

Research Skills Development

Developing research skills is an important part of academic development for all students, but for students who are blind or have low vision, it is of critical importance. As blindness and low vision is primarily an information disability, the ability to research information and to find accessible sources of knowledge is critical to both school and life outcomes. Learning to be organised in one's research and to work smarter, not harder, assists learners with blindness or vision impairment to develop organisational skills, something that both assists at school as well as in the world of work. Understanding how to break down research tasks and allocate time to particular duties helps pupils to develop their overall time management and organisational skills.

When researching a topic students need to ensure that the source they are utilising is authentic, trusted and peer reviewed. Learning to identify reputable sources, especially when using the internet to conduct research, is vital to producing a sound research assignment.

Organisation is key to developing good research skills. Students who plan their assignment and systematically research the key information and supporting evidence ensure that their time spent researching is targeted. Many students with low vision or blindness may be slower at some tasks throughout the reading, research and writing process, so learning to target one's research, and work smarter not harder, is essential for good time management and to reduce eye fatigue.

Students who organise their research notes well and include URLs in their notes referencing and bibliographies, are better able to revise their materials for tests and assignments without the additional eye fatigue associated with scrolling the net to look up information already sourced and reviewed. Furthermore, including URLs and acknowledging the ideas of authors avoids plagiarism and provides supporting evidence in assignments.

Students with blindness or low vision can readily navigate to the address bar utilising key commands. These commands will differ depending on the chosen technological tool being used for research, reading, and writing tasks. These can include:

- For Mac and IOS students can quickly locate the address bar using "Command + L" if they are using a standard keyboard.
- For browsers using Windows, the address bar can be navigated to with the "Alt + D" short cut key.

Research tasks can be made more efficient if students are:

Proficient touch-typist and understand the keyboard lay-out.

- Know the short cut keys to cut, copy and paste.
- Can locate the address bar when using the internet and copy and paste the URL into their documents.
- Know how to efficiently navigate through a web page or electronic document using their preferred reading and writing tool.
- Can access materials in formats suitable to their learning.

Learning to use sound key terms when researching using the net is important. The following tips can assist a learner to research more efficiently:

- Make sure the search terms are clear.
- Consider adding a minus sign to subtract information or add a plus to ensure particular information is included. There are a range of methods that can be used to modify search terms to include and exclude information from your search that may benefit the user's specific research request.
- Including search terms in inverted commas ensures that the search is for that exact term rather than a synonym of the search.
- Searches can also be conducted using dates to guide a search (using before and after terms) which can again make research tasks faster for students.

YouTube Reference: [17 Google Search Techniques You Need To Master](#)

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