APA Publication Guidelines

A guide to using
the American Psychological Association
format in research papers
APA Publication Guidelines

What is APA?

American Psychological Association (APA) has created a set of publication guidelines known as “APA style.” This document provides rules for writing and publishing research materials. This style is used primarily within the field of social sciences.

Why Should I Use APA?

APA provides standard guidelines for all research papers, reports, and essays. NSU students are expected to follow accurate APA rules when completing writing assignments. APA ensures that sources are properly cited, helping to avoid plagiarism.

Where Can I Find More Information?

Further information may be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association [APA Manual]*. Copies of this manual may be found in the university library or online at:

- www.apastyle.org

Students may also wish to check the following websites for information on APA:

- http://owl.english.purdue.edu
- http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc
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*Note: The Publication of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed.) does not include a section on using a table of contents. However, it might be helpful for longer papers, such as dissertations or Master’s theses. The above Table of Contents is a common format that you may wish to follow.*
What Does This Booklet Cover?

This booklet addresses the following aspects of APA style (or format):

I. Formatting a paper
   II. In-text Citations
   III. References

Students unfamiliar with the APA format should preview each of the three sections before writing their paper. Those familiar with all aspects of APA style may refer to specific information when needed.

I. Formatting a Paper

Academic writing is generally divided into two types—standard essays and research reports based on the writer’s clinical research. You must check with your instructor regarding the format of your paper.

Essay
A properly formatted standard paper includes three parts appearing in the following order:

1. Title page
2. Body
   • Introduction
   • Discussion
   • Conclusion
3. References

Research Report
A properly formatted research paper includes six parts appearing in the following order:

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Table of contents (optional)
4. Body
   • Introduction
   • Literature Review
   • Methods
   • Results
   • Discussion
   • Conclusion
5. References
6. Appendix
   • Tables and Figures (optional)

The next few pages explain each of these parts in detail.

Note: This body format is not used for all academic papers. It is applicable only to papers based on field research.
1. Parts of an Essay

   a. Title Page

According to the APA Publication Manual, a title page should include
   • a running head
   • a title
   • the author’s name
   • the institutional affiliation

Note: Some instructors may require other information on the title page, such as the title and course number, the submission date, and his/her name. It is the student’s responsibility to verify title page requirements with the instructor.

Parts of a Title Page [APA—p. 23,229-230]

(1) Running head
   • On the first page double-click the header area. The header function will open.
   • In the Options group on the top ribbon select Different First Page.
   • In the Header & Footer group, select Page Number; select Top of Page; select Plain Number 1.
   • The cursor should appear before a number. Type in the following: Running head: YOUR PAPER TITLE. The entire string of text should not exceed 50 characters, including letters, spaces, and punctuation.
   • Click TAB until the page number moves to the right margin.
   • Click on the X on the top ribbon to close the header.

(2) Title
   • Capitalize all main words in the title.
   • Double-space all lines on the title page.
   • Place in the upper half of the page.
   • Title should not exceed 12 words.

(3) and (4) Author’s Name and Affiliation
   • Type your name on the line below the title. (If more than one author, list several student names on one line).
   • On the next line type the full name of the university.

Tip: To center your words, click on this button: =
OR
highlight text and press Ctrl + E
b. Body
The body contains an introduction, a discussion, and a conclusion. [APA—p. 27; 35; 36 respectively]
- Use Times New Roman, 12-point font.
- Double-space all text.
- Use one-inch margins on all sides.
- Align all paragraphs to the left.
- Indent new paragraphs five spaces.
- Insert a header to appear on the rest of the pages.

Tip: To insert a header, go to the second page of the paper. Double-click the header area. The header function will open. In the Header & Footer group, select Page Number; select Top of Page; select Plain Number 1. The cursor should appear before a number. Type in YOUR PAPER TITLE in caps. Click TAB until the page number moves to the right margin. Click on the X on the top ribbon to close the header.

c. References Page
- The references page appears at the end of the document. For more information, see References (pages 15-24).

d. Section Headings
- Standard essays do not typically have sections. The parts of the paper, such as introduction, body, and conclusion, should not be identified with headings. For section headings in a research paper, see p. 7.

2. Parts of a Research Report
a. Title Page (see p. 4)

b. Abstract [APA—p. 25]
- An Abstract is a brief summary describing the purpose and content of the paper.
- The Abstract follows the title page.
- It is written as a single paragraph.
- It is double-spaced.
- It is between 150 and 250 words in length.
- Center the word “Abstract” at the top of the page. Capitalize the first letter only. Skip one line and type the text of the abstract in a block format (aligned left, using no indentations).
c. Table of Contents

- Center the words “Table of Contents” at the top of the page.
- Double-space all entries.
- Align left all entries.
- Indent all sub-headings five spaces.

*Note: Most academic APA papers do not require a table of contents. However, individual instructors may require that a table of contents be included in the paper.*


d. Body

*Note: Papers entailing field research, where you set up a study and collect data, should include the following sections:*

(1) **Introduction [APA—p. 27]**
This section prepares the reader for what’s to come.
- Introduce reader to the topic/problem under discussion.
- State why it is important to discuss.
- State briefly what is already known about this topic.
- State very briefly how the topic will be explored in this paper.
- State the main claim (hypothesis) that is made about the topic.

(2) **Literature review [APA—p. 10]**
This section is focused on setting the stage for research. It should offer the following:
- A summary of the literature devoted to the topic
- Conclusions drawn on the topic so far
- The need for further research revealed by this review

(3) **Methods [APA—p. 29]**
This section provides the reader with details about how the research was conducted. It may include information about research subjects and materials used.

(4) **Results [APA—p. 32]**
This section presents the results of the research. It is different from the Discussion section in that the results are not analyzed, but simply reported.

(5) **Discussion [APA—p. 35]**
This section analyzes the research results.
(6) **Conclusion**

This section reviews the major points of the paper and paraphrases the information in the introduction. It reminds the readers what they have just learned.

- Reiterates the topic/problem discussed
- States the importance of the findings
- Summarizes the main findings of the research
- Leaves the reader with a final thought or recommendation

**e. Section Headings [APA—p. 62]**

APA proposes the following three levels of headings:

1. Centered, Bold, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading
2. Flush left, bold, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading
3. Indented, bold, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.

**f. References Page**

- The References page appears at the end of the document. For more information, see References (pages 15-24).

**g. Appendix (optional) [APA—p. 38,39]**

- An appendix includes supplemental information that may be useful to the reader.
- The information may include, but is not limited to, the following materials:
  - Instructions to participants
  - Original questionnaires
  - Raw data
  - Interview transcriptions
  - Sign-up sheets
  - Consent forms
  - Statistical calculations
- An Appendix must include two pieces of information: a name and a title, both centered.
  - The name is “Appendix,” unless the paper contains more than one. In that case, each appendix should be placed on a separate page and named in alphabetical order (“Appendix A,” “Appendix B,” etc.).
  - The title is listed below the word “Appendix.” Capitalize all main words in the title.

### STUDY HABITS 15

**Method (1)**

**Participants (2)**

**Assessments (2)**

**Internal instruments. (3)**
(1) Tables and Figures

The APA Publication Manual separates non-textual information into two categories: Tables and Figures.

Tables [APA—pp. 128-150; 151; 230] are documents that organize numerical data into columns and rows.

Figures [APA—pp. 150-167; 230] include all other types of visual illustrations, photographs, charts, graphs, diagrams, and drawings.

(2) Guidelines for Inserting Tables and Figures

- Tables or figures enhance the reader’s understanding of the topic without repeating the text already written.
- Tables and figures provide only vital information. Avoid including extra information that may confuse the reader.
- Tables and figures must be clear and easy to read. Consider font size, font style, and color when determining font. (Remember that certain colors—e.g., yellow—are difficult to read).
- Tables and figures must have a caption, which consists of two parts:
  - Assign each table and figure a number. For example, “Table 4.”
  - Name each table and figure with a specific title that accurately identifies the information. For example, “Flowchart for including figures in a document.”
- Refer to a table or figure by its number. For example, “as shown in Figure 3” or “see Table 2.”
II. In-Text Citations

Internal (in-text) citation identifies the source of information. It is used to give credit to authors whose ideas or thoughts are used within the academic paper. Internal citations allow the reader to identify the source and find the borrowed information within it.

1. Plagiarism [APA—pp. 15-16]

Plagiarism is the improper use of another person’s words or ideas. Plagiarism includes quoting someone’s words without giving them credit, stealing someone’s idea, and paying someone to write your paper. Regardless of whether the plagiarism is intentional or not, it is a serious academic offense. In order to avoid plagiarism, cite all sources used in research.

Sources May Include the Following:

- Books
- Magazines / journals / newspaper articles
- Database articles
- Films
- Television programs
- Radio documentaries
- Websites
- Blogs
- Internet bulletin boards / forums
- E-mails
- Encyclopedias
- Personal Communications

2. Paraphrasing [APA—pp. 170-174]

Paraphrasing is stating the original material in your own words. Changing a few words in an otherwise untouched quote does not constitute paraphrasing. In order to paraphrase effectively, the information must be re-stated in a new way. Therefore, successful paraphrasing occurs when you are able to maintain the intended meaning of the original source without copying the words or sentence structure.

Tip: Read the information to be paraphrased, then close the book/turn off the computer. Make sure you understood the information; then, restate it in your own words. Go back and check for accuracy. Doing this helps prevent you from copying words or sentence structure, which may constitute plagiarism.
Example:

Read the original passage below and compare it with the paraphrased versions.

**Original Passage**

“Adult learning research helps to explain why immersion is so important” (Hewett & Ehmann, 2004, p. 11).

**Unacceptable Paraphrasing**

Research in adult learning assists us in explaining why immersion is so important.

**Acceptable Paraphrasing**

According to Hewett and Ehmann (2004), current research gives insight into why immersion is a valuable aspect of adult learning.

- Paraphrases must be cited with the name of the author and the year of publication of the original source. Citing the page number is optional.

> Current research provides insight into why immersion is a valuable aspect of adult learning (Hewett & Ehmann, 2004).

**OR**

According to Hewett and Ehmann (2004), current research provides insight into why immersion is a valuable aspect of adult learning.

- Personal communications (e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, online chats, class lectures, and personal or telephone interviews) should be paraphrased. For information on citing personal communications, see **Quoting Personal Communications** on p. 14.

3. **Quoting Directly [APA—pp. 170-171]**

Direct quotes use the language of the original author word for word.

- Use quotation marks around all borrowed words, phrases, or sentences.
- Cite the author's name, date, and page number.
- When no author is available, use document title (if the piece is written by a random individual) or an organization name (if the piece is presented by an organization).
- When no page number is available, use a paragraph symbol (¶) or abbreviation “para.” If the text is divided into titled sections, rather than paragraphs, use section title with para. 1.

> According to Alzheimer’s Association (2007), patients “progress through several stages of the disease” (Symptoms, para. 1).
There are two types of direct quotes:

a. Regular quotes
b. Block quotes

a. Regular Quotes [APA—p. 171]
Regular quotes are used when the quote is less than 40 words (short).

Diana Hacker (2003) writes, "To show readers that you are using a source’s exact phrases or sentences, you must enclose them in quotation marks" (p. 384).

Note: 40 words equal approximately three lines of text. Quotes that are longer than three lines should be presented as a block quote.

b. Block Quotes [APA—p. 171]
Block quotes are used when quoting more than 40 words.
- Indent the block quote five spaces.
- Do not put quotation marks around the block quote. Use quotation marks to identify quoted material within the block quote.
- Double-space the block quote.
- Do not include any additional lines or spaces before or after the block quote.

The following explains Diana Hacker’s view of plagiarism:

You are guilty of the academic offense known as plagiarism if you half-copy the author’s sentences—either by mixing the author’s phrases with your own without using quotation marks or by plugging your synonyms into the author’s sentence structure. To prevent unintentional borrowing, resist the temptation to look at the source as you take notes—except when you are quoting. (Hacker, 2003, pp. 116-117)
4. Citation Placement [APA—pp. 174-179]

a. Citations within Paraphrased Information

- **Beginning of sentence**
  Palmacci (2007) argues that the curriculum is diverse.

- **Middle of sentence**
  After thoroughly researching the program, Palmacci (2007) concluded that the curriculum is diverse.

- **End of sentence**
  The study found that the curriculum is very diverse (Palmacci, 2007).

b. Citations within Direct Quotes

- **Beginning of sentence**
  Palmacci (2007) states that “the curriculum is diverse with courses offered in poetry, teaching writing, and travel writing” (p. 52).

- **Middle of sentence**
  According to Palmacci (2007), “the curriculum is diverse with courses offered in poetry, teaching writing, and travel writing” (p. 52).

- **End of sentence**
  Research reveals that “the curriculum is diverse with courses offered in poetry, teaching writing, and travel writing” (Palmacci, 2007, p. 52).

c. Multiple Citations by the Same Author

- When citing information from the same author more than once within the same paragraph, list author’s name only in the first citation. All subsequent citations should simply list the page number.

5. Multiple Authors (Same Source)

When citing work written by more than one author, the following rules apply:

- **One author**
  (Smith, 2002)

- **Two authors**
  (Smith & Jones, 2001)

- **Three to five authors**
  - (first mention) (Smith, Jones, Williams, & Torrington, 1983)
  - (following mentions) (Smith et al., 1983)

- **Six or more authors**
  (Smith et al., 1983)
6. **Multiple Authors (Different Sources)**

- Different sources may be cited when referring to several studies on the same topic.
- List authors by last name in alphabetical order within the same parentheses.
- Separate names with semicolons.

```markdown
Studies show that obese children are at risk of diabetes (Alberts, 1999; Peterson, 2003; Smith, 2008).
```

7. **No Authors**

- When no author is available, use document title (if the piece is written by an individual) or an organization name (if the piece is presented by an organization).
- Italicize titles of books and periodicals. Enclose titles of articles and chapters in quotations marks. Capitalize every word.

```markdown
Stress impacts one’s ability to perform work functions (“Why Can’t I Concentrate,” 2009). Studies show that obese children are at risk of diabetes (National Health Association, 2008).
```

8. **Quoting a Secondary Source [APA—p. 178]**

- Sources fall into one of two categories: primary and secondary.
- If the author of the source you are using *generated* the information to be cited, the source is primary.
- If the author of the source you are using *borrowed* the information to be cited, the source is secondary.
- When citing from a secondary source, it is important to cite the original author (primary source), as well as identify the text where the quote was found.

**a. Within Text**

- cite the **primary source** *without* the year of publication;
- place the words “as cited in” and the citation for the **secondary source** in parentheses.

**b. In the References List**

- cite the **secondary source**.

```markdown
According to Presley, Meilman, and Lyerla (as cited in Levine & Cureton, 1998), marijuana is used by almost a quarter of the college population.
```
9. Quoting Personal Communications [APA—p. 179]

- Personal communications include e-mail messages, private letters, instant messages, text messages, online chats, class lectures, and personal or telephone interviews.
- When quoting a personal communication, include the words “personal communication” into the citation.
- The format of the citation is the same whether the information is directly quoted or paraphrased.
- The information from personal communications cannot be recovered by other researchers. Therefore, it should not be listed in the reference section.

According to J. Smith (personal communication, April 5, 2008), Nova Southeastern University is a great place to work.

Nova Southeastern University offers many student services (J. Smith, personal communication, April 5, 2008).

10. Modifying Direct Quotes[APA—p. 172-173]

a. Removing Text
- When omitting unimportant information from the beginning or middle of a quote, use an ellipsis (three periods with a space between each one) to indicate where the information has been removed.
- When omitting words from the end of a quote, put the period at the end of the sentence followed by the ellipsis (four dots altogether).

b. Adding Text
When adding your own words to a quote, put the words in brackets.

According to The new St. Martin’s handbook (1999), “as you choose which sources to use, . . . you may reevaluate the decisions [about which research material to use]. For example, you may decide to summarize in your essay. . . . To avoid plagiarizing, document any source material you do include with a citation within your text and an entry in your list of sources” (p. 505).
III. References [APA—pp. 193-224]

A references page provides bibliographic information about the sources used in the academic paper. It allows the reader to locate specific sources within the body of research.

1. General Guidelines

- The references page appears at the end of the document before appendices.
- The references should appear on a separate page.
- The word “References” should be centered at the top of the page.
- The list of references should account for all in-text citations.
- All entries must be alphabetized by author’s last name (or organization name, in the absence of the author).
- The list must be double-spaced.
- All entries must be placed with a hanging indent, so that the first line is flushed left and subsequent lines are indented.
- The abbreviation (n.d.) needs to be used in the absence of a date.
- Titles of books, magazines, and journals are italicized.
- Only proper nouns, the first words of titles, and the first words after a colon in a title are capitalized.

**Tip:** Use the hanging indent function to create a hanging indent. This way, all reference entries will automatically be indented.

2. Document Identification System [APA—p. 188-192]

- Documents can be identified in one of three ways — with a DOI (for all sources), with publisher information (for printed books when DOI is not available), and a URL (for all online resources, when DOI is not available).
- DOI (digital object identifier) is an alphanumeric string of characters that can be found near the copyright information. If DOI is available, provide it for both printed and electronic sources.

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**STUDY SKILLS**

**References**


**My friend Annie: A journey through time.**
• DOI and URL appear at the end of the reference entry. Do not place a period after either one.
• URL (uniform resource locator) is the internet address of the source. Provide it for electronic source only when the DOI is not available. For periodicals, provide the address of the journal home page.
• To find any document using DOI, type in the following in the address window: http://dx.doi.org/[your doi number]

3. **Referencing Books and Sections of Books**

Book citations have the following pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author. (Year). <em>Title of the book</em>. Location: Publisher. (if DOI is not available)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author. (Year). <em>Title of the book</em>. doi: 10.xxxxxxxxxxxxxx (if DOI is available)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Book (one author) [APA—p. 202]**

- List the last name of the author, followed by his or her initial.
- You may list only one initial or two (for first and middle names).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Pay close attention to punctuation when referencing sources.
Book (edited) [APA—pp. 202; 204]

- If the book has an editor instead of an author, place the editor’s name in the author’s position, followed by (Ed.) for editor or (Eds.) for editors.
- If the book is a compilation of chapters written by various authors, see Chapter in an Edited Book (p. 18).


Book (two authors) [APA—pp. 175-176]

- Use commas to separate last names from initials and to separate each author from the next.
- Use an ampersand (&) before the second author.
- If the author has a suffix (ex. Jr. or II), use the pattern: Smith, B., Jr., & Jones, H.


Book (three to five authors or editors) [APA—pp. 175-176]

- List authors in the order that they appear on the cover of the book.
- Use commas to separate last names from initials and to separate each author from the next.


Book (six or more authors or editors) [APA—p. 184, 198]

- If there are up to seven authors, include all. If there are eight or more, include the first six, and then insert three ellipsis points and add the last author’s name.
- If the book is part of a volume or series, indicate the volume number in parentheses after the title.

Electronic version of a printed book (with DOI) [APA—p. 203]

- List author and title. DOI information takes the place of the publisher location and name.


Electronic version of a printed book (without DOI) [APA—p. 203]


Chapter or Article in an Edited Book [APA—p. 202]

- List the source by the name(s) of the author(s) of the chapter or article.
- Write the title of the chapter or article after the authors’ names.
- Introduce the title of the book by stating “In [editor’s name] (Ed.) or (Eds.),” (Note that the editor’s initials precede the last name).
- The page numbers at the end reflect the pages of the chapter or article within the book.


Encyclopedia or Dictionary (entire book) [APA—p. 204]


Encyclopedia or Dictionary (online) [APA—p. 205]

- Provide an exact URL address of the entry.

Encyclopedia or Dictionary (entry) [APA—p. 202]

- If there is no information about the author of an encyclopedia or dictionary entry, use the title of the entry.
- Write the word “In” before the title of the encyclopedia or dictionary.


4. Referencing periodicals

Use the following basic pattern for all periodicals (newspapers, journals, and magazines). This pattern may change slightly depending on the sources used.

**Author.** (Year). Title of article. *Title of periodical, volume* *(issue)*, p.-p. doi:

  xx.xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (if DOI is available)

**Author.** (Year). Title of article. *Title of periodical, volume* *(issue)*, p.-p. (if DOI is not available, printed)

**Author.** (Year). Title of article. *Title of periodical, volume* *(issue)*, p.-p. Retrieved from URL of the periodical homepage (if DOI is not available, online)

**Journal Article with a DOI (in print or online) [APA—p. 198]**


**Journal article without a DOI (printed) [APA—p. 199]**

Journal article without a DOI (online) [APA—p. 199]

- No retrieval date is necessary.
- Provide the URL of the journal homepage, not the actual article.


Magazine Article (in print) [APA—p. 200]

- Include a year and month for magazine articles.


Magazine Article (online) [APA—p. 200]

- Retrieval information should refer to the magazine home page.


Newspaper Article (with author, in print) [APA—p. 200]

- Include a year, month, and date for newspaper articles.


Newspaper Article (no author, in print) [APA—p. 200]

- If no author is available, list the entry by the title of the article.


Newspaper Article (online) [APA—p. 200]

News Article on a Website [APA—p. 201]

- The exact URL is provided because the website itself is not a periodical and the article may be difficult to locate without it.


5. Referencing Reports and Documents [APA—p. 205]

For reports and documents found online, it is important to identify if the author of the document and the publisher of the site are one and the same. If they are the same, the website publisher is listed as the author. If they are not, the website publisher is named in the retrieval section.

**Report by an Individual Author [APA—p. 205]**

- Website name is identified within the retrieval statement because the author of the report is not the organization that sponsors the website.
- An exact URL is used here because it may be difficult to locate the article on this site.
- Document title is italicized.


**Report by the Sponsoring Organization or Agency [APA—p. 205]**

- Under this category, the organization is the author. In other words, you are taking information written by an organization and presented on its own website.


The following is the general format for the documents:

| Name (Producer), & Name (Director). (Year). *Title* [Motion picture]. Country: Studio. (visual) | Writer’s name. (Copyright year). Song title [Recorded by]. On *Album title*. [CD]. Location: Label. (audio) |
| Film or Movie [APA—p. 209] |
| Television episode [APA—p. 209] |
| Video [APA—p. 209] |
| Film or Movie Review [APA—p. 209] |
7. **Referencing Internet Communication, Online Communities**

- Personal communications over the internet should be included in the in-text citations only. They should not appear on the reference page. See the entry *Quoting Personal Communication* on page 14.
- General format of internet communications is as follows:

  Author. (Year). Title of post [Description of form]. Retrieved from exact URL

**Online Bulletin Board Posting, Newsgroup, or Online Forum [APA—p. 215]**
- If the author’s name is not available, use the screen name.
- Do not italicize the title of the message.
- Provide the identifier for the message in brackets [ex.: Msg. 4].


**Message Posted to an Electronic Mailing List [APA—p. 215]**
- Use the same guidelines as for Online Bulletin Board (above), but also include the name of the mailing list (Ref-Links) and the full address for the archived version of the message.
- Capitalize all words of the subject line of the posting.


**Blog post [APA—p. 215]**
- A blog is an on-going record by an individual or an organization on a particular topic.


**Data File [APA—pp. 210-211]**
- A data file is usually a spreadsheet with statistical information used for research.

Dispute Systems Design in Conflict Resolution

Alex Smith

Nova Southeastern University

[BEH 2120: Introduction to Conflict Resolution

Prof. Belandi]
Abstract

Dispute Systems Design (DSD) is a widely used method of conflict management. This paper outlines a system developed for Sample College, a post-secondary college in New York that does not currently utilize a conflict resolution or management system. After an analysis of all components of the institution, a dispute system was designed to address how conflicts are to be addressed and prevented. Recommendations specifically address communication breakdowns between administration, staff, and faculty. They include establishing college-wide conflict management procedures, building student and employee motivation to engage in conflict resolution, and developing necessary resources for effective conflict management.
Dispute Systems Design in Conflict Resolution

The field of conflict resolution can still be said to be in its infancy. Over the past 60 years, there has been an increase in the number of theories and practical applications of conflict resolution methodologies in a variety of social contexts such as organizational relationships. Managing disputes has become a major focus of conflict resolution as organizations cope with increased cultural diversity, employees retiring from the workforce and costs associated with litigation. They also deal with a decrease in the number of qualified employees entering the workforce (Conbere, 2001). Practitioners look at the whole system of interactions within an organization. Dispute Systems Design addresses organizational conflict concerns in a cost-effective manner. Its broader impact has been influential in shifting the focus to conflict management (Rowe, 1997), a more proactive approach to handling organizational conflict...

Ury, Brett, and Goldberg (1988) created the original model of DSD as a result of their consulting work within strike-ridden Caney Creek mine. They classified existing approaches to conflict resolution into three categories, power, rights, or interests, and placed them on a cost continuum.

Organizations with a distressed system of conflict resolution primarily utilize rights and power-based approaches. While they acknowledge that “not all disputes can be—or should be—resolved by reconciling interests” (Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1988, p. 18), organizations feel that an effective conflict resolution system should approach most of the conflicts in the following order: interest, rights, and power. The original systems design model offers six founding principles (p. 41).
This section offers an overview of scholarly research on the topic. The job of the writer is to summarize the current discussion within the academic community by pointing out major research concerns and findings.

**Literature Review**

Social conflict has been a subject of extensive studies (Senechal de la Roche, 1996; Borrero, 2001; Cramer, 2003). Nonetheless, the research has been somewhat lopsided in that social scientists primarily investigate conflicts which result in group violence. Collective violence received so much attention because it is immediately apparent and much more easily studied. However, it is only one of the ways that social conflicts can be solved. Conflicts are generally approached in three ways – through contention, yielding, or problem-solving (Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994; Uri, Brett, & Goldberg, 1998). . . .

Social scientists agree that individuals and groups often employ extreme forms of contention to rectify what they perceive as injustice. Senechal de la Roche (1996) calls it a “form of self-help”. She names four types of group violence – lynching, rioting, vigilantism, and terrorism. These are distinguished on the basis of the level of organization and liability each carries. . . .

The type of violence more likely to occur can be determined by the degree of social polarization and the continuity of the unjust negative behavior. Senechal de la Roche (1996) claims that when “those in conflict are relationally and culturally extremely distant, have little or no interdependence, and differ sharply in status” (p. 116). . . .

Inequality, as one of the variables leading to group violence, has received separate attention. Many studies have focused on various types of inequality in an effort to predict its effects on group behavior. Cramer (2003) proposes that the type of existing inequality has a much greater impact on conflict than its extent (p. 397). . . .

Other studies look at the historically existing structural inequality as a determinant of violent behavior. Caldwell et al. (2004) and Anderson, Dyson and Grandison (1998) suggest that when certain sectors of the population experience continual structural inequality, group violence is likely to be perpetrated as a response to historic oppression. . . .
This section describes how the research was conducted.

The Sample College (“Sample”) is a private four-year college located in Downtown Manhattan in New York City. The college is highly culturally diverse, with faculty and students representing Eastern European, Asian, and Latin American populations. The college faces a constant flow of student complaints about unfulfilled promises and unmet expectations, while at the same time dealing with faculty complaints about student placement and the pressure to produce unrealistic results.

Method

Personal experiences, interviews, and informal conversations with colleagues were used to collect information about common disputes and the types of conflict resolutions employed at the Sample College. This information was used to create a dispute resolution system that could be applied to the organization’s unique mission, culture, and environment.

Assessment

Organizational assessment is required when designing a dispute resolution system. Two methods will be combined when examining the organizational resolution system at Sample. The first method, proposed by Costantino and Merchant (1996), outlines the process in four steps:

- Organization (what does the organization do, and what is its mission?)
- Disputes (what types of disputes are most prevalent?)
- Resolution methods (what methods are employed to address disputes?)
- Results (what are the outcomes of current resolution practices?)

The second method is proposed by Ury, Brett and Goldberg (1988), who break down the process into three sections—disputes, resolution methods and rationale. The rationale section asks why certain resolution methods are employed instead of others. A combination of the two methods will be used to assess the case.

The section is written in the past tense because the research has already been completed. However, if this were a research proposal, the method section would be written in the future tense.
In this section, the results presented above are discussed in terms of their significance.

**Results**

While some conflicts may be satisfactorily resolved by the Dean or a faculty member, most parties feel that long-standing disputes have not been adequately resolved. Because administrators are unwilling to meet with students, students do not feel that their concerns are addressed.

Faculty members at Sample feel betrayed. They are offered support when speaking with administrators, yet are presented with unrealistic expectations. Faculty members feel that they must comply or face the consequences, which brings them neither satisfaction nor a sense of empowerment.

**Discussion**

In designing a dispute resolution system, the characteristics of The Sample College were taken into account. As discussed earlier, Ury, Brett and Goldberg (1988) propose six principles of dispute system design. The first of these is placing the focus on interests, which can be accomplished through procedures, motivation, skills, and resources (p. 42). Focusing on interests means providing a number of methods that allow parties to resolve conflicts before they are escalated to the level of rights and power.

Assessment of the organization drew attention to several important issues. First, the college deals with a very specific population of clients and staff who demonstrate a deep-rooted conflict over the organization’s mission and how to accomplish it effectively. Second, Sample’s centralized decision-making prevents effective conflict management because conflicts are not resolved on the basis of interests.
Conclusion

The Sample College should address disputes as early as possible by establishing procedures for initial negotiation. One way of dealing with student grievances would be for administrators to discuss issues directly with students. Establishing an ombudsman and communicating to staff and students that participation in constructive discussions is encouraged, will also help to eliminate retaliation. In addition, all staff should be trained in communication and mediation/negotiation, and peer mediators should be established. Forums should be set up to discuss on-going work-related issues and procedures should be set in order to implement faculty/staff suggestions.

According to Rowe (1997), an effective dispute resolution system “provides ‘problem-solving’ options based on the interests of the disputants, and ‘justice’ options based on rights and power” (p. 84). The recommendations presented in this case focused on creating options that addressed parties’ interests and built in preventative measures that would eliminate unnecessary conflict.
DISPUTE SYSTEMS DESIGN

References


Note: For the purpose of demonstrating a variety of references, this page contains references that do not match the preceding paper. This is only a sample. Please remember, that in a real paper references should match in-text citations.