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Referencing
Academic Tip Sheet

This academic tip sheet:

- defines referencing;
- explains why we reference;
- looks at the referencing system we use at ECU; and
- explains how to reference in your academic work.

What is referencing?

Referencing, or citation, is a vital aspect of research and academic writing. Referencing is a formal, systematic way of acknowledging the sources (other writers' words, ideas, theories) that you have found in your research and used in your writing.

Whenever you use someone else's words, or someone else's ideas or opinions, from any medium (book, magazine, journal article, newspaper, web page) in your own work, you must provide a reference in the correct format.

Why do we reference?

Referencing is an established convention of academic writing – acknowledging other writers' contributions to our thoughts and writing is one of the foundations of Western scholarship. References demonstrate to your readers that you are familiar with the important sources in your field of research and allows the reader to trace, verify, and even to use the sources you give.

Failing to acknowledge other writers' words, ideas or theories, either intentionally or unintentionally, is called plagiarism.

Plagiarism is taken very seriously at ECU and is subject to academic penalties. You need to reference correctly so as to avoid plagiarism.

What referencing system do we use at ECU?

The APA (American Psychological Association) referencing system is used at ECU. The APA referencing style is **prescriptive** – that is you must follow it exactly. Full details of the APA requirements are available in the *Referencing Guide* (Bennett, 2008).

Referencing in your work

In the APA system, references are given both **in-text** (that is, in your assignment itself using an author date system) and **end-text** (that is, in a 'Reference List' on a separate page at the end of your assignment).

In-text referencing

Whenever you use other people's words, ideas, theories, diagrams, graphs, graphics, definitions etc., you must reference your source/s using an in-text reference. Types of in-text references include direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries and syntheses.

1. The direct quote

- To directly quote a text is to reproduce someone else's words exactly as they appear in the original text.
- When you use a direct quote, you must signal this to the reader by placing that passage or sentence in quotation marks, and placing the author's surname/s, the year of publication and the page number where you found the quotation in brackets. The elements in the brackets are separated by commas.

An example of a direct quote:

"Interactivity has become a catch-cry. Marketers use it to sell everything from toys to television programs, but just what constitutes interactivity? Do 'interactive' products provide consumers with real interaction, or merely with limited choices which give an illusion of control and decision making power?" (Beveridge, 2007).

Note: The above example is made-up.

Other ways to direct quote

More elegant ways to quote directly are to:

- Introduce a quote by naming its source, by indicating what the quote is intended to demonstrate, or both, e.g.,

  Smith asserts "…" (2007, p. 9).

  This bias is evident in the assertion that "…" (Smith, 2007, p.9).

  Smith reveals her bias in her assertion that "…" (2007, p. 9).

- Use your own assertion and a colon plus a quote, e.g.,

  This nineteenth-century tendency to view the nervous system as an electrical system is exemplified in the following passage from Breuer's *Studies on Hysteria*: "…" (1895, p. 67).

2. The paraphrase

Paraphrasing is when you take an author's ideas and put them into your own words. It is an accepted scholarly practice. It is important for you to train yourself to redraft other people's ideas into your own words – to paraphrase. It is one of the ways in which you can see for yourself whether you have really understood what the author is saying.

When you paraphrase from a source (that is, when you put someone else's ideas into your own words), you must signal this to the reader by providing a reference. Put the author's surname and the year of publication in brackets.

An example of a paraphrase:

The following paragraph is a paraphrase of the previously given direct quote.

Over recent years many products have been marketed as 'interactive'. Beveridge (2007) questions the definition of interactivity used by marketers, and asks whether the interactivity we are sold is real or illusory.

Note:

- The writer of this paragraph, while using Beveridge's work, has substantially rephrased the original quote.
- The author's surname and the year of publication have been given.

Some tips for learning how to paraphrase are:

- Read the piece you want to paraphrase carefully, making sure you understand it.
- Cover it up and try to rewrite it in your own words, allowing yourself 2-3 keywords.
- Check your own work, changing any words or phrases that you have reproduced from the original.
- Look for synonyms: different words with the same meaning.
- Change the sentence structure/the voice/ the part of speech. Reduce a clause to a phrase.
- Link the paraphrased sentence smoothly into your own text.
- Obviously, when we paraphrase, we cannot change the technical words, numbers, and so on, used in the original source.

To sum up, when paraphrasing you must:

- Understand the original text.

- Change both words and sentence structure.
- Cite correctly.

End-text referencing

An end-text 'Reference List' records bibliographical information for each source you have referred to, quoted from or paraphrased (and only those sources) in the body of your written work.

The 'Reference List' appears at the end of your written work, on a separate page, and is arranged in alphabetical order. Formats vary slightly according to the source. See the *Referencing Guide* (Bennett, 2008) for these formats.

Referencing checklist

- **Have you consulted the guide to ensure that you have correctly formatted all your in-text and end-text references?**
- **Is your end-text reference list on a separate page with a title 'Reference List'?**
- **Have you included all the publication details appropriate for each type of reference?**
- **Have you supplied end-text references only for the sources you have included as in-text entries?**

References

Andersson, B., & Beveridge, A. (2007). *A guide to assessments and skills in SCCA* (2nd ed.). [Booklet]. Perth, WA: Edith Cowan University.

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