts plagiarism (Prashanth et al., 2020, p. 2). Intentional or accidental plagiarism is a significant disrespect for academic integrity that may result in penalties including poor grades, a suspension, or exclusion (Vardi, 2012). By teaching students how to identify relevant sources, effectively paraphrase, accurately cite, and check their work for originality, research skills and referencing can help students prevent plagiarism (Prashanth et al., 2020, p. 2; Vieno et al., 2022, p. 642).

The art of modifying someone else's concepts in one's own language constitutes the essential research skill of paraphrasing (UWTSD, 2023). This ability performs several essential roles in academic work. Firstly, it acts as a glaring sign that students have understood the primary source material and can communicate it in their own distinctive way, so displaying their understanding (Prashanth et al., 2020). It also assists students in avoiding overusing direct quotations, which can make their writing less unique and lower the overall standard of their work (Perkins et.al, 2020). In order to ensure that the audience fully understands the text, paraphrase also enables the simplification and clarification of complex or technical phrases and concepts (Vardi, 2012). Finally, it

gives students the ability to smoothly incorporate source material into their points of view or analyses, improving the overall cohesiveness and argumentation of their academic work (Vardi, 2012; Prashanth et al., 2020).

However, paraphrase does not just entail rearranging the original source's sentence structure or adding a few new words. Students must carefully read the content and note its key ideas and supporting information before paraphrasing it (Vieno et al., 2022, p. 642). Without consulting the source, students have to compose the paraphrase in their own language and style, and they must cite the source correctly. The process of citing the sources that students have used in their research is known as referencing (UWTSD, 2023, p. 3). A student's work must include brief in-text citations, which typically just include the author's last name, the year the work was published, and maybe a page number. References are complete descriptions of the sources that are listed at the end of the student's paper, typically in alphabetical order by the author's last name (Castillo-Martínez and Ramírez-Montoya, 2021; UWTSD, 2023).

One of the most often utilized referencing systems in academic writing is the Harvard style. It is a contextual referencing style that gives full reference information in a reference list and employs the author-date format for in-text citations (UWTSD, 2023, p. 5). Additionally, Students must use a search engine or database to find suitable resources like books, journal articles, and reports in order to choose appropriate sources for a student's topic (Lander et al., 2019; Vieno et al., 2022; Prashanth et al., 2020). Utilize keywords to focus on the search results and rank sources according to their credibility, accuracy, timeliness, coverage, and objective. Avoid outdated, incorrect, biased, or inappropriate sources in support of reliable, contemporary, and relevant sources (Prashanth et al., 2020; Perkins et.al, 2020). Students who follow these instructions can show that they have conducted independent research, have comprehended and assessed the sources they have used, and have acknowledged the authors whose work they have drawn upon (Prashanth et al., 2020; Perkins et.al, 2020; Vieno et al., 2022).

CRITICAL THINKING

The development of critical thinking is another factor supporting the significance of research techniques and reference for. The ability to analyze, assess, and synthesize data from multiple viewpoints, sources, and settings is known as critical thinking (Gonzalez et al., 2022, p. 43). Because it helps students to construct original arguments, ideas, and conclusions supported by logic and evidence, critical thinking is essential for academic achievement (Gonzalez et al., 2022, p. 43). By exposing students to various points of view, arguments, and pieces of evidence on a subject, requiring them to evaluate the caliber and dependability of the sources they use, and encouraging

them to compare and contrast various sources and spot gaps or inconsistencies in the literature, research skills and referencing can aid students in developing their critical thinking (Gonzalez et al., 2022, p. 43; Khairuddin et al., 2021). Students can get the ability to develop their own conclusions based on reasonable justification and supporting data by doing this (Khairuddin et al., 2021).

COMMUNICATION

Reference management and research techniques are crucial for students for a third reason: these enhance communication. Being able to express one's thoughts intelligibly, logically, and effectively, whether orally or in writing, is known as communication. In order to effectively communicate, persuade an audience of one's point of view, and display one's knowledge and abilities, communication is essential for academic achievement (Awang and Daud, 2015, p. 484). By giving students access to pertinent and accurate data to back up their claims, assisting them in structuring their work logically and cohesively, and demonstrating how to use the right language and tone for various purposes and audiences, research skills and referencing can help students improve their communication (Awang and Daud, 2015, p. 484; Castillo-Martínez and Ramírez-Montoya, 2021).

LEARNING

The fact that they support in learning is another reason for the significance of research abilities and referencing for students. Learning is the process of gaining new knowledge, talents, and skills through study or experience (Lander et al., 2019, p. 137). Learning is crucial for academic achievement because it allows students to broaden their views, get a deeper understanding of a subject, and apply what they have learned in other contexts (Lander et al., 2019). By encouraging students' curiosity and interest in a subject, exposing them to novel ideas and theories that contradict their preconceived notions, and allowing them to reflect on their own learning process and results, research skills and referencing can support students' learning (Lander et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Skills in research and referencing are interrelated and mutually useful. Research techniques assist students in finding and applying reliable sources of information, while referencing helps in recognizing and valuing sources and preventing plagiarism. These improve the student's integrity and academic achievement when viewed together. By developing these abilities, students not only achieve academic success but also set themselves up for a future in which critical thinking and information literacy are essential. The value of research techniques and proper referencing cannot be stressed in an age where information is disseminated quickly, making them crucial to every student's academic and professional success.

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