CONNECTING RESEARCH TO YOUR WRITING

Integrating the research that you have found with your own idea is paramount in composing a research paper; don't just leave others' ideas hanging or assume that the reader sees the same connections that you do. Make sure that every source you present is directly related to your research question, and <u>explain this connection to your reader</u>. Establish what your argument is, why you are making it, and how it differs from what others have said. Here are four good ways to incorporate data or ideas from other sources into your research paper:

1. **As a means to extend your thinking.** After presenting an author's ideas, show how these ideas lead you to your own conclusions about the topic.
    <u>Example</u>: Although X does not say so [directly/explicitly], she apparently assumes that _____.
    Based on this research, I will argue _____.
    <u>Example</u>: X's claim that _____ rests upon the questionable assumption that _____. While other scholarly authors have sided with X's claim, I will argue, instead, that _____.

2. **As evidence or example.** Use others' research to support the argument you are making.
    <u>Example</u>: Although X seems trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today's concerns about _____.
    As my argument will highlight, _____ is of utmost importance for _____.
    <u>Example</u>: I agree with X's view that _____ because, as recent research has shown, _____.
    These ideas support my argument that _____.

3. **As counter-evidence or counter-example.** Good arguments will generally account for counter-claims. In your research, you may encounter ideas that (in your view) are oversimplified or make incorrect assumptions. Ask yourself, "Why do intelligent, rational people tend to make this argument? Why is my argument better? What data, information, or concepts are those other people overlooking?"
    <u>Example</u>: Yet is it always true that _____? Is it always the case, as I have been suggesting, that _____?
    <u>Example</u>: Some readers might challenge my view that _____. After all, many believe that _____. Indeed, my own argument that _____ seems to ignore _____ and _____.

4. **As opportunity for analysis or interpretation.** If, for example, one of your sources is especially interesting or important, you may want to analyze and interpret it in depth.
    <u>Example</u>: Although I [agree/disagree] with X up to a point, I cannot [accept/fully endorse] his overall conclusion that _____.
    <u>Example</u>: While it is true that _____, it does not necessarily follow that _____.
    <u>Example</u>: Whereas X provides ample evidence that _____, Y and Z's research on ___ and _____ convinces me that _____ instead.

It is totally okay, and likely, that you will not use all elements of all the research you found! If it doesn't fit within the scope of your paper, let it go. Including excess information will only confuse your reader about the central points of your paper.

If you're not sure which format to use, ask your professor! The Writing Studio has guidebooks to help you with appropriate citation for each of these formats.