

# individual Report

*by Aurel Apopei*

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## **Individual Report**

### **The importance of Research skills and referencing**

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**Academic Skills**

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## 1. Introduction

To succeed as a student, you must reach and adapt many attributes and specific skillsets such as academic skills. Academic skills are known to be the abilities, habits and strategies used by students to prove their understanding of topics through academic writing and use of reliable resources. Some academic skills involve effective time management, communication skills, critical thinking, research and writing skills as well as referencing. These set of skills are all extremely important as they have an enormous potential to increase productivity and overall success within the academic setting (Hermida, 2009), which can result in earning the academic credentials required to qualify for the job position you have always wanted. The purpose of this essay is to enhance and highlight the significance of academic skills, specifically research skills and referencing. The essay will be split into two different subheadings for each of the specific academic skill, which will cover and explain their meaning and importance whilst also providing examples with the use of credible resources.

## 2. Academic Skills

### 2.1. Research Skills

One of the most important academic skills is research, as it is the foundation upon which all academic work is based on. Without effective and reliable research, students would not be able to understand certain topics which will more than likely result in inferior quality of work. According to Allison et al. (2016) research skills are based on the ability to search, organize, and use information that is relevant to a particular topic. However, Thomas (2004), describes research to be a “complex craft” as there are many strategies used to collect high quality research through either primary or secondary data. According to Driscoll (2011), primary research employs direct data collection rather than depending on information that has previously been gathered by another individual. Some examples of this can include surveys and interviews. This is different to secondary research, as Saunders and Lewis (2017) define secondary research to be the use of information that has already been gathered by another individual. Some examples of secondary research could be journals, books, the internet, blogs etc.

Research therefore gives students the opportunity to make the best use of multiple resources, academic opinions, facts, or information and combine them for a better

understanding of a specific topic which will result in a higher quality work and more correct information. With technology advancing, Thomas (2004), states that to conduct high quality secondary research, you must have a wide range of computer skills for literature searching, data analysis and text preparation. This is different when collecting primary data, as you must possess good social skills as you will mostly be interacting with participants and other people from which you can collect data from. Research is not only beneficial for students, but for all individuals within the workplace. This is mainly because research can help acquire knowledge and information effectively, provide the latest information, discover, and seize opportunities as well as building credibility. For example, before creating and setting up a business, owners must always conduct quality market research which will determine whether their business idea is unique and needed within the local/national market. The outcome of the research will then guide action and change perspectives, as research would help establish whether the business idea could be successful or not. For students however, if you are unaware of a certain topic that has been taught during a lecture, reviewing and browsing it on academic resources such as books, journal articles or even on credible websites, could make you finally understand and get you ready to conduct your assignment in which you can demonstrate your understanding through the use of referencing.

After conducting the necessary research, writing skills are the core of student's education (Pearson, 2022). Effective writing skills can ensure academic success as in order pass modules and graduate, you as a student must demonstrate a level of understanding of the relevant topics discussed through your writing, so good grammar, expanded vocabulary and correct spelling could lead you to academic success. These writing skills all take part of academic writing. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007), the process of developing academic writing has been described to have 4 steps, which include prewriting, organising, writing, and polishing. These steps would help new students turn into effective academic writers, which is why it is significant to follow.

## 2.2. Referencing

The display and integration of knowledge of the topics discussed is managed through referencing, which is a system in which other writer's words and ideas are formally acknowledged (Borg, 2000). References are just a way of stating which ideas are your own and which are someone else's (Singh et al., 2020). Referencing is therefore a crucial part of academic writing and being a successful student overall, as it avoids plagiarism which is prohibited by all academic settings (Santini, 2018). Moreover, the use of references is not

just about writing what other writers say about a certain topic, is about understanding their work and interpreting it into your own words and style (Borg, 2000). This is different to paraphrasing which according to Bhagat and Hovy (2013), is the process of conveying someone else's ideas and thoughts using different wording, whilst retaining the original meaning. This helps avoid plagiarism, as you are adopting a writer's ideas but are delivering the same message using different wording. Moreover, there is a correlation between the referencing list and in-text citations, with the only difference being that in-text citations provide more specific credit to the writers, as they are put after a sentence or idea. This makes it easier for readers to follow, as they could examine where you have certain ideas from. This is something that they cannot do from using only the referencing list, hence the use of the in-text citations.

<sup>1</sup> In other words, if you have read a source and got an idea from it, you should paraphrase it using your own words. After the idea has been elaborated clearly, you should then cite it, giving the author's name and date of publication and lastly adding the source to the referencing list at the bottom of the essay. It is significantly important not to take credit for someone else's work as it is classified as cheating and stealing, so knowing how to reference and cite effectively, along with high quality academic writing and research, would more than ensure academic success. As referencing and engagement with literature skills <sup>1</sup> hold to 10% or more of overall grades, it just shows how significant referencing skills are, so being aware of how to do it effectively, can help students improve marks and grades which will later lead to graduation.

The importance of referencing to students is therefore crucial, as it can highly impact grades and overall module marks. Referencing can also help avoid plagiarism, which can also benefit students as they would no longer need to worry about similarity levels after submitting. Referencing also gives supporting evidence for your ideas, so using as many credible references would show that you have embraced the academic experience and will more than likely be successful.

### 3. Conclusion

As a conclusion, there is a high correlation between effective research and referencing skills and academic success, which instantly highlights their importance for students. Not only do they improve grades and makes the academic journey much easier, but they can also be applied within the workplace. It is therefore easy to deduce that both research and referencing are significantly important for students to ensure academic achievement.

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