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Writing Centers and Documenting Sources

Many instructors at Antelope Valley College (AVC) assign research papers that require students to document sources they have found to support their thesis statement. Diane Flores-Kagan, AVC Writing Learning Specialist, states, “Many instructors assign papers requiring a style developed by the Modern Language Association (MLA) while others prefer the American Psychological Association (APA) format.” While these are two of the most common documentation styles at Antelope Valley College, students intending to transfer to universities may find that their professors require other documentation styles such as Chicago or Turabian (Chan and Gomez 12). It is important, therefore, that students be prepared to meet the challenges of citing sources properly and to avoid unintentional plagiarism. Writing centers can help, and the biggest benefit to students is that information about documentation is offered in a variety of ways to meet everyone’s needs.

First of all, workshops on many aspects of documentation are held on campuses nationwide at various times during the school year and are typically led by writing center instructors. New York University scholar, Carla Adams, reports, “Students at various colleges and universities attend workshops regularly to receive instruction from faculty learning specialists trained in various documentation styles” (76). At Antelope Valley College, MLA and APA workshops are primarily offered because many instructors prefer these formats; however, small group sessions that focus on other styles can be arranged, according to Ms. Flores-Kagan. For instance, science majors may request help with citing sources in CSE, Council of Science Editors, or history majors might request a session on the use of CMS, Chicago Manual of Style, a