**Knowing how to use the concepts of Reliability, Validity, and Credibility, in your Research Project annotations**

**Reliability:**

Not all written sources are reliable, regardless of whether the language, theories and claims they make, appear grounded or reasonable. More so, people tend to believe a source is reliable especially if the information it contains acknowledges their (the readers) thoughts and views. This means the reader has not considered the aspects of **bias** and **reliability**. In addition, it is also meant the reader has not considered other perspectives that oppose their own thoughts and potential bias.

To evaluate the reliability of a piece of writing, you need to consider several issues related to the **subject** and to **the person** or **publisher** that **presents the information**.

Ask yourself and find the information for the following:

1. Who is responsible for the information? Is an author or publisher listed at all?
2. What is the purpose of the information? To inform, to persuade etc?
3. Is the information correct? **See below**
4. **Does the source contain reputable references to support and justify the claims and or theories contained within the source? To check the reliability of those references, check the sources bibliography and research those author(s) referenced. Are they reliable and credible? (see factors of credibility below)**
5. Is the information current? If the information is outdated, then you will need to consider whether the source is still reputable (is still used in other resources), or if you need to research a more current source were the information more accurate and reliable.
6. Does a date of publication appear, and or has the information been updated recently?
7. How will this piece of work be reliable and applicable to your research question? What will it help you to answer? More importantly, HOW?

**Validity:**

The concept of validity aligns itself with factors of reliability, in that **a piece of information will be valid if it accurately measures or represents the information it intends to measure or represent**. This may sound confusing, but in fact, understanding validity could not be easier.

Measuring validity requires:

1. Check the provided information against other reliable sources to verify accuracy.

For example, if all peer reviewed journals, scholarly articles etc have thorough evidence and findings that stipulate cigarettes cause cancer, yet another source objects (says otherwise), then the lone source must questioned for accuracy (validity) and for credibility to verify the information.

1. Searching for information that is included or obtained from reliable and trustworthy sources. Examples include academic articles, peer reviewed journals, books, university websites, government websites/ agencies, academic associations, and professional organisations.

**Credibility:**

In general, for academic writing, a credible source is one that I **unbiased** and is **backed up with evidence.** When annotating your source, and even writing your outcome, always use and cite credible sources. Use this checklist to determine if an article is credible or not. Remember, the source also needs to **abide by the concepts of reliability and validity** for you to then determine how it can be applied to your work.

1. Who are the authors? Are they respected and well known in the field of their research? Are they easily identifiable?
2. Have they written about similar topics? What are their credentials? Most articles or information on the web will provide a link to do further research on the topic or support the claims that are made. When this information is not adequately provided one can assume that the source is not reputable
3. Is the source reputable? Has it been published on a reputable, non-biased website, or in a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal, and not from a wiki or a blog? If it has been published on a blog, then you must critically determine the value of bias in the piece of work using the protocols of understanding validity and reliability
4. Is there supporting documentation (graphs, charts, illustrations or other supporting documentation)? How does it support the information?
5. Is the source in-depth (more than a page or two), with an abstract, a reference list, and documented research or data? (this is mainly applicable for

**Factors to consider implementing in your annotations that will highlight your critical thinking skills and demonstrate further connectivity to the ‘D1, 2, 3 and 4’ Performance Standards.**

1. How do your annotations relate to one another? Discuss the similarities or contrasts within the information you have researched.
2. Future considerations – Is there anything from the source(s) that redirects your thinking? For example, additional factors you could consider researching or including in your work. If so, then discuss them – show me your level of deep thinking
3. Is there anything from the source that indicates the need to research additional resources to support the claims made within the source?