The Writing Center & Reading/Study Skills Lab presents:

**Tip Sheet on: In-Text Citation (APA)**

The American Psychological Association (APA) uses its own form of source documentation. APA style documentation is used in fields such as the psychology, sociology, nursing, anthropology and business.

English language expert Diana Hacker, English teacher and author of several handbooks, offers helpful information in *A Writer’s Reference* on in-text citation for research papers.

Hacker (1999) notes, “The American Psychological Association recommends an author/date style of in-text citations…. For direct quotations, a page number is given as well” (p. 365).

These examples can be seen in Hacker’s *A Writer’s Reference*.

**Author named in a signal phrase** – Normally, one should introduce the material being cited with a signal phrase that includes the author’s name. This method prepares the reader’s for the source and allows for brevity.

According to Hart (1996), researchers took terrace’s conclusions seriously, and funding for language experiments soon declined.

**Author not named in a signal phrase** – The author’s last name must appear in parentheses along with the date of publication separated by a comma if they are not named in a signal phrase.

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**Two Authors** – If your source has two authors, name them both each time you cite in a signal phrase or include them in the parentheses separating the names with an “&” instead of “and.”

Patterson and Linden (1981) agreed that the gorilla Koko acquired language more slowly than a normal speaking child.

Koko acquired language more slowly than a normal speaking child (Patterson & Linden, 1981).

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Three to five authors – Name all authors in a signal phrase or parentheses the first time you cite the course. Afterwards you may use just the first author’s name then “et al.”

Researchers found a marked improvement in the computer skills of students who took part in the program (Levy, Bertrand, Muller, Vining, & Majors, 1997)  
-- in subsequent citations:  
(Levy at al., 1997)

Six or more authors – Only use the first author’s name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or parenthetical reference.

Better measurements of sophistication in computer use could be obtained through more thorough testing (Blili et al., 1996).

Unknown author – If the author is not given, either use one or two words from the title in a signal phrase or parentheses.

Massachusetts state and municipal governments have initiated several programs to improve public safety, including community policing and after-school activities (“Innovations,” 1997).

Web site – Put complete address in parentheses.

Authors with same last name – If you have authors with the same last name use first initials in the signal phrase or parenthetical reference to avoid confusion.


MCC offers a Writing Center & Reading/Study Skills Lab at both the Bedford and Lowell campuses. Tutoring is available weekdays and some evenings, at no charge. Schedules are posted on the doors. Drop in or make an appointment.

Bedford: AR 214, Tel: 781-280-3727 or 3728.
Lowell: City Campus Room 406, Tel: 978-656-3364 or 3365.