Integrating Scholarship

At university, your task is to make an answer rather than find an answer. To do this, you will be drawing from the work of other scholars as your foundation and building blocks, in order to support each of your points.

But a collection of references, citations and quotations isn't an argument in itself; you need to weave them into your own writing so that it is clear what is your work, and what is the work of other scholars, and how their work relates to yours and helps you make your case.

Integrating scholarship well isn't just about avoiding plagiarism; it's about demonstrating the range and quality of your reading, your ability to critique sources, use them convincingly as evidence and synthesise them into something new. Being able to see clearly what your sources are and how you are using them will allow the reader to see how well you have built your argument.

If a quotation or citation isn't integrated, then your argument starts to sound disjointed, like a series of unconnected statements, as in this example:

> Critical thinking is an activity that is much valued within an academic context but might not be considered a transferable skill. "I fail to see any connection between an ability to think critically and the survival of American democratic institutions" (Weissburg, 2013).

It's not clear how the quotation relates to the first sentence. Is it supporting it and if so, how? What does the student think of it?

Integrating a source

To integrate a source well into your own writing means clearly indicating

- what comes from where
    - Which parts of your assignment are from another source
    - Where the original can be found - full reference
- In what form
    - Direct quotation whether full or partial, or a paraphrase whether extensive summary or brief mention
- Your own stance on it
    - Agree, disagree, somewhere in the middle
- How you are using it
    - How you understand it / how your reader should understand it
    - How it's relevant to your thinking
    - How you're using it to support your thinking

This can be done at length through your own commentary, or it can be done very briefly, using strategies such as quotation marks, integral or non-integral citation, placement of references and choice of reporting verb.

Using Quotation

You can quote the original words of your source exactly as they were, if you surround them with quotation marks (single ' or double ") to show that they are not your words. You don't have to quote whole sentences; you could just quote part of a sentence if that's what suits your needs and you're not distorting the meaning. However, make sure that you integrate the partial quotation with your own sentence, and indicate any changes you had to make with square brackets [ ] for example if you had to change a word to make it fit your sentence, or left a bit out in the middle […]. Include a page number with the in-text reference so your reader can check the original easily.

Weissberg (2013, p.46) "fail[s] to see any connection between an ability to think critically and the survival of American democratic institutions".

If using a quotation, remember that it doesn't speak for you – you will still need to state your own viewpoint in some way rather than speaking through other people. Also, a quotation doesn't speak for itself – you will still need to interpret it for the reader so they know how you understand it, and how it relates to your own ideas.

Using Integral and Non-Integral Citation

Integral citation

Integral citation includes the name of the authors you're citing as part of your sentence:

> Ennis (1964, p. 46) states that critical thinking is fundamentally "the correct assessing of statements".
>
> Weissberg (2013) argues that there is no connection between critical thinking and democracy.

This approach puts the reader's attention onto the author you're citing, emphasising that it is someone's opinion. You might want to draw attention to the author in this way because they are an authority and you want their weight behind your point ("ah, well, if Ennis says

so, then it's reliable) OR because you want to suggest that this is just an opinion, as you are about to critique it or compare it to a different perspective by someone else ("well, Ennis may say that, but it's just his view, and he's contradicted by other evidence"). The way you comment on the citation will steer the reader as to your own views.

Non-integral citation

Non-integral citation removes the author's name from the flow of your sentence, and tucks it away in the reference, often, but not necessarily, at the end:

> Critical thinking is fundamentally "the correct assessing of statements" (Ennis, 1964).
>
> There is no connection between critical thinking and democracy (Weissberg, 2013).

Placing the author's name in a less conspicuous place puts the emphasis more on the idea than the individual. This can make it sound more authoritative and matter of fact, something you want the reader to accept, rather than question. This usage indicates that you agree with the original source and are using it to support your thinking.

Reporting verbs

If you are using integral citation, a reporting verb introduces a quotation or paraphrase. The verb you choose can indicate your stance on the source you're citing, whether you agree, disagree or are being neutral.

> Ennis states that critical thinking is fundamentally "the correct assessing of statements" (1964).

'States' is a fairly neutral word, but indicates that you feel that the cited view is a statement of fact, and therefore that you agree.

> Ennis (1964) claims that critical thinking could be considered "the correct assessing of statements."

'Claims' indicates that you think this is just a viewpoint, and not a very strong one – it indicates that you disagree to some extent.

> Ennis (1964) described critical thinking as "the correct assessing of statements."

'Described' is a neutral word, but the use of past tense for 'described' indicates that you think this view is outdated and no longer current.

Placement of references

You don't always have to place a reference at the end of the sentence. If a reference is at the start or end of a sentence, the reader assumes that it relates to the whole sentence. However, you can mix a citation or quotation with your own commentary on it in the same sentence, as in this example:

Weissburg's claim that there exists no "connection between an ability to think critically and the survival of American democratic institutions" (2013) indicates that critical thinking is not always transferrable to non-academic contexts.

In this example the beginning of the sentence before the reference is clearly from Weissburg, whereas the end of the sentence after the reference is the student's own conclusion.