Paraphrasing & Plagiarism

Anytime you use the ideas or work of other people you need to give them credit by citing them and referencing their work. It is very important that you understand how to cite and paraphrase other’s work because if you do not understand this you might commit plagiarism without intending to do so.

To illustrate some of the ideas in citing others, consider the following paragraph that is taken from Crites, Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson (1995). This paragraph is describing a brain potential called the LPP that is larger to inconsistent stimuli (e.g., a liked stimulus that was proceeded by disliked stimuli) than to consistent stimuli (e.g., a liked stimulus that was proceeded by liked stimuli). Crites et al. (1995) showed that the brain potential was not affected when people were told to lie about how much they liked certain stimuli (e.g., say that they disliked a stimulus that they actually liked).

In this study, a distinction was made between the evaluative judgment (categorization) and the response components underlying an attitude. The participants' task was to categorize each stimulus in a six-stimulus sequence as either positive, neutral, or negative and to either report accurately or misreport the valence of certain evaluatively inconsistent stimuli. As Cacioppo et al. (1993, 1994) found, the LPP evoked by evaluatively inconsistent stimuli was larger than the LPP evoked by evaluatively consistent stimuli. This study extends our earlier findings by showing that the amplitude of the LPP varies as a function of evaluative categorization rather than attitude reports. Instructions to misreport the valence of stimuli led to the instructed changes in attitude report, but these attitude-report instructions did not significantly change the amplitude or the scalp distribution of the LPP to these stimuli. (pp. 1003-1004)

There are two ways that you can cite someone:

1) You can summarize their findings, ideas, implications of their findings, etc. in your own words and give the credit for the idea. This is called paraphrasing. Here are two examples of doing this:

Research reveals that the LPP is not affected by instructions to lie (Crites et al., 1995).

Crites et al. (1995) showed that brain activity can be used to assess attitudes...
even when people do not accurately report their attitudes.

2) You can quote a person directly and use their own words. Here is an example of doing this:

Crites et al. (1995) found that “instructions to misreport the valence of stimuli led to the instructed changes in attitude report, but these attitude-report instructions did not significantly change the amplitude or the scalp distribution of the LPP to these stimuli” (pp. 1003-1004).

When you quote someone directly, you give the page number of the quotation and generally put their words in quotations marks – there are some circumstances when you do not do use quotation marks and you should look at the APA Publication Manual (2001) for the rules on when to use quotation marks.

Except in very rare circumstances, it is always better to put things in your own words and not use direct quotes. Most scientists and writers could go their entire careers without every using a direct quote. **BECAUSE PARAPHRASING OR PUTTING SOMEONE'S IDEAS IN YOUR OWN WORDS IS ALMOST ALWAYS BETTER (99.9% OF THE TIME), DIRECT QUOTES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN THIS COURSE. YOU WILL LOSE POINTS ON YOUR ASSIGNMENTS IF YOU USE DIRECT QUOTES.**

**Plagiarism**

All of the passages below are examples of plagiarism. Please look at each example, compare it to the original, and decide why it is an example of plagiarism.

**Example 1**

Instructions to misreport the valence of stimuli led to the instructed changes in attitude report, but these attitude-report instructions did not significantly change the amplitude or the scalp distribution of the LPP to these stimuli (Crites et al. 1995).

**Example 2**
The late positive brain potential evoked by evaluatively inconsistent stimuli was larger than the potential evoked by evaluatively consistent stimuli (Crites et al. 1995).

Example 3
Crites et al (1995) had participants categorize each stimulus as either positive, neutral, or negative and report accurately or misreport the valence of certain inconsistent stimuli. They found that the LPP evoked by inconsistent stimuli was larger than the LPP evoked by consistent stimuli.

Example 4
The subjects' task was to evaluate each word in a six-word sequence as either positive, neutral, or negative and to either report accurately report or lie about the valence of certain evaluatively inconsistent words. This study showed that the amplitude of the brain potential varies as a function of evaluation and not attitude reports (Crites et al. 1995).

Example 5
Previous research has shown that a brain response can be used to investigate attitudes because it is larger when an attitude differs from previous attitudes. In addition, the research showed that the brain response could be used to investigate attitudes even when people lied about their attitudes.

References