**Credible Sources**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Q: What is a peer-reviewed article?**

P*eer review* is an academic term for quality control. It means a research article was expert approved to help ensure we are not reading only opinion or false information.

A peer-reviewed article is one that was published in an academic journal and before it was published, a panel of reviewers (the author’s peers) approved the content as scholarly. The reviewers looked for author credentials, research methods, etc.

Papers published in journals are expert-approved and so they are called *scholarly articles* and they are viewed as the most authoritative sources of information for college-level research papers.

**Q: What is the difference between Scholarly and Popular Sources?**

A: Scholarly Sources refer to peer-reviewed articles that were written by experts (in a particular field) and the material was peer-reviewed by other experts prior to publication. Popular Sources, on the other hand, refer to information that is found on the Internet, usually on ad-based sites and include general news, business, educational, and entertainment publications.

***Scholarly Sources***

Scholarly work will thoroughly cite all source materials used and it has been subjected to "peer review" prior to publication. This means that independent experts in the field review the publication to check the accuracy and validity of its claims.

You can find scholarly articles using your library’s database or by going to GOOGLE SCHOLAR. Scholarly work is written *by* experts *for* experts (and used for student research), peer-reviewed prior to publication, and is based on original research or intellectual inquiry. Scholarly sources are not written for easy reading, they are for the pros, but students use the articles to argue and develop points for their research. Also, most scholarly articles today have sections that present findings and discuss outcomes.

***Popular Sources***

While many of your research projects will require you to read articles published in scholarly journals, there is great information to be found from popular publications.

You can find everyday (popular) articles using regular search engines (Bing, Google, Duck Duck Go) or by going to news sites or direct websites.

Examples of popular sources include general news, business and entertainment publications such as *Time Magazine, Business Weekly, and Vanity Fair*. Note that special interest publications, which are not specifically written for an academic audience, are also considered "popular" - i.e., *National Geographic, Scientific American, Psychology Today*, *Verywellmind, Explore Psychology,* etc. Popular sources are helpful because they can explain terms and concepts in ways that people easily understand, whereas scholarly articles were not written for everyone to read. However, popular sources might mean that you are not using a credible source for your points made. Some of the material is robust, but it is not defined as scholarly.

**Q: Can I use “old” articles or sources for supporting my points in a paper?**

A: Sources used should be current, which means published within the last five years. It depends on the topic and some research is more time-sensitive. For example, teenagers today have different technology and so if I use an article that examined teens from the 1980s or 1990s, the outcomes might not apply (generalize) to teens of today. However, some research is viewed as a landmark study or it has been used to build theory, and so when referring to that research you will see the older dates. For example, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs was published in 1943, Pavlov’s work with dogs occurred in 1902, and Laird presented facial hypothesis feedback in 1974.

**Q: What is APA Style?**

APA style just refers to the formatting rules we follow when writing a paper. It is not a foreign language and some students make it more difficult than it has to be. The rules that we follow help ensure that all student papers have a uniform look. The font used is Times New Roman size 12, margins are one-inch, and we double-space the text. Some of the requirements are for function, for example the hanging indent makes it easier to find an author on the reference page. The American Psychological Association (APA) style is found in the titled the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

**Q: What is Plagiarism?**

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary the term to *plagiarize* means to steal and/or pass off someone else’s ideas or words as your own.

Plagiarism occurs when students use material without crediting the source. This can sometimes happen on accident – but sometimes students intentionally copy.

*Do not cut and paste from the Internet (or from an article) without properly citing the source.* ECPI sometimes uses a service called “Turn it In” to check for originality in student papers. There is a huge database that keeps track of what is written on the Internet and in papers. You will be accused of plagiarism if you “cut and paste” information and do not give credit to the original author.

You need to reword the material (paraphrase) and then credit the source with an in-text citation to tell us the source (author, year). Or you need to put the information in quotes (if it cannot be paraphrased without losing meaning) and use an in-text citation to tell us the source (author, year, page number). In order to prevent plagiarism, use citations.

**Q: How do I cite the textbook in my assignments?**

A: This is how the text is referenced on your Reference page.

Spielman, R. M. (2017). *Psychology.* (Rice University: Open Stax). Retrieved from: https://openstax.org/details/psychology

The in-text citation if paraphrasing from the text is (Spielman, 2017). Here is an example of paraphrased (reworded) material from text:

Understanding human behavior is complex because there are many factors, like biological, environmental, and experiential variables, which impacts how people think and behave (Spielman, 2017).

Or:

According to Spielman (2017) critical thinking is a skill, which involves learning how to understand people, situations, and issues with objectivity. When we critically think, we do not jump to conclusions based on bias and opinion; instead, we gather information, and become more aware of bias and then we try to draw conclusions based on evidence.

**Example #1 Scholarly Article:**

Taylor, E. W., & Snyder, M. J. (2012). A critical review of research on transformative learning theory, 2006-2010. *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice,* 37-55.

Researchers reviewed numerous studies that explored transformative learning. A consistent finding across studies showed that the entire person is involved in the learning process and in adult education this means learning is enhanced when students have access to small group activities and experiential learning activities (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). Adults need to be engaged in the learning process just like younger students do.

The review noted that most studies focused on the experience for women, but both genders might find useful tips. Taylor and Snyder (2012) argued that research on the female experience in adult education was not properly explored (but there were plenty of studies about men) and so findings helped fill in a gap. However, just because there is a gap in an area in the literature it does not mean that gap needs to be filled. We must always have an argument for why research was needed.

**Example #2 Scholarly Article:**

Koukourikos, K., Tzeha, L., Pantelidou, P., & Tsaloglidou, A. (2015). The importance of play during hospitalization of children. *Materia socio-medica*, *27*(6), 438.

*Example of using this source in your paper:* When children in the hospital were allowed to play, they experienced a sense of connection to the familiar environment of home and everyday life (Koukourikos et al., 2015). Play therapy can help hospitalized children maintain physical and emotional wellness. Allowing children to play in the hospital is a powerful tool in the hands of healthcare professionals.