11. Incorporating Research

One of the most important issues to consider when incorporating research is using the information correctly. Many writers make the mistake of manipulating the text or taking it out of context. Make sure that you understand the meaning of the whole before you use a part.

Original Source

“While national surveys have documented a significant decline in the use of other drugs by high school seniors and college-age youths, there have been only modest declines in the numbers reporting binge drinking. Teenagers and young adults drink alcoholic beverages at about the same rates they did 5 years ago. Binge drinking increases the risk for alcohol-related injury, especially for young people, who often combine alcohol with other high risk activities, such as impaired driving.” (9 June 2003 <http://www.health.org/govpubs/phd627/binge.aspx>.

Misuse of Quote

Teenagers must be getting the message that drugs and alcohol can cause many problems for them because the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that “national surveys have documented a significant decline in the use of . . . drugs by high school seniors and college-age youths.”

Considering the overall point that the U.S. Department of Health is trying to make, the quote is taken out of context. The original source discusses the problem of binge drinking, but the author claims (incorrectly) that drug and alcohol use are both declining.

To use this quote correctly, giving the information as it was intended, the writer must change the argument. This incorporated research does not support the decline of alcohol use among minors; rather, the study reveals that drug use has declined while binge drinking has remained nearly the same. Therefore, the writer must either find other sources to support his/her claim accurately, or the writer must change the argument to discuss the lack of decline of alcohol use.

Correct Use of Quote

Binge drinking is still a problem among teenagers. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that “[t]eenagers and young adults drink alcoholic beverages at about the same rates they did 5 years ago,” which, in turn creates many of the same problems and dangers that all substance abuse causes.
The Oreo Cookie Method
The correct use example also demonstrates the importance of “leading in” to your quote and “following up” your quote with your own writing, what we call The Oreo Cookie Method. Think of your words as the cookie and the quote as the cream filling. Your words should always surround quotes to provide proper contextualization and explanation of the research you are incorporating. Just “plopping” quotes into your essay will confuse readers; you must show them how the research connects to your argument.

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Correctly incorporating research will prevent you from misleading your reader and provide the necessary context your reader needs to follow your argument with ease.