

Writing Tip Sheet # 1

Criminology Department, VIU

A. Repetitive Citations

When you quote the works of others, avoid repetitively citing the same source.

Incorrect	Correct
One of the problems with understanding the scope and nature of organized crime is that there is little consensus about the meaning of the term (Gabor, 2003). Failing to agree on what constitutes organized crime makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts (Gabor, 2003).	Gabor (2003) argues that of the problems with understanding the scope and nature of organized crime is that there is little consensus about the meaning of the term. Failing to agree on what constitutes organized crime makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts.

B. Citing a Guest Speaker or Other Personal Communication

Suppose your professor invites an RCMP Sergeant come to talk to your class about crime prevention. He uses a PowerPoint presentation and you take notes during the lecture. In your term paper, you decide to use some of the ideas from his presentation. How would you cite him? The correct way is shown in the examples below:

One of the more innovative strategies for preventing repeat youth crime in the mid-Vancouver Island area is based on “restorative justice” (RCMP Sgt. Bruce Willis, personal communication, February 19, 2008).

Note that the institutional affiliation (RCMP) and rank of the speaker is included in the citation. This tells your reader that the person you cite has some authority on the topic.

Citing your professor in a term paper should be used very sparingly, if at all. For example, if your professor makes a claim about the health effects of marijuana, ask him or her where they got their information. Once they provide you with their source, go directly to that source and cite it.

Avoid	Use
Marijuana is not generally harmful to the human body except for about 3% of chronic users (Professor Maxwell Smart, personal communication, April 1, 2008).	Marijuana is not generally harmful to the human body except for about 3% of chronic users (Joy, Watson, & Benson, 1999)

References

- Gabor, T. (2003). Assessing the effectiveness of organized crime control strategies: A review of the literature. Retrieved January 3, 2007, from <http://www.canada-justice.ca/en/ps/rs/rep/2005/rr05-5/rr05-5.pdf>
- Joy, J. E., Watson, S. J., & Benson, J. A. (1999). *Marijuana and medicine : assessing the science base*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences.