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Strategies for Studying, Learning, and Researching
By David Alderoty © 2014

Chapter 9) The Utility of Paraphrasing, Quoting, and Citing, With Definitions, and Related Concepts
2696 Words

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Definitions, and Descriptions, with Related Concepts

Notes for this Chapter, in Regard to Terminology

In this chapter, I am using the following terminology to **simplify the text**.   The term **student,** refers to **any individual that is writing a paper,** even if she is not a student, and is a professional writer.   The word **paper,** refers to any document, article, thesis or book that the student is writing, in hardcopy or the electronic format.   The term **author,** refers to the creator of a source of

information, which a student uses for writing a paper.   I am using the words **she and her**, and **he and him** in an alternating sequence.

What Are Citations?

In the most general sense of the term, a citation is a statement that provides the data needed to access a source of information, such as a book, an article, a website, a video, or sound recording. Citations generally include the <u>title</u> of the work, the <u>author's name</u>, the <u>publisher</u>, the copyright date, or the date of publication.   With this information, you can usually find any book, article, video, or sound recording.

A citation might also include the page number, section number, or chapter, to indicate the source of quotes or paraphrases, in a student's paper.

Some of the information mentioned above may not be available for websites, including web-based videos and articles. However, the only data needed to access web-based material are the URLs.   When available, a citation for web-based material may include other information, such as the title, author's name, copyright date, or date the material was created or updated.   This additional information might be useful for accessing the work from an alternative source, if the original URL is changed.

There are various styles on how to arrange the data that comprise a citation, such as APA and MLA.   I will present this information in the next chapter of this e-book.   However, in the

last section of this chapter, there is a list of websites, and a list of videos from other authors, that cover various aspects of style, including APA and MLA.

Different Types of Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of one or more authors in a paper, without acknowledging the source(s).   When a student does this intentionally, it is obviously unethical.   When a writer does this inadvertently, it is accidental plagiarism, which is explained below.

What is Accidental Plagiarism?

Accidental plagiarism is **inadvertently** using the words or ideas of one or more authors in a paper, without acknowledging the source(s).   The following four items are probably the most common causes of accidental plagiarism.

1) The student forgets to provide citations.

2) When a student does not provide citations, because he mistakenly thinks it is unnecessary or irrelevant for the writing assignment.

3) When a student mistakenly thinks the information she obtained from a source is common knowledge, and does not require a citation.

4) When a student confuses her own words or ideas, with the materials he studied, from books and other sources.   This is more likely to occur when a student takes notes from multiple sources, and uses the notes to write a paper.   It is even more likely to happen if the notes were created by paraphrasing, or by copying portions of the text, from one or more sources.

What is Self-Plagiarism

Self-plagiarism is reusing material the student previously wrote, in a way that is improper or unethical.   For example, self-plagiarism occurs, when a student writes a paper for one course, and at a later point in time, submits the same paper for another course, **without informing the instructor**.   This is obviously unethical.   Most instructors will probably consider this unethical even if the paper was rewritten or substantially modified.   Some authorities might consider it improper even if the student used a portion of a previously submitted paper, to write a new paper for another course.

Problems of the type mentioned above, can be avoided by indicating what material was taken from a previously submitted paper.   This should be done by obtaining the approval of the instructor in advance, and indicating in your new paper the sentences or paragraphs that you are including from a previously submitted paper.

Another example of self-plagiarism is republishing your own work, after you sold the publication rights to a publisher.   Reselling

an article, without informing the buyer that it was previously published can also be defined as self-plagiarism.

Self-plagiarism in relation to republication can happen accidentally, because contracts involving the sale of publication rights can very.   For example, there may be geographical and/or time restrictions for republication.   Some contracts can prohibit republication permanently.   Sometimes it is permissible to republish work, if it contains a citation for the original publication. This can involve a modified or simplified version of the original article.

The above also applies to peer-reviewed journal articles, even though the writer usually does not receive financial compensation.

The rules involving self-plagiarism, and republication of your own work, can vary, and may be ambiguous.   However, you can probably avoid difficulties, with appropriate discussions with all relevant parties, before you submit an article for republication.

Paraphrasing and Quoting

What is Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is rephrasing in your own words the ideas or information presented by an author.   This can involve the rephrasing of one sentence, several sentences, one or more paragraphs, or an entire article.   When you paraphrase, you are required to indicate your source of information, with citations.

Based on the way I am using the terminology, there are

different types of paraphrasing.   The first type, I am calling a <u>word for word paraphrase</u>, which expresses the original ideas of an author, in approximately the same sequence that the author used.   The second type, I am calling a non-sequential paraphrase, which presents the ideas of an author in a different sequence.   A third type, <u>I am calling a mixed paraphrase</u>, which consists of sentences and/or paragraphs that are partly paraphrased.   A fourth type, I am calling a <u>paraphrase summary</u>, which is a summary of a specific source of information.   **All of these variations of paraphrasing require citations.**

What Are Quotations?

A quotation is an **exact sequence of words**, copied from a source, for use in a paper.   A quotation can consist of a phrase, or one or more sentences or paragraphs.   A quotation requires quotation marks, or any other acceptable method that clearly indicates that it is a quotation.   When using quotations, you are required to indicate your source, with a citation.

      In the next chapter of this e-book, I will provide information on style for short and long quotations.

Scholarly, and Non-Scholarly Sources of Information

Information Sources in Two Categories

I am dividing <u>information sources</u> into two general categories, which I am calling **scholarly sources**, and **non-scholarly**

sources.   An understanding of these categories is important for writing good papers, and they are explained under the following two subheadings.

What are Scholarly Sources?

Scholarly sources are books, articles, videos, sound recordings, and other material created by <u>recognized experts in a specific field</u>. Two examples are peer-reviewed journal articles and, textbooks.

Instructors, and others in the academic community, assume that scholarly sources provide valid information.   College professors and publishers of peer-review articles often require citations from scholarly sources.

What Are Non-Scholarly Sources?

Non-Scholarly sources include conventional magazines, popular books, and articles.   Your own knowledge, personal experiences, preferences, beliefs, and feelings are also a non-scholarly source of information.   Information from non-scholarly sources might be unacceptable for certain types of college and graduate school assignments, and for publishers of peer-reviewed articles.   As a result, it is important to understand the difference between scholarly and non-scholarly sources.

General and Non-General Sources of Information, and Ambiguous Cases, in Relation to Citation Requirements

Three Categories of Information, and

Citation Requirements

In this section, I am dividing information into three categories, which relate to citation requirements.   I am calling these categories 1) <u>non-general information</u>, 2) <u>general information,</u> which is often referred to as <u>common knowledge,</u> and the 3) <u>ambiguous case</u>.   Information in these categories can be found in scholarly and non-scholarly sources.   <u>This will be clarified, with the definitions and explanations, presented under the following three subheadings.</u>

What is Non-General Information?

Based on the way I am using the terminology, <u>non-general information</u>, is comprised of original ideas, which are associated with specific author.   Sometimes the sources are created by a number of authors, or an organization.   Over time non-general information, **might** be widely distributed, and fit the category of general information (common knowledge within the discipline).

Information that falls into the <u>non-general category</u> **always requires citations**, when used in your paper.   This is because you will be using the **<u>original ideas</u>** that were created by the authors, **even if you are not actually paraphrasing, or quoting.**

What is General Information?

<u>General Information,</u> (common knowledge) is information that is **widely distributed**, and is **presented in books and articles**

without citations.   General information can be divided into two subcategories, as presented in the following two paragraphs.

The first, I am calling **common sense knowledge,** which is information that most people are familiar with, in our society.   This includes the basic information needed to survive, linguistic knowledge, and skills.   Basic mathematics and reasoning skills also fall under this category.   Other examples are the names of elected officials, and knowledge of commonly used tools and products.

The second subcategory I am calling, discipline-based information, which is **common knowledge within a discipline**. This is comprised of terminology, concepts, theories, and other material that is **widely known within a discipline**, and is presented in books and **articles, without citations.**   This includes well-known historical events, widely distributed scientific, technical, and mathematical information.   Much of the material presented in textbooks is in this subcategory, especially if they are at an introductory level.   However, **some** of the information in most textbooks involves non-general information.   This material can be easily identified, because it will have citations.

The concepts presented in the above paragraphs provide useful guidelines on when **not** to provide citations.   However, instructors or publishers often have their own citation rules for **general information (common knowledge).**

I never encountered any instructor that required citations for

<u>common sense knowledge,</u> unless the student was paraphrasing or quoting from a specific book or article.   However, **some** instructors might require citations for **<u>discipline-based information,</u>** (**<u>common knowledge within a discipline</u>**) even if you are **not** paraphrasing or quoting.

The instructors that I had did **not want** citations for any type of general information, including the **<u>discipline-based information</u>** from textbooks, unless the student was quoting or paraphrasing.   For example, if a student studied a chapter from a textbook, comprised of **<u>discipline-based information,</u>** and then wrote about the theories and concepts he learned, **<u>without paraphrasing or quoting</u>**, no citations were required.   However, if a student studied a journal article, on a new scientific discovery, and wrote about the material she learned, without paraphrasing or quoting, at least one **citation was required**.   This is because the journal article in this example is non-general information.

Ambiguous Cases, and Citation Requirements

When you are not certain about the necessity of acknowledging a source, what is the best strategy?   When you are dealing with uncertainty or ambiguous situations always provide citations.   If you provide a citation that is unnecessary there usually is no penalty.   However, if you do not provide citations in the ambiguous case, you might be accused of plagiarism, if your instructor or publisher believes it is required.

The idea to keep in mind is authorities may have different opinions about what constitutes general information.   In addition, when a student initially studies a subject, it can be difficult to determine what is considered general information, and what is considered non-general information, which require citations.   Thus, when in doubt acknowledge the source.

Another example of an ambiguous case, involves a paper that was written without quotes or paraphrases, but the paper appears to have paraphrases from the book you studied.   If your work might appear to have paraphrases, in the mind of your instructor or publisher, use citations as if you intentionally paraphrased.

The Utility of the Above Concepts

What is the Primary Purpose of Citations?

A primary purpose of citations is to differentiate, the material the student obtained from sources, and the material the student created.   Generally, when a student writes a paper, some of the material is the result of his writing style, arguments, and creative thinking.   A portion of the material may be from sources that contain common knowledge that relates to a discipline.   This might not require citations, if you are not quoting or paraphrasing.   (Some instructors might require citations, for certain categories of general information.)   The remainder of the material may be from sources that require citations.   This can involve arguments, experiments, philosophy, and concepts from

one or more authors. This information might be presented with quotes and/or by paraphrasing.

This can involve a paper that contains your own thesis, which you support with information you obtained from your sources. It can also involve interpreting or reinterpreting in your own way the ideas, theories, or concepts, you obtained from your sources.

The idea to keep in mind is citations are used to distinguish your ideas and words, from the ideas and words you obtained from your sources. Your readers, especially instructors, want to know what ideas and information is your original work, and what ideas and information came from your sources.

Additional Utility of Citations

A major utility of citations is to provide proof or credibility for the material the student presents in her paper. Citations are useful in evaluating the credibility of any type of work, especially if it is written by a non-expert. In such a case, the reader can check the validity of the written statements, by accessing the sources the student used.

Citations can be used to prove, or reinforce the student's thesis and/or sequence of reasoning presented in a paper. In this regard, a student can also use their own experimental evidence, formal logic, or mathematical reasoning to prove their thesis or sequence of reasoning.

<u>The Utility of Paraphrasing</u>

Paraphrasing has practical utility.   Paraphrasing in notes and in papers can facilitate learning.   When a student paraphrases in a writing assignment, an instructor can assess the student's comprehension of the material.

Paraphrasing and simplifying technical or scientific material can be used to create an article that is easily understood by the general population.

Paraphrasing can be used as a technique for deciphering the meaning of material that is difficult to understand.   This can involve text that is poorly written, essays written in an archaic writing style, and highly technical documents.   This technique involves writing a paper, specifically to comprehend the difficult material, with a <u>word by word paraphrase</u>.   This involves an attempt to decipher the meaning of each word and phrase, with the goal of replacing the poorly understood sentences, with your own wording.   With this technique, you can initially leave sections of the material in your paper blank, if you cannot decipher the meaning.   At a later point in time, you can return to the blank sections, and attempt to decipher the material.   This process is the type of decoding, and once part of the material becomes comprehensible, it may be easy to fill in the sections you left blank.

<mark><u>Commentary and Opinion</u></mark>

My Opinion

The above, especially paraphrasing, quoting, and using sources of information to write papers, functions as an effective learning strategy. However, this learning strategy is overused to the extent that it may actually interfere with learning and creativity.

Creativity is a complex skill, which involves synthesizing original sentences, paragraphs, and papers, with original ideas. It does not involve the rephrasing of material created by others. It involves presenting original ideas, supported by logic, mathematical reasoning, experimentation, as well as personal knowledge and experience.

We live in a society that is the product of creativity, not paraphrasing, and not quoting. Specifically the computers we work with, the buildings we live in, and the beds we sleep in, are all the result of creativity. Everywhere we look, every product we buy, the clothes we wear, all represent creativity. The focus should be on creativity, which is perhaps easier said than done.

From Other Authors: Additional and Supporting Information, and Alternative Perspectives, for this Chapter

Instructions

If you want more information, alternative perspectives or explanations, see the following websites and videos from other authors. To access this material left click on the blue links, or the

URLs presented below.

If a link fails, enter the indicated **search phrase,** or the
*words that are displayed from the website,** into the search
engine presented on the left of each entry.   If there are many
words displayed from the website, select a few of the words that
seem most useful for a search phrase.   Then, carry out a
conventional web-based search.

*Note the words from the website are indicated with **Words
on website:**   If you examine the following entries all of the above
will be clarified.

Webpages from other Authors, to Support and Supplement The Concepts and other Material in this Chapter

www.Google.com Search phrase: **paraphrasing, quoting and citations, This is a Google search page, which indicates 1,380,000 results.**

www.Google.com Words on website: Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing URL is: http://goo.gl/qdRaKW

www.Google.com Words on website: MLA Citation Style 7th Edition URL is: http://goo.gl/n4kXZF

www.Google.com Words on website: Examples of Using Direct Quotes, URL is http://goo.gl/rGngiU

www.Google.com Words on website: Rules in Writing – Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Citing: *How to Write Honestly, Creatively, and Without Getting Into Trouble Thomas A. Bryer, Ph.D*. URL is http://goo.gl/bMmwtR

www.Google.com **Words on website: Tips on Paraphrasing URL is http://goo.gl/sfVpkt**

Videos from other Authors, to Support and Supplement The Concepts and other Material in this Chapter

When you left click on a **link** for a video, a webpage will open, and the video will start automatically in most cases.   The webpage that opens with the video will usually have 10 or more **RELEVANT** videos.   If the video does not start automatically, and the webpage opens, left click on the link provided by the author of the video. This link is usually in the center of the screen.

www.Video.Google.com   Search phrase: **paraphrasing, quoting and citations, This is a Google video search page, which indicates About 1,410,000 results.**

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: Quoting vs. Paraphrasing - MLA Style, URL is: http://youtu.be/0KkTzOjVKuc**

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: MLA Style Using Microsoft Word, URL is: http://youtu.be/0EsMd70YwCk**

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: MLA Works Cited page in Word 2010, URL is: http://youtu.be/G4deiZvUJ3U**

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: Summarizing, Paraphrasing, Quoting, and Citing, URL is: http://youtu.be/FE9hdCTgAy0**

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: APA Format: In-text Citations, Quotations, and Plagiarism, URL is: http://youtu.be/1FrJeRrLYe0**

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: MLA In-Text Citations,**

URL is: http://youtu.be/XLmmNQDbnHk

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: A guide to Harvard Referencing, URL is: http://youtu.be/NDgqqPvMn0U**

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: Harvard Referencing Part 3 - Citing and referencing, URL is: http://youtu.be/IY5QGPjOGa0**

www.Video.Google.com **Words on website: Harvard Referencing Part 4 - Quoting and Paraphrasing, URL is: http://youtu.be/ed7n63JFY6M**

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