Format of Teaching on APA Style

Each discipline has its own rules and methods for citing and referencing the works of others in the community. In terms of rules, the format of the citation and reference help with clarity and consistency of information for readers in the given discipline. In APA style, we give the author's last name & year (as the year indicates it's currency). The page number is included for a quote (so that the reader can later refer to that direct page).

**Purpose:** Teaching students the following rationale for citing: (1) Giving credit to another for his/her prior work, (2) indicating the writer's own familiarity with the academic community's discussion on the topic, (3) making it easier for interested readers to further pursue something discussed - by referring to the given citation & reference.

In-class time: initial quote/paraphrase assignment takes one class period; the following activity takes about 15 minutes for follow-up questions and group work; follow-up instruction the next day takes about 15 minutes*

Out-of-class time: as needed for graded assessment

**Activity:** Students complete an in-class paraphrase/quote assignment on an article while I answer any questions students might have about APA format or paraphrasing. Then they’re given a homework assignment to pick a peer-reviewed article and to repeat the same activity with this article.

The first homework assignment on paraphrasing and quoting was to help them learn the 'rules of the game.' I went through the class and briefly checked off that each student had done the homework assignment - and just by looking at each assignment for three to five seconds - as they were being checked off, found about one error with every single assignment (most were small - but some left out the citation entirely). I then had students show their work in group's of three - so that they could help one another - and I went through on a second pass and again helped many students with their questions that they had as a result of the assignment. This in-class portion of reviewing the assignment was about fifteen minutes. I then told them to treat what they had done as a draft, to correct it, and turn in their final copy at the next class session (to be graded).

**Morality:** I shared with the class that from this point forward, it would be their moral responsibility to give appropriate credit on subsequent assignments. Whether or not they italicized the journal's name would always just be a 'rule issue' - but that it was their moral obligation to (1) either paraphrase substantially, cite, and reference or to (2) quote and use quotation marks, cite, and reference.

**Assessment:** Distinguishing between 'rules of the game' and 'moral obligation' caught the students' attention. I think it helped them to see how serious the issue would be taken if failure to cite, quote, or reference did not occur. This presentation lasted about fifteen minutes. Then having the opportunity to do a low stakes 'Rules of the Game' assignment, to get a hands-on experience of applying the APA rules, was clearly advantageous. They learned a great deal about APA style from doing the assignment, from meeting briefly with me, discussing it with
their peers, and asking follow up questions. The subsequent in-class time to look over the assignment was again about fifteen minutes. I actually have a second 'Rules of the game' follow up assignment to give students further practice (before the training wheels come off and they cite on their own), but definitely having at least one of these assignments was of great value to them.

*Is this a lot of class time? Yes—it involves at least one whole class session, but students really do seem to need that time as a class. Afterwards, I hold students accountable for good citation, paraphrasing, quoting, and referencing behavior.