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Discuss briefly the need for citation and referencing, and describe the main characteristics of the Harvard System of Referencing, the style favoured by this University

Introduction

A perusal of academic articles will show that citations and referencing is a common feature, and there are several kinds of citations and referencing used. This raises the question as to why academic articles are so particular to use citations references.

The Role and Importance of Citations and References

The role of citation and referencing is in the ethics, integrity and professionalism attached to academics. In academic papers the work or ideas of others are used and if due acknowledgement is not given to the borrowed work or ideas it reflects on the ethics, integrity, and professionalism of the author of the academic paper, giving rise to the charge of plagiarism (Academic Integrity).

Gray et al 2008, p. 114, term the use of proper use of citation and referencing as “ academic integrity”. The reputation of a piece of academic work lies in proper use of citations and references. Any author has a right over the ideas and words present in their work and this right deems that it is morally important to their ideas and work are appropriately attributed, when used by others (Gray et al, 2008).

When accurate citation and referencing is done it reflects the integrity of the author, for it shows that the author recognizes the sources and acknowledges these sources. This leads to the importance of referencing in letting others find the original sources used in the work (REFERENCING,

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2000). This is why citations and references may be considered as signposts and acknowledgements. The signpost perspective arises from showing the location of the source, while the acknowledgement perspective arises from accepting the indebtedness to the source (Hunter, 2008).

Hunter 2008, p. 1 gives three reasons why citations and references are important, which are “ ideas are the currency of academia”, “ failing to cite violates the rights of the person who originated the idea and “ academics needs to be able to trace the geneology of ideas”.

Referencing in an academic work demonstrates the quality of the work, through the range of ideas that are used and acknowledged and does away with possibility of any charge of plagiarism (University of South Australia, 2007). The quality of work thus becomes another important contribution of proper referencing in a piece of academic work, as it reflects the thoroughness and the diligence of the author and through that contributes to the reputation or impression of the academic work (Glick, 2007).

There are different formats for referencing and citations (Hunter, 2008). The Hard System is one format for referencing and citations.

The Harvard System

The Harvard System uses an author-date system. There are two places in an academic work that citations and references are used, which are in the text of the work as in text references or citations and at the end of the work. It is in the in text references that the Harvard System uses the author-date system, while the end of the work more details of the source is provided (University of South Australia, 2004). The Harvard System places an emphasis on the author by starting with the author, where available in

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references and citations (Monash University, 2008). In the Harvard System the in text reference is author-date system, where the surname of the author and the date of publication are entered and in the end of text referencing the list of references is arranged in alphabetic order in terms of the surname of the author, when the author is available. When the author is not available, like in some Internet sources, the first alphabet of the title is taken into consideration. The Harvard System is commonly used in the field of education, because students can easily use it correctly and because of the manner in which the details are presented making it easy to find the sources (School of Education and Professional Development).

The usefulness of the Harvard System can be understood when compared to the other commonly used author-date system of APA and the numeric MLA system.

The numeric MLA system uses numbers for in text references in order of outside sources, which is reflected in the numbers of the end of text works cited page (The Owl at Purdue, 2008). The APA system follows the Harvard System author-date format for in text references, but with less emphasis on the author in the end text references (North Michigan University, 2008).

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