DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITY STUDIES
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

REQUIREMENTS FOR
ASSIGNMENT WRITING,
REPORT WRITING, AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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LITERATURE SEARCH

ASSIGNMENT PREPARATION

Write out the questions before beginning your assignment and highlight the key words contained in it. This will ensure that you understand the full implication of the question.

The following is one procedure for obtaining and selecting reference material for your assignment.

1. Begin with the text book. Read the relevant chapters.
2. Refer to texts named during the lectures.
3. Go to the library and look for associated readings. Make sure that some references are from recent publications (eg within the last 10 years).
   - Use the Voyager Information System to look up the topic (go to http://voyager.flinders.edu.au/ and click on “Search Catalogue”), and locate other writers. Also search for authors mentioned in material you have found so far.
   - Locate the text on the shelves. Look for texts on your topic in the same section of the library.
   - Search through those journals that may have relevant articles.
4. Using the material obtained, look up authors cited in this literature. Go to the references section at the end of the chapter or book, and locate some of original sources used by that author.
5. Speak to your tutor or lecturer in the topic if you are having difficulties. (Do not use tutors or lecturers as your first source of information. Use others methods first, as outlined in this section)

THE INTERNET & WORLD WIDE WEB

Using the Internet to obtain materials and research assignments can be very useful. However, you must be aware that anyone can publish anything on the Web. Some of it is of dubious accuracy so exercise judgment in deciding what to use and what to discard. Also appreciate that the review processes conducted by editors of books and journals provide more credibility for these as sources of support for your ideas. If all of your references are from the Internet, your markers may not be impressed. However, as well as credible sources made available by reputable organisations on the Internet, you will also find many on-line Journals that have been subjected to the usual academic review processes (e.g., International Journal of Community, Disability, and Rehabilitation, http://www.ijdcr.ca/about.shtml, Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, http://www.envmed.rochester.edu/wwwvgl/jaba_articles/jaba_articles.htm).
Questions when evaluating web pages:

- You find the webpage through a sponsored link? (This may indicate commercial and therefore unbalanced content)

- What is the domain and is it appropriate for the site? E.g., the domain may be commercial (.com), educational (.edu), government (.gov), non-profit (.org) or miscellaneous (.net)

- Who or what agency wrote the page and why? Is it reputable? (Check for a statement of copyright, links to information about the agency, do a background check on the agency for information on funding sources and underlying agendas)

- Is the information from a personal webpage or blog? Look for a personal name in the URL (for example /~mbellon/). Check if the author an expert or credible source.

- Is the information current (look at the bottom of the page for the date it was created or last updated)

- What is the quality of content and layout? (If the page does not look professional, contains spelling/typo mistakes etc., you should carefully consider the author’s level of scholarship in gathering information)

(Hay, Bochner & Dungey, 2006, p84-85)

Using Flinders Library to Access Online Journal Articles

The Flinders University library web page is a useful source for finding reputable journal articles. Start by going to www.lib.flinders.edu.au. Under the Information Resources heading, click on Full Text Electronic Resources. Useful collections to start browsing may include:

- Journals@Ovid

- ProQuest

- Individual journals from Taylor and Francis Online Journals

Searching

A number of Search Engines exist to help you find materials on the Internet. At first, you might be overwhelmed by the number of possible links to follow. You can limit the time and effort by:
• turning off the images/pictures (In Internet Explorer 5, this is done in the **TOOLS** under **INTERNET OPTIONS**, click on **ADVANCED**, scroll down to **MULTIMEDIA** and make sure that **SHOW PICTURES** is not ticked)

• using several windows (the latest versions of Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator will support as many as 10 at one time), so that you can look at one while others are loading

• learn to use some of the more advanced features of the Search Engines to better define what you are looking for.

**SOME SEARCH ENGINES**
- Google at [http://www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
- Lycos at [http://www.lycos.com/](http://www.lycos.com/)

**REFERENCING**
Rules for referencing from Internet sources are still evolving. You can find information on conventions relevant to your requirements at:


Examples of referencing style are discussed further in following section

**USING DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS**
Do not use dictionary or encyclopedia definitions, for two reasons:

1. Some terms used in specialist fields are also in common usage. However, they acquire specific meaning within the field, which may not be given in a dictionary.

2. The definitions in dictionaries are basic, whereas tertiary study is aimed at more sophisticated uses of the concepts.

Definitions will be contained within the relevant literature on the topic; rely on these. You will, however, need to read widely to cover various writers' understanding of the concept. If unsure of the meaning of a word, it can be useful to look up the term in the dictionary, to ensure you are clear what the word itself means. Do not however use this in your assignment, as we are interested in the concept, not the word definition.
CITATIONS AND QUOTATIONS

A wide range of referencing styles is accepted, but please do not use footnotes as your main form of referencing unless you have clarified this with your marker.

A series of quotations is not an assignment - you must link the ideas together. All ideas that are not your own must be acknowledged (cited) in the text.

INDIRECT QUOTATIONS:

The practice of indirectly quoting from another source, commonly known as paraphrasing, is usually preferable to transposing a large slab of another writer's work. By incorporating another's ideas, but not his/her exact words, into the assignment, continuity of style is maintained, and the argument is more concise because unnecessary words are not included.

RULE: THE LOCATION OF THE CITATION MUST INDICATE WHAT PART OF YOUR MATERIAL IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THAT SOURCE.

EXAMPLES:
• Single Author: However Halle (2000) observed that....
  or
  MacDonald (2002) argues that ..
• Multiple Authors: provide the full listing of authors the first time you cite the source:
  Donnellan, Mirenda, Siegel-Causey and Strauss (2004) found that...
  subsequent reference to this work can then become: Donnellan et al. (2004)....

RULE: WHEN A WORK HAS TWO AUTHORS, ALWAYS CITE BOTH NAMES ANY TIME THE SOURCE APPEARS IN THE TEXT.

• Citation of work located in a secondary source: You wish to make reference to a study by Kretschmer (1997) cited in Quigley (1999) but were unable to locate the original source (the preferred option), cite:
  ...Kretschmer (1997) cited in Quigley (1999) identified...
  OR
  ...Kretschmer (1997, cited in Quigley, 1999) identified...
  in your Reference list you will cite Quigley (1999) not Kretschmer (1997)

RULE: YOU NEED NOT GIVE PAGE NUMBERS IF NOT QUOTING DIRECTLY.
DIRECT QUOTATIONS

SHORT QUOTATIONS: (up to 30 words)

- Incorporate the quotation into the sentence or paragraph, without disrupting the flow of the text.
- Use single/double quotation marks at the beginning and end of the quotation.
- Use same spacing as in the rest of the text.
- Acknowledge the source of the quotation in the text.

RULE: TO CITE A SPECIFIC PART OF A SOURCE, INDICATE THE DATE AND PAGE AT THE APPROPRIATE PART OF YOUR SENTENCE

EXAMPLE: Seligman (1975, p. 151) notes that ‘Early experience with control can immunize against adult helplessness ....’

RULE: QUOTE EXACTLY FROM YOUR SOURCE. IF LEAVING A FEW WORDS OUT, USE THREE FULL STOPS TO SHOW THIS.

EXAMPLE: Seligman (1975, p. 151) notes that, ‘Early experience ... can immunize against adult helplessness ...’

RULE: WHEN ADDING INFORMATION TO A QUOTE, DO SO IN SQUARE BRACKETS.

EXAMPLE: Seligman (1975, p. 151) notes that ‘Early experience with control [of the environment] can immunize against adult helplessness.’

LONG QUOTATIONS: (more than 30 words)

- Do not use quotation marks.
- Indent the quotation from the remainder of the text. The quote can be in italics.
- Use single line spacing for quotation.
- The source of the quotation is acknowledged immediately following the quote.

A very long quotation is likely to contain some irrelevancies and thus may actually obscure the point at hand.

Sometimes a very long quotation is essential to the whole presentation. If so, it is preferable that it be included in an appendix, at the end of the assignment.
REFERENCE LIST

This contains all works (and only those works) cited in the text, excluding personal communications. It does not contain all the sources you consulted in compiling your assignment, only those cited.

While the Department of Disability Studies generally follow the American Psychological Association (APA) system for referencing sources cited in assignments, it is still best to check with the lecturer-in-charge of the topic. The indentation rules for assignments change periodically. The current APA standard is to indent the first line of the reference. Generally, it is acceptable to use this system or previous systems (indent second and subsequent lines of reference; do not indent but leave space between references) as long as you are consistent.

RULE: CHECK THE OUTLINE FOR THE TOPIC AND FOLLOW THE SYSTEM USED BY THE LECTURER-IN-CHARGE.

You may well encounter instances not covered in this brief section. Check with the lecturer-in-charge or your Supervisor.

ENTIRE BOOK

With one author:


With two authors:


With several authors:


EDITED BOOK

Second and subsequent editions:


Corporate author:


CHAPTER OR SECTION IN AN EDITED BOOK


JOURNAL ARTICLE:


VIDEO:

With corporate author


MAGAZINE ARTICLE:


THE INTERNET/WORLD WIDE WEB

There is no "perfect" way to reference material from the Internet, as yet. The following are some suggestions and more ideas can be obtained from Greenhill, Fletcher, and Ciolek (2003).


EXAMPLE OF A REFERENCE LIST FOR AN ASSIGNMENT

References


RULE: REFERENCES ARE LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF FIRST AUTHOR OR, WHERE THIS IS NOT GIVEN, THE SPONSORING/CORPORATE BODY.

RULE: REFERENCES ARE NOT NUMBERED.

RULE: INTERNET REFERENCES ARE INCLUDED WITH BOOKS, JOURNALS, AND OTHER SOURCES.

RULE: OBSERVE THE CORRECT PUNCTUATION AND INDENT CONSISTENTLY. ALSO NOTE THAT TITLES MAY BE UNDERLINED OR ITALICISED (NOT BOTH). AGAIN, BE CONSISTENT, THOUGH; ITALICISE OR UNDERLINE.

RULE: WHERE YOU CANNOT FIND THE DATE OF AN ARTICLE, CHAPTER, OR OTHER SOURCE, LIST AND CITE IT AS, FOR EXAMPLE, BLOGGS (ND).
Presentation Of Assignments

**Layout For The Assignment**

The following points are suggested for the form/appearance of your assignment:

- Provide a 4 cm left hand margin on each page. This space may vary according to the way in which you are presenting your paper - If you are presenting your paper in an unbound format (stapled together top left corner) then a 3 to 4 cm left margin is appropriate. However, if you are binding it in a folder, you will have to allow 5 cm so that there is a left margin in which markers may write. The use of folders is not encouraged for assignments.

- (a) Indent the first line of each paragraph by approximately 1 cm and do not leave a space between paragraphs

- OR

- (b) Do not indent the first line and leave a space between paragraphs.

- Use 1.5 or double line spacing

- Use only one side of each page

- Preferably, the assignment should be typewritten/word processed.

- **Do not insert individual pages into plastic sleeves.**

- **Keep a copy of your assignment** - These sometimes go astray and you will save yourself much grief if you have retained a copy.

- **Headings** - Headings are usually an important feature of assignments written in Disability Studies. Headings and subheadings make explicit to the marker the organisation that you have applied to your assignment. Headings should be directly related to the question (to make it easier for the marker to see that you have answered the question and subsequently to give you a good grade!). It is wise to check with your lecturer, though, as agreement on this issue is not 100%.

**Writing Style**

- Check that you have developed an orderly sequence of ideas - headings show your focus for each section.

- Ensure that you write with precision and clarity. Avoid jargon, clichés, slang and colloquialisms.

- Take care with word choice. Avoid the following:
• *like, nice, got, get, thing*

• You can replace these with words that convey a more precise meaning.

• Ensure economy of expression. Say only what needs to be said.

• Avoid wordiness e.g. *so as to* - replace with *so that*.

• Avoid pretentious words

• *contemporaneously* - replace with *at the same time*
  *whilst* replace with *while*
  *overly* replace with *over*

• Avoid redundancies, such as the word *situation* after a noun:
  *The classroom* conveys the same meaning as *The classroom situation*.

• Check with your lecturer about his/her preference for first person (*me, my, I*) versus third person expression. If in doubt *use the third person*.

• *I think that* replace with *It seemed that*

• Avoid long rambling sentences. Vary sentence length, however, as too many short sentences can sound staccato to the reader.

**GRAMMATICAL CONVENTIONS**

**CHANGES FROM SINGULAR TO PLURAL**

You must maintain the same number throughout a sentence and paragraph.

**RULE:**  **PRONOUN AND NOUN MUST HAVE THE SAME NUMBER.**

*Example:*

**INCORRECT:** 'A child with a physical disability may be unable to lift their legs'

**CORRECT:** 'A child...may be unable to lift his or her legs,'

  or

**CORRECT:** 'Children with physical disabilities may be unable to lift their legs'.
**Rule:** Each, every, either and neither are singular, and must be followed by a singular verb or pronoun.

*Example:*  
Each of us was there.  
Neither one of us is attending.

The following words are singular:
- phenomenon, criterion, medium, datum, bacterium.

The following words are plural:
- phenomena, criteria, media, data, bacteria.

**Apostrophes**

**Rule:** Apostrophes indicate possession and should not be used in the cases below.

*Example:*  
**Incorrect:** The families' experienced high stress.  
**Correct:** The family's experienced high stress.

**Rule:** The apostrophe is placed after the noun, singular or plural as the case may be.

*Example:* The book belongs to the child: it is the child's book.

The book belongs to the children: it is the children's book.

The book belongs to the parents: it is the parents' book.

*Exception:* If an article belongs to 'it' there is no apostrophe.

It's means 'it is'.

See Strunk and White (1979, p. 1) for further explanation of apostrophes.

**Colons and Semicolons**

**Rule** A colon (:) precedes a list, or shows that what follows loosely relates to the preceding clause. Commas should not precede lists.

*Example:*  
**Correct:** She needed: pen, paper and eraser for the examination.  
**Incorrect:** She needed, pen, paper and eraser for the examination.

See Strunk and White (1979, pp. 7-8) for more detailed analysis.
NOTE: WHEN COLONS ARE USED IN THE NAME OF AN ARTICLE OR BOOK, THE FIRST WORD AFTER THE COLON MUST BE CAPITALISED.


**RULE:** SEMI COLONS (;) SEPARATE TWO COMPLETE SENTENCES THAT COULD EQUALLY WELL EXIST ALONE BUT WHICH THE WRITER FEELS WOULD HAVE MORE IMPACT IF JOINED IN ONE SENTENCE.

*EXAMPLE:* Electricity is costly; gas is cheap

_The sentence could equally well have a conjunction added:_Electricity is costly whereas gas is cheap

_or, the writer could separate the two with a full-stop_ Electricity is costly. Gas is cheap.

**RULE:** A SEMI COLON OUGHT NOT BE USED IN PLACE OF A COMMA. THIS IS COMMONLY DONE TO GROUP SIMILAR ITEMS IN A LONG LIST, BUT IS INCORRECT.

**ENDING A SENTENCE WITH A PREPOSITION**

**RULE:** A PREPOSITION BEGINS A PHRASE - IT SHOULD NOT END ONE.

**INCORRECT:** It was a brief program I worked on.

**CORRECT:** The program on which I worked was brief.

**EXCEPTION:** Sometimes it makes the sentence unduly formal or clumsy to place the preposition before the phrase it applies to. However, use caution when placing it last.

**SPLIT INFINITIVE**

**RULE:** THE INFINITIVE FORM OF A VERB ('TO GO' 'TO ASSESS' ETC.) SHOULD NOT BE INTERRUPTED BY PLACING WORDS IN THE MIDDLE AS IT INTERRUPTS THE FLOW.

**INCORRECT:** To boldly go where no-one has gone before.

**CORRECT:** To go boldly where no-one has gone before.

**INCORRECT:** To further assess the child

**CORRECT:** To assess the child further

**EXCEPTION:** Again, failure to split an infinitive can be more clumsy to the ear than splitting it. However, in written work split it rarely and with caution.
USE OF ABBREVIATIONS AND NUMERALS IN THE BODY OF A PAPER

• The numbers `one' to `nine' are written. Numbers `10' and above are written in the usual mathematical notation.

• Use 'example' not 'e.g.'

• Use 'namely' not 'viz.'

• Use 'etcetera' only when the list is in fact incomplete, not to add to a sentence when you can think of nothing else but don't want to admit it.

EXCEPTION: When quoting percentages, do not write in full. For example, '95%'.

NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE

1. Use 's/he' followed by 'him or herself'

2. Use the plural form 'they, them, themselves' (and plural verbs)

3. Use female pronouns in one half of your paper, male in another half and state this.

SPELLING

People who spell easily, usually have a negative emotional response to poor spelling.

If a good speller is repeatedly confronted by poor spelling, this may promote a negative view of an assignment that may have very good content.

Use a dictionary or a computer spelling check. It will help eliminate this possibility.

Some commonly misspelled words include:

* Dependent/dependant 'Dependent' - a verb - means to be conditional
* Dependant' - a noun, meaning a person who is reliant on another.
* Practise/practice 'Practise' is a verb: 'I practise tennis'
* 'Practice' is a noun: 'I attended the practice session'
* weather - refers to climate
* whether - or not
* where - refers to place
* were - plural of 'was'
RULE: WHEN A NOUN IS FORMED FROM A VERB THAT HAS A FINAL CONSONANT, YOU DO NOT DOUBLE THE CONSONANT; WHEN A VERB IS FORMED YOU DO.

EXAMPLE: 'enrol' becomes 'enrolled, enrolling' but the noun 'enrolment' has a single 'l'.
commit becomes 'committed' but 'commitment' has one 't'.

COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

'Due to' means 'attributable to' and can be used only where 'attributable' fits the sense. Replace with 'owing to' when 'attributable' does not fit. For example:

INCORRECT: Due to bad weather, we did not go camping.
CORRECT: Owing to bad weather, we did not go camping.
CORRECT: The rise in unemployment is due to (attributable to) inflation.
HINT: 'Due' must be preceded by an auxiliary verb (is, was, am). If it is not then 'due' is incorrect.

Orient - is a verb Orientation - is the noun Conjugation of verb is 'I am oriented. She is oriented' etc. There is no such word as orientated.

Different must be followed by 'from'. An article is 'different from' another, or 'similar to' another, but not 'different to'.

Effect/Affect NOUN: effect = result: e.g. The effect of the policy was raised unemployment affect = feeling: e.g. An example of affect is depression.
VERB: effect = bring about: e.g. Mr. Howard effected a policy change.
affect = to influence: e.g. The unemployed were affected by fiscal policy decisions.

Less refers to quantity
Fewer refers to number
Amount refers to volume
You can have less people in a room only if they've all been on diets.
You cannot have a large amount of people agree unless they were overweight. Instead 'A number of people agree...'

Incident means 'event'
Incidence means 'frequency'. It cannot be pluralled, as in 'incidences'.
Like means 'similar to'. You ought not introduce a statement:

'He bought many things, like a sweater....' unless he did not buy a sweater but only something resembling one.

Use 'such as': 'He bought many things, such as a sweater....'

Only needs to be placed next to the word it qualifies

For example:

**INCORRECT:** 'He only waited a while'. Here 'only' qualifies 'waited': he simply waited, did not throw a tantrum, pace the floor, but merely **waited**.

**CORRECT:** 'He waited only for a while'.

Disinterested means 'impartial' or 'unbiased'.

Uninterested means 'lacking interest'.

Continuous means 'without stopping'.

Continual means 'often repeated'.

Enormity means 'horror'.

Enormousness refers to 'size'.

Stationery means 'paper goods'.

Stationary means 'stopped'.

who refers to the subject of a sentence.

whom refers to the object of a sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** The culprit, whom the police wished to question, has disappeared. The police, who were on the scene, attended to the culprit.

whose refers to 'possession'.

**EXAMPLE:** The culprit, whose shoes were found, gave himself up to the police. Whose shoes are these?

who's who is

imply a speaker implies

infer a listener infers

shall used for the first person 'I shall' 'we shall'

will used for second and third person 'She will' 'it will'

alot is **not** one word - replace with many

hopefully replace with **it is hoped**

thank you is **not** one word
SOME ADDITIONAL WRITING TIPS

By Barbara Matthews

• Prior to beginning an assignment decide whether you are going to write in the present tense or past tense, or in the first or third person. Once this decision is made, stick to your decision in all aspects of your paper and for the duration of your paper. This will help with expression.

• Avoid using "absolute" terminology. Words such as "always", "never", “constant" "constantly" etc. invite argument, i.e. Very few people (if any) “never" or "constantly" do things.

• Similarly, using unspecific language, for example, "the person uses more expressive communication when s/he is in a good mood” or "when s/he feels like it" invites comments such as "how do you know s/he is in a good mood, feels like it" etc. If you use this type of terminology make sure you identify how you know.

• When writing your paper, do so from the perspective that the person reading knows absolutely nothing about the topic. Upon finishing your paper the reader must be clear about all aspects of your paper. Therefore all concepts, ideas and terminology related to the topic must be explained and/or clarified. Generally this can be done in one sentence or less by including a brief explanation. For example if you use a word like syntax explain what this means. On other occasions an example may be all you need to clarify a particular aspect of what you have written. Alternatively it may be necessary to back up an idea, statement or opinion with reference to the literature. It's okay to be passionate about your topic, as long as you back up what you say with a reasoned argument.

• Attending to all of the above will help your paper to come across as being objectively written. This is a critical issue especially when writing reports. A report loses credibility if it sounds too subjective. Therefore clearly stated examples are essential to back up what you're saying in a report. For instance "Joanna was a very socially competent and popular 4 year old girl" is not enough to convince a reader who does not know Joanna. The same message can, however, be expressed much more objectively and specifically. For example "During observations, there were many examples of Joanna's social competence and popularity. Some of these examples included ... “ The number of examples you provide will depend on how much you want to emphasise this point.
• To help with expression keep your sentences short. If you have more than one conjunction in your sentence (i.e. "and, although, therefore, because" etc.) your sentence is probably too long. Also, if you are struggling with expressing a sentence correctly, this may be because you are trying to convey too many ideas in the one sentence. This can be very confusing for the reader, and some important points or good ideas can get lost in this type of sentence. Generally include only one concept or idea per sentence. When re-reading your paper, if either of the above has occurred, try expressing what you're saying in two sentences instead.

From an organisational point of view, the use of headings helps, not only you but also the reader. From the reader's point of view s/he will have some idea of what s/he is about to read. From your point of view, using headings can act as a prompt for you to include only relevant or important information under that heading. Headings can also be helpful in allowing you to see whether your discussion of ideas is proceeding logically. Ask yourself the following:

• What are the main features or points to be discussed?
• In what order should these main features or points appear?
• What is the logical flow to all of this?
• If you're not sure, check the textbook. How do the text or other related books talk about the topic? What is the order of the ideas in these books?
• Generally, when you've covered the first point, you move on to the next. Avoid repeating the same point except in summaries or conclusions. When referring to a previous point do not introduce new information about that point. If you find you have to introduce new information about a previous point, this is an indication that the previous point needs some work.

• Never include new information in summaries or conclusions. A summary is simply a synthesis of what you have previously written. A summary may, however, draw some preliminary conclusions. The preliminary conclusions are generally an emphasis of the major points of what you have written previously. In order for your preliminary conclusions to make sense, your previous information should have been clearly linked with, and backed up by, the literature. This also applies to conclusions. However, conclusions are a synthesis of your entire paper, drawing out and re-emphasising the major points.

• Do not take shortcuts at the cost of clarity. Acronyms should always be present in both expanded and initialised versions the first time used: occupational therapist (OT).
A FRAMEWORK FOR REPORTS

By Brian Matthews

Information which may be included in the description of a person is discussed below. It is important to remember, however, that descriptions, reports, etc. have different formats depending on the reason for the report and the agency/assignment involved. This paper is intended to suggest a general framework – make sure you check with your Lecturer or Supervisor before using this framework.

Name

Pseudonyms are used in academic reports, assignments, journal articles, etc. Avoid the very objective "X" or Ms. X. Use a given name which is similar to the person's real name or which allows you to form some connection. There are differences of opinion on whether you provide a given name or a surname. Some will argue that any report on an adult should refer to "Ms. Bloggs" etc. I can see the point but I tend to have an informal approach in naming people. Make your own decision on this and follow agency guidelines where these are available.

Date of Birth

The age of a person is necessary information. It need not be the date of birth, but this is the most accurate way of presenting this information in a formal report. In an assignment, "Jane is 21 years old" is fine.

Gender

Many names are confusing. Make sure you include the gender of the person.

Home Address & Phone

Where does the person live? How do you contact them? Do not include in an academic assignment unless specifically requested otherwise.

Date of the Report/ Description

Always include this. It is uncanny how many times you will come across reports or descriptions of events in files etc. where this information is not present.

Person Writing Report

Make sure you always indicate this clearly. Write your name in full. Sign the report where it is an agency report (not necessary for assignments).
Purpose of the Report

Very early in the report it should be made clear what the report is about, why it is being written, etc.? For example,

"An assessment of John Brown's living situation was requested by his brother Peter Brown. Peter Brown felt that some of John's staff were unclear on many of John Brown's self-care needs and suggested that these be outlined clearly in a report."

or

"A request was made by Supported Holidays of South Australia for information on Mabel Jones' communication skills. Mabel is going on a holiday in three months time with the group and they want to be aware of particular skills which carers may need in order to allow Mabel to access a range of activities of her choice."

Overview of the Person/ Background Information

There is much useful information which could be included and this will vary from report to report. Important areas may include the following, but remember that an academic report will generally only require a subset of these areas:

**FAMILY INFORMATION**

What is the family situation? Are there brothers and sisters? Any relevant information.

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

How does the person communicate? Make sure you are specific. Do not say things like "h/she understands most things" etc.

**BASIC DAILY LIVING SKILLS**

How does the person manage the things like eating, dressing, self-grooming, washing, etc.

**ADVANCED DAILY LIVING SKILLS**

How does the person manage the things like using public transport, managing their finances, etc.

**MEDICATION & MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS**

Is the person taking medication and are there any medical complications of which others need to be aware?

**SLEEP CYCLES**

Sometimes there is a need to comment on sleeping patterns etc.
EATING ROUTINES AND DIET

Similarly with eating and diet.

A DAILY SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

For many reports, a detailed description of the person's daily activities is necessary. A brief timetable is useful.

Interests
What are the things that the person likes? What do they usually do when their activities are not structured? What leisure/recreational etc. interests do they have?

Dislikes
Are there particular events the person dislikes? More importantly, are there any specific phobias which the person has (fear of dogs, heights, etc.).

Comments on the suitability of current activities
Whatever the activities are in which a person is engaged, there are a number of relevant aspects to comment on. Try not to be unnecessarily critical, but these issues are worthy of comment. Check with your lecturer before including this information. These aspects may include:

VARIETY

Does the person have the opportunity to engage in a range of activities or is it always the same old routine? Is the degree of variety relevant to their chronological age?

CHOICE

Are there choices between activities and/or are there choice opportunities within the activities which are available.

ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES

There are many important environmental variables that we will discuss. What are the obvious issues though? Is the person’s environment overcrowded, cold, stimulating, comfortable, etc.? Be specific!

STAFFING

Where a person is being provided services within a staffed centre/program, what are the staffing arrangements? Does the person always have the same staff, or are these largely casual staff? What are the attitudes of staff toward the person's development?
BORING/PLEASANT

Does the person seem to like their activities? Are their activities suitable for their developmental level?

MONITORING OF OUTCOMES

Is the person's progress being monitored? What methods of maintaining client records are used? For example, "In Maria's yearly review meeting it was agreed that her transport training goal needed to be modified". etc.

Challenging Behaviour

Where a person is frequently displaying difficult-to-manage behaviour, this needs to be described accurately and carefully. For example, “Jeff is usually quiet and cooperative but in the first six months of this year it was reported on three separate occasions that he had hit one of his house mates”. There is also other information which needs to be included, particularly if the focus of the report is dealing with this type of behaviour. Specific information on how this should be reported will be dealt with in relevant topics.

Summary and Recommendations

Finally, it is important that the information is summarised briefly and recommendations made about the reason the report was requested. For example, in one of the examples given above, the purpose of the report was:

"A request was made by Supported Holidays of South Australia for information on Mabel Jones' communication skills. Mabel is going on a holiday in three months time with the group and they want to be aware of particular skills which carers may need in order to allow Mabel to access a range of activities of her choice."

Summary and recommendations emerging from a report on Mabel's communication skills might be:

- "Mabel Jones has limited verbal communication (her only recognisable words are two swear words) but uses a Compic symbol board containing approximately 150 symbols. Each of the symbols/phrases is labelled at the top so that these can be easily read by a communication partner."
• Mabel understands most concepts related to daily activities (washing, bathing, dressing, etc.) and is able to indicate by vocalising and pointing to symbols on her board which of these she wishes to do. She is also interested in bungy jumping and NBA basketball and attempts to engage people in conversation about these activities, frequently (she has symbols for both on her board).

• When Mabel does not understand what is being said to her she will shake her head emphatically and repeatedly point to a symbol for "I don't understand". When this happens, it is suggested that the question is rephrased.

• When Mabel is uncomfortable or needs repositioning, she will squirm in her chair and moan. If asked what is the matter, she will give the relevant information by indicating appropriate symbols on her board.

• If in doubt, ask Mabel what the problem is or what she wants.

**Oral Presentations**

Many topics in the Department of Disability Studies require seminar presentations by students. These presentations are an essential component of your professional training. The suggestions outlined are a guide for the preparation of your oral presentation. You are advised to read further on oral presentations and to seek advice from the relevant lecturers.

**Developing Your Presentation:**

Formal presentations are structured - they have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

The beginning introduces the topic by:
- stating it
- defining the terms
- outlining the sequence of the talk.

The middle develops the topic by:
- keeping to the topic
- expanding the plan in a point-by-point sequence that is logical
- containing references that support the claims being made
- using audio/visual aids to help present more detailed information.

The end concludes the topic by:
- stating the main point again
- evaluating the importance of the information presented
- formulating some conclusions
- reviewing any implications.
You can talk about any seminar topic using this basic plan. However you can vary the components in each section depending on the nature of the topic to be presented. Seek advice from your lecturer if you are having difficulty in developing a plan.

**FURTHER SUGGESTIONS:**

1. Do not read your notes. Have cue cards or overheads with summary points that can act as a prompt. Overheads need to be well prepared and clearly laid out, easy to read and preferably typed.

2. Know the material you are discussing - do not rely on detailed notes.

3. When preparing the presentation, write a single sentence summary of the presentation. Choose three to five main points to develop this summary. Decide on a means of supporting each main point. Work out any sub-points to support your main points. Prepare the transition from one point to the next.

4. Plan your introduction and begin confidently. Develop a precise introduction with an attention-getting statement, controversial fact/issue question or quotation that will challenge your listeners. You could use a visual cue or novelty prompt to set the scene for your presentation. Then move into your presentation.

5. When presenting, stand, move about the room. Avoid standing still, leaning on desks or chairs, slumping in chairs.

6. Make eye contact with individuals in the audience. Visually scan the room. Be sure you speak to the whole audience, not just to one specific person.

7. If you have an activity for the group - plan it carefully. Explain to the participants what you want to achieve by the activity, discuss the results of the activity, draw conclusions, relate the activity and the results to the specific topic being addressed.

8. Avoid citing the literature for every statement you make. If quoting a study you need to acknowledge the study. Refer the audience to the reference list.

9. Always check that you are familiar and relaxed with any audiovisual equipment that you may be using. If using video, slides, or other audiovisual material, explain the rationale for using that material, set the context in which the material is to be viewed or listened to, discuss the material after the showing and draw conclusions from that discussion.

10. Time-manage your presentation. Keep to your schedule. If you are running out of time, always conclude on a strong positive note ensuring an impact on the audience.
GUIDELINES FOR POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Microsoft PowerPoint software, and use PowerPoint Presentations where possible. The following are a list of design guidelines to keep in mind:

- Use the “Rule of Six” (No more than 6 points per slide and 6 words per point)
- Ensure readability (20 point minimum)
- Use colour consistently (for contrast, emphasis, impact and continuity. Select colour combinations carefully!)
- Avoid using all upper case
- Use animation to help emphasise points
- Use special effects sparingly (limit distractions)
- Avoid using effects that are slow
- Use graphics
- Don’t put up everything you want to say
- No more than 1 slide per minute
- Proof read carefully
- Know about the equipment (make back-up overhead transparencies)
- Don’t read off the screen
- PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE!

RELEVANT REFERENCES


