

Facilitator Notes

# Citing References

These notes accompany the PowerPoint presentation of the same title by Barbara Gastel.

This module normally would accompany modules on writing other parts of a journal article.

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| Module Title | Citing References |
| Course title (or analogous information) | This module normally would be part of a workshop or course focusing largely on writing and publishing journal articles on research. |
| Unit Title | Not applicable |
| No. of Unit | Not applicable |
| Session Day/Time | Not applicable |
| Length of Session | This module typically would run about 30 to 45 minutes, depending in part on the amount of discussion. |
| Aim | This module is intended mainly to emphasize to participants the importance of citing references appropriately and to provide guidance in that regard. |
| Learning Outcomes | By the end of this module, participants will be able to (1) state the functions of references, (2) say why references are important, (3) follow principles of reference formatting and citation placement, and (4) explain what reference management software is. |
| Facilitator Profile | Ideally, this workshop would be facilitated by someone who has experience with research writing (for example, as an author of journal articles or as an editor), because such an individual can enrich the content with examples from his or her experience. However, a less experienced facilitator also can present the module, as the combination of PowerPoint slides and facilitator notes provides sufficient information to do so. Also, the module can be presented jointly by a facilitator and a co-facilitator who provides additional commentary. |
| Participant Profile | This module is primarily for early-career researchers who are starting to publish their work. It also may be useful to mid-career researchers who wish to improve their writing or increase their ability to mentor others in research writing. In addition, it may be helpful to some editors and writing instructors. |
| Pre-workshop Activities | (1) If possible, each participant should bring a set of instructions to authors. Ideally, the instructions should be for a journal in which the participant hopes to publish. If at least some participants will not or might not bring instructions to authors, the facilitator should, if possible, bring some instructions to authors or links thereto.  (2) If possible, each participant should bring a journal article reporting research in his or her field. Ideally, it should report research related to the participant’s research and should be in a journal in which the participant hopes to publish. If at least some participants will not or might not bring articles, the facilitator should, if possible, bring some articles or some links to articles.  (3) If participants are currently writing journal articles, they should bring drafts of their articles. |
| Room Layout | Ideally, this module will be presented in a room layout facilitating interaction—for example, with several small tables, with tables in a U configuration, or with a conference table. However, this module also can be presented in a traditional classroom or a lecture hall. |
| Number of Participants | For optimum discussion, the number of participants should be limited to about 10–15. However, the module also can reasonably delivered to about 25 participants. |
| Files and Materials | PowerPoint file: 10\_Citing References  Examples: It can be helpful for the facilitator to show examples of reference lists and of paragraphs containing citations. It may be ideal to choose examples that are in some participants’ fields. |
| Visual Aids and Resources | Computer with PowerPoint; projector for PowerPoint presentation; Internet connection if possible |
| Potential Embellishments of the PowerPoint | To keep the file small, the presentation consists almost solely of text. Images can be added to make it more visually appealing. For example, decorative images can be inserted between sections to signal a change of subtopic and provide visual relief. Also, relevant images can be added to selected slides if desired.  If desired, the facilitator can divide the material on a given slide into more than one slide or can format some slides for progressive disclosure, in which items on a slide are revealed one by one. |
| Learning methods and activities | The following notes may help facilitators to (1) elaborate on the content of some slides and (2) elicit group participation at suitable times. In the PowerPoint presentation, similar notes appear in the notes sections below the respective slides.   * (Slide 1 is a title slide.) * Slide 2 (“Overview”)   + Note the topics that the module will address.   + Note the module’s overall aim, which is stated earlier in this facilitator’s guide. (Feel free, of course, to frame it in the way that the group is likely to find most relevant.) * Slide 3 (“Why have references?”)   + Suggestion: Have groups of two or three participants apiece list functions of references. Then elicit items from the full group.   + An alternative: Especially if the group is quite small, perhaps just elicit items from the full group. * Slide 4 (“Functions of References”)   + Go through this list. If the group identified other functions, perhaps note them.   + Perhaps illustrate some points in this list with examples from your experience or with hypothetical examples.   + Perhaps ask the group members whether as readers they have ever used references for the last stated purpose. * Slide 5 (“References: Importance of Accuracy”)   + Perhaps ask group members whether they ever have had trouble finding an article because a reference listing it was inaccurate. Alternatively or in addition, perhaps briefly tell about a frustrating experience of your own in that regard.   + Emphasize the importance of accurately representing the content that is cited. Perhaps note from your experience an example in which an author distorted what a previous author said. Or perhaps ask the group for such examples.   + Also emphasize the importance of ensuring that all elements in a reference (authors, title, etc) are accurate. * Slide 6 (“Another Reason Your References Should Be Accurate”)   + Note that to identify potential peer reviewers for a paper, journal editors often look at the paper’s reference list.   + Note that inaccurate references may cause a reviewer to question whether the authors are careful researchers.   + If you have been a peer reviewer and received a paper in which your work was inaccurately cited, perhaps say how you felt. * Slide 7 (“Formats”)   + Emphasize that different journals have different formats both for citing references in text and for presenting references in the reference list.   + Perhaps mention that different fields of research sometimes have different conventions (traditions) in this regard. * Slide 8 (“A Reminder”)   + Note that journals’ instructions to authors almost always say how to cite and list references. Urge participants to follow these instructions. Note that it also can be helpful to use articles in the journal as models regarding citation of references.   + Perhaps note an instance in which you or another author needed to reformat citations or references because a paper wasn’t accepted by one journal and therefore was being submitted to another journal.   + As an example of what not to do, perhaps note the student who cut and pasted references from the reference lists of several articles in different journals, thus ending up with a list having different references in different formats. * Slide 9 (“Citation Management Software”)   + In case some participants might not be aware of citation management software, briefly say what such software does (second the third bullets of the slide).   + Ask whether any participants have experience using citation management software. Perhaps have one or more participants briefly describe their experience. If you have such experience, perhaps briefly describe it.   + Note that even if citation management software is used, one still must proofread the citations and references and correct any errors.   + If participants are at an institution offering instruction in using citation management software, note the availability of such instruction.   + In some courses or workshops, it may be worthwhile to include a module providing introductory instruction in using citation management software. Either the facilitator or a guest speaker may present such a model. * Slide 10 (“Placement of Citations”)   + The principle to emphasize here is that for clarity, each reference should go immediately after what it refers to.   + It might be noted that students sometimes mistakenly place all the references for a given paragraph at the end of the paragraph, rather than inserting the references at appropriate places throughout. * Slide 11 (“Other Advice on References”)   + Regarding the first bulleted item: Perhaps have groups of two or three participants discuss this question and then have open discussion. It may be noted that some ways to try to obtain items not freely accessible through journals’ websites are the following: consult a librarian at your institution (which may have access to the journal, for example through INASP), check the institutional repository (if any) at the author’s institution, see whether a copy can be accessed from the author’s website, email the author to request a copy, and see whether a colleague has a copy.   + The other items listed on this slide might have come up already but are worth reemphasizing. * Slide 12 (“Exercise”)   + Have the participants address the questions in small groups, using points included in the presentation. Then bring the full group together to discuss responses and ask questions.   + If some parts of the exercise are not relevant, of course omit them. For example, if participants are not bringing drafts of papers, delete the third bulleted item. * Slide 13 (“In Conclusion”)   + If time permits, include a question-and-answer session before ending.   + Perhaps do one or both of the following:     - Have participants note points to remember.     - Summarize the session.   + If the workshop or course will include later modules, note the topic of the next module. Perhaps also note more generally what will follow.   + Perhaps encourage group members to share points from this session with others. |