UNIT 2 MATERIAL COLLECTION AND NOTES TAKING

Contents

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology is a system of methods used for collecting data, information etc. for the solution of problems identified for research. In order to begin a research work we have to consult relevant sources of information. The sources provide data gathered from observation, interviewing, mailing etc., particularly for philosophical research mostly the data is collected from journal articles, research reports, conference papers, thesis, project reports etc. The researcher should be capable of sorting out the reliable material useful for his research work advanced by these sources. After determining the reliability and usefulness of the sources, we will have to take notes on it. In this unit, we are making a detail study of the method of notes taking in the process of research.

2.2 PRACTICAL HINTS FOR MATERIAL COLLECTION

Material Collection

Collection of data is the major task of a student. It comprises the finding of sources and gathering materials for the topic. "Collection of data is like collecting pearls from deep sea." (Ganapathy 2003, 123). Identifying the best sources is the first step in collecting the data. Standard, authentic, reliable and published sources are to be preferred. One has to avoid very popular, unscientific, biased and unpublished materials. In choosing the publications too, care should be taken to identify standard publications. Bibliography Cards and Notes Cards are prepared for gathering views and ideologies of different authors. With one's own ideas, the summary of ideas or the word by word quotations are noted down in the Note Cards. With these cards, one is ready to write and present the paper.

Credibility of Materials

In the process of research work good material collection from reliable sources is only one among the different methods. Nevertheless while doing research it has enough significance since the accuracy in taking notes will help us to save a lot of time while preparing the final report, bibliography etc. There are different methods of note taking. The various types of note taking like summary, paraphrasing, précis, and quotation are equally important. By adhering to proper method of notes taking would save lots of time in the course of research.

It is important for us to know the reliability of the materials that we base the data or information used in our research. Not every material we get should be used, since they may be prejudiced or motivated. Some significant questions to find out the reliability of the already existing research material are: In what source did you find the article? Was it reviewed by experts in the field before publication? Does the article have a stated research question or problem? Or, can you determine the focus of the work? Is the article logically organized and easy to follow? In what way is this relevant to the research problem? Are the procedures clear enough that you could repeat the work and get similar results?

Identify books and articles related to the research. This can be done through browsing the latest edition of encyclopaedias on the subject matter or using search engine on the internet. Make sure that these books and articles are available to you either in the your library or in any institutions near-by where you can access them. Author-based research calls for a distinction between primary and secondary sources. You can also include online sources provided they are of academic standard.

Keeping Record of the Sources

Use separate card (6" x 4") for entering then bibliographic information of each work whether book or article. Choose the most recent edition and the best translation if choices are available in the library. Note down the complete and precise references of books and articles from the start in the card including the shelf where they can be located. Arrange the cards in alphabetical order according to the surname of the author. If the study is author-based, then maintain two sets of cards – one for primary sources and the other for secondary sources. Arrange the secondary sources in alphabetical order according to the surname of the author. Eventually, you will transform this into your bibliography.

Necessary Data for a Book

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Name of the Library

Call number

Author – Surname followed by given name(s)

Title of the Book in italics

Details of Publication

Personal Remarks
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Specimen Bibliography Card for a Book

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JDV Library

DO-254-W3

Welsch, David

Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations

London: Croom Helm, 1983

(This books seems to have 2 particularly useful chapters)
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Necessary Data for an Essay from an Edited Work

> Name of the Library
>
> Call Number
>
> Name of the Edited Work in italics
>
> Editor – First name followed by the surname
>
> Author – Surname followed by given name(s)
>
> Title of the Article in double quotes with exact page numbers
>
> Details of Publication
>
> Personal Remarks

Specimen Card for an Article from a Journal

> Name of the Library
>
> Name of the Journal in italics
>
> Author – Surname followed by given name(s)
>
> Title of the Article in double quotes with exact page numbers
>
> Details of Publication including volume and number if any
>
> Personal Remarks

2.3   METHODS OF NOTE-TAKING

The clarity in reporting a research work is influenced by the reader in view, how technical the problem is, the research's hold over his facts and techniques, his command over language and the form and fullness of notes, i.e., of the data and documentation. For keeping accurate records we need high quality notes and this shows the importance of note-taking in research. Thus notes taking is an important part while writing a research paper. This records the information of the sources that we will use while reporting our research work. Therefore, it is necessary that we should critically evaluate the texts or articles before we select them and then make necessary choices before taking notes on them. Otherwise, there is a chance to overload with information which will be time consuming.

To take effective notes, first, we should understand thoroughly the information contained in the sources. Then notes should be taken from it so as to develop knowledge and comprehension of the subject. Thus going through a source, making a decision about what is useful for a paper and writing notes on it should encourage the researcher to think more deeply and understand the relevance of the notes taken by him to the research topic. Again, he should also sort out the material he needs from other information surrounding it in the text, while taking notes on it. To make use of this information effectively in the research work, care should be taken to record it in such a way that it can be easily sorted, reorganised and incorporated in the paper.

We should take notes in such a way that it briefly summarizes the most important points of each source. Main points has to be stressed in the notes and it should be clear and concise as possible. The details that are unnecessary

to the research area should be avoided. It is not always necessary to write complete sentences or even complete words. We can use abbreviations which saves a lot of time. But it should be used in such a way that we can understand them in the notes when we consult it later. One important thing to be remembered during note taking is that we should always remember to be record the page number in the text or articles from which our note is taken. As far as possible, all bibliographical details has to be added for each source. If possible, we should also try to the review the chapter or article after note taking so as to make it sure that we have not missed any important points and also to see that our notes are accurate and complete. The notes has to be recorded in such a way that we can easily locate all the points related to a particular subject easily and readily identify the source from which a piece of information is taken. Thus the requirements of a good not taking system are as follows: It should facilitate ready location of the recorded information when required. It should allow flexible handling and organising of information and All notes related to a particular concept of a topic should be available together.

There are different methods in taking notes. Some researchers take notes by hand on index cards or in sheets of paper of a note book. Some others prefer using a computer to take notes as it will save their time as well as improve the accuracy in transcribing the material from the sources. While collecting data by taking notes we should set down first the authors full name and complete title of the source. By doing this we will be able to locate the same source easily while working for bibliography.

Card style

If we are taking notes on cards we should record each piece of information from a source in a separate card. For each source the completer bibliographical information has to be recorded in one card, which will be our bibliographical card. Thus this is not only helpful for accuracy and organisation but also, technically while compiling the bibliography. If we are taking notes on cards, we should mention the name of the author as usual and the name of the book is to be underlined. While taking down the matter, we should leave some margin on the left side of the card. The card possessing the material from an article from a book should first mention the name of the author and then the title of the article in inverted commas with the work cited in underline and the page no:. If there are two authors, we should mention the name of the first author and write the other or 'et al'. For e.g.: Kootz , Harold, et al, ' Management ' Mc Graw-Hill International Book Company, New Delhi, 1980. p. 120. If the publication is an edited one, we should use 'ed ' after the name.

For multiple notes from the same source, we should record a short form of the title and author's last name in the upper right hand corner of each card. We should always record the page umber from which our summaries, ideas, paraphrases or direct quotes have been taken in the lower right hand corner. Materials taken from journal should indicate the name of the author, title of the article within inverted commas and also the volume and details of journal along with the page number. For e.g.:-Ananthu, T .S. "Hind Swaraj- Its Relevance Today." Gandhi Marg. New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, Vol. 31. NO. 2, July- September 2009. Pg no. 192.

In order to facilitate organising and reorganising information subject or topic headings on the cards can be written in pencil. To make note taking on cards more convenient and easy sometimes two sets of cards are used. One is source cards and the second is known as note cards. Source cards are used for noting bibliographical information and the note cards are used for actual note taking. In the source cards bibliographic information should be recorded in the proper bibliographic format. 'Author's name, the title of the book, the publisher's name, place and year. On the note cards information from a printed source is recorded. To make it more flexible , it is better to note a single fact or an idea on each card and to use only one side of the card. In the body of the card, first, the name of the author and the title of the book or article may be noted in order to avoid making any mistake in identifying the concerned source card. The page number of the source from which the idea or fact has been taken also is to be noted. Thus, the two sets of cards together will facilitate in arranging the notes appropriately for drafting the report.

Note Book Style

In this method, we should record all information on a single page or a series of pages in the note book. We should write all the bibliographical details including the author, title, place of publication, publisher and year of publication at the top of the page of each source. Notes should be recorded in the middle of the page leaving wide margins. In the right hand margin page numbers of the source from which we have made the notes has to be recorded. The specific topic to which each piece of information is related can be noted in the left hand margin . For each source we are consulting , a new page can be allotted. Notes can be listed according to topic also. But here care should be taken to list the page numbers because otherwise it will be very confusing.

Note taking in a computer

Notes can be entered in a computer and these notes will be handy. We can enter the notes into a word processor as separate files in one directory. Otherwise, we can enter all notes in a single file rendering new name or phrase for each new note. In the first method the needed notes can be moved to appreciate place in our draft by copying and pasting method. For a short paper, it is better to opt the computer method and if it is a longer, which makes use of many sources, it is better to opt the cards system because card system is the most suitable method of note taking. It meets all the requirements of a good recording system. Cards are tougher and so can withstand handling. As they are compact, they can be handled easily and can be stored conveniently in boxes. In addition, the cards are most flexible while arranging, rearranging, grouping, and classifying information.

Types of note-taking

Different types of note-taking include –summary, paraphrase, quotation and précis.

Summary

If we want only the general idea of a large amounts of material, it is better to summarise it. This type of note taking describes and rewrites the source material without specific concern for style and expression. But it should be

done with great care and in this type of note taking we should try to keep the material as short as possible. Quotation marks may be provided for key phrase that cannot be paraphrased. Name of the author and page number also has be mentioned in the note.

Paraphrase

It is restating the material in our own words. As we have to restate the thought, meaning and attitude of another person in our own words, paraphrase may be considered as the most difficult type of note taking. In order to be sound and perfect, in paraphrasing we should try to rewrite the original in about the same number of words as possible. In text, citation may be provided to the source by mentioning the author and page number in the paraphrase. Care should be taken while paraphrasing exceptional words and phrases in the original. It is better to retain by enclosing them within quotation marks. We should always try to avoid word by word copying as far as possible in this type of note taking. Paraphrasing will help the researcher to understand the author's ideas rather than just mechanically copying them.

Quotation

Direct quotation may be used for documentation of a major argument where a foot note would not be sufficient and where paraphrasing the passage might cause misinterpretation. The exact words of an author or the exact words from an official publication must be quoted. Quotation notes are necessary because it will enable us to capture opinion of the experts on the subject. It will also help us to show that we have carried out research in that area carefully and also to show that there is an authoritative opinion on the topic we have discussed in the research area. Where a few paragraphs or sentences are required to be quoted from a quotation which is very long, it is permissible to omit sections of an original passage by a procedure called ellipsis. To indicate ellipsis three spaced full stops(…) are inserted. An ellipsis can occur at the beginning or the end of a quotation. Use double quotation marks at the beginning and the end of quotation. We should never forget to acknowledge the quotations by way of a footnote or otherwise.

Other rules to be followed while taking quotation notes include –

We should always try to quote from primary and secondary sources. The quoted material selected should be important and well phrased.We should always use exact words of the source. If at all possible, we should quote key sentences and short passages instead of entire paragraphs. Quotation marks should be used in the notes so as to distinguish it from summary and paraphrase. If we are downloading a text and taking quotation from it into our paper, we should always remember to place quotation marks around the words taken from the source.

Précis

This is quick summary notes. It can be used to review an article or a book or create an abstract. The original source has to condensed here with precision and directness so that the tone of it is preserved. It is better to write the précis note in our own language but exceptional phrases from the original can be retained here by enclosing it in quotation marks. Documentation also should be provided.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Good note taking will help us a lot in avoiding plagiarism which is the act of taking ideas , passages etc. from an author and presenting them as one's own. Writers plagiarise when they present the words or ideas of others without making it clear that these are not their own words or ideas. In order to make sure that we have not plagiarised, we should see that each of the phrase or ideas borrowed from other sources are credited to that source. Acknowledgement of the source is that which distinguishes a scholar from a plagiarist. In the MLA Hand book For Writers of Research Papers, Joseph Gibaldi has mentioned of different forms of plagiarism. According to him, "the most blatant form of plagiarism is to obtain and submit as your own a paper written by someone else. Other, less conspicuous form of plagiarism includes the failure to give appropriate acknowledgement when repeating or paraphrasing another's wording, when taking a particular apt phrase, and when paraphrasing another's argument or presenting another's line of thinking". Thus plagiarism is a failure to acknowledge borrowed material.

In order to avoid plagiarism we should always make a list of all the writers and sources from which the viewpoints we have used in our research work and should acknowledge the same. Acknowledgement may be made in several ways-(1) in the bibliography (2) within the text, either by specific reference or parenthetical reference or (3) in a foot note which is the commonest form of acknowledgement.

The most common and serious error in taking notes is to copy the wording of the source directly, either word-for word or with minor changes. This not only prevents the researcher in processing the information fully into their mind, but also encourages plagiarism since the notes find their way directly into the paper. The best way to avoid this is not to look at your sources as you write your notes. In that way we will be sure to use our own words. Including too many details in notes will slow down our research work. If we are doing this, we are not distinguishing between significant and insignificant information. Notes are meant to be concise. Direct quotation should be used only when we have a special purpose. If we use a direct quotation we should copy it accurately. We should remember to include page number on notes. Otherwise, we will have to spend valuable time, returning to the sources to find page numbers. Note taking is thus an important phase in the process of research and it helps a lot in saving our time during the presentation of Research paper.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR NOTES TAKING

- Prepare a separate dossier for each of the work

- Prepare a set of cards to note down citations which you think you would quote in your paper

- You need to practice the art of omission though you may be tempted to take down everything

- Equip yourself with techniques like précis writing and paraphrasing.

- Avoid reproducing the words of the author instead try to employ your own words.

- Remember to note down only those citations which you think cannot be said otherwise.

General Tips

- Read primary sources carefully and secondary sources rapidly, if it is an author-based research.

- Begin reading from the book/article recently published on the theme or of the author if it is an author-based study.

- Look for striking ideas pertaining to the subject.

- Summarize the ideas accurately.

- Take notes accurately by giving reference to the exact page, work, and edition.

- For passages taken verbatim to be quoted in the text, use standard cards and give exact reference and organize them thematically.

- For the summary, use the A4 size paper divided into three unequal parts: the left side for the summary idea of the author, right side for your comments and observations, and the bottom for technical words and cross-reference to the card.

Tips for Personal Critical Comments

- Identifying arguments and conclusions

- Identifying implications of arguments

- Identifying Assumptions

- Evaluating the truth of reasons and assumptions

- Evaluating support for conclusions

Identifying Arguments and Conclusions

- To identify reasoning, we need to look for indicator words in the conclusion. Some indicator words to be sought in the concluding statement are "should," "must," "it is evident," "obviously," "so," "thus," "hence" and "therefore." Example: "He must be older than 42; he has a daughter who is 39 years old."

- When indicator words are absent, look for relationship between statements in a passage. Example: Knowing the dangers of smoking is not sufficient to stop people from smoking. Everybody knows that smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease. One third of the population still smokes.

- When there is no conclusion in the passage, then it does not contain an argument.

Identifying Implications of Arguments

- This involves either of the two skills: parallel arguments and applying principles. Parallel arguments from a known domain help us to find the flaw in the argument. Applying principles calls for consistency in reasoning and its consequence in all similar situations.

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- The argument is faulty if an example from a known domain with parallel structures of argument can be shown to be faulty. Example:

  o Original argument: We have all had the experience of being deceived by our senses – the stick which looks bent when it is straight – and all the information we get through our senses is potentially illusory, therefore sense experience is always unreliable.

  o Parallel argument: We have all had the experience of being lied to – that even lovers lie – and that everyone is potentially a liar, therefore no one is trustworthy.

- Application of principles to other cases may show us that the principle needs to be modified or rejected. Example: "Killing is wrong." this principle implies that the killing in self-defense is wrong. If we are convinced that killing in self-defense is not wrong then the original principle has to undergo modification.

Identifying Assumptions

- There are two types of assumptions: Assumptions underlying basic reasons and Assumptions as unstated conclusion.

- Assumptions underlying basic reasons: The reason provided for an argument is based on an assumption, that is, no empirical study or any study beyond disproof as has established this as a fact. Example: The number of accidents will reduce when strict measures of penalties and punishments are deployed by the government. The underlying assumption is better enforcement of law is directly related to the decrease in the number of accidents. Without any proof, this claim that the reason for the high number of accidents is lack of proper enforcement of law.

- Assumptions as unstated conclusions: A conclusion based on potentially disputable premises can be called assumptions as unstated consequences. Example: the burglar must have left by the fire escape. This person is not in the building now, but has not been seen leaving the building, and there are guards posted at each entrance. The conclusion is that the burglar must have left the fireplace, but the premises are still disputable. It is likely that the guards were not sufficiently watchful.

Evaluating the Truth of Reasons and Assumptions

- The authority of the person in the subject in question

- Factors that can possibly distort the accuracy of the person's judgments

- Other sources either corroborating or contradicting the person's position.

Evaluating Support for Conclusions

- Every conclusion is supported by reason or reasons. Conclusion may state a supposed fact (it is dangerous to drive a car after drinking alcohol) or make a recommendation (you ought not to drive your car). Some arguments introduce their conclusion with "so" or "therefore." A

conclusion need not be the last statement in the argument. Example: "You have to take a Happitum travel sickness pill when you go on the ferry. They are very effective against sea-sickness, and you have always been sick in the past when you have travelled by sea."

- One way of identifying faulty reasoning is through the use of the principle "some does not imply all." Example: Some people say that the depiction of violence on television has no effect on viewers' behaviour. However, if what was shown on television did not affect behaviour, television advertising would never influence viewers to buy certain products. But we know that it does. So it cannot be true that television violence does not affect behaviour. Faulty reasoning: The fact that advertising shown on television affects viewers' behaviour is not a good reason for accepting that everything on television affects viewers' behaviour.

- Another way of identifying faulty reasoning is the lack of sufficient evidence. If people became healthier as the affluence of the country increased, we would expect the population to be healthier now than it was thirty years ago. But over the last thirty years new illnesses, such as chronic fatigue syndrome, have appeared, and we have become more vulnerable to old diseases such as heart disease and cancer. So the increased wealth of the country has not produced improvement in the health of the population. Faulty reasoning: Even if some new diseases have appeared and old diseases have become more common during the last thirty years, it does not follow that the population is less healthy than it was thirty years ago, because people may have long periods of good health before suffering from these diseases.

- A third way of identifying faulty reasoning is by verifying if correlation is equated with cause. In the above stated example, claiming that increased affluence had produced an improvement in the health of the population, the argument has flawed because it assured that because two things have occurred together, one has caused the other, and because it failed to consider other possible causes of the improvements in the health of the population.

2.4 MAKING AN OUTLINE

After the notes are taken carefully, read them to get a bird's-eye view of the material. Then, as a first step towards writing the paper, prepare an outline. Include the important questions you want to address and the main divisions you want to make. This helps avoiding materials that, though interesting, are irrelevant to your paper, but also focus on materials that are relevant. The outline divides the points into various groups, co-ordinates the main points, subordinates the sub-points, and discards trivia. Look for a general structure. Arrange your ideas and notes according to this structure, looking for order, progress, and forcefulness. **Subdivision**

Avoid single subdivision. To divide you always need at least two parts. This means, there can never be an "A" without a "B," a "1" without "2," an "a" without a "b." For an enumeration having several subdivisions, one of the following schemes or notation and indentation could be used.

Model of a Scheme - 1

I.   Main heading

    A.   Subheading (level 1)

        1.   Subheading (level 2)

            a.   Subheading (level 3)

                i.   Subheading (level 4)

                ii. Subheading (level 4)

            b.   Subheading (level 3)

                1. Subheading (level 2)

    B.   Subheading (level 1)

II. Main heading

Model of a Scheme - 2

1.   Title

    1.1 Subtitle

        1.1.1   Subtitle

        1.1.2   Subtitle

    1.2 Subtitle

        1.1.1   Subtitle

        1.1.2   Subtitle

1.   Title

    1.1 Subtitle

        1.1.1   Subtitle

        1.1.2   Subtitle

    1.2 Subtitle