

## Bibliography, Referencing and avoiding the pitfalls of 'genuflection', 'sandbagging' and 'kingmaking'.

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Authors of academic papers cite referenced extracts from the established literature in order to strengthen their accounts. High-quality papers include direct quotations from the literature within the author's paper, the source of each quotation being given in the References section at the end of the paper (in the case of publications in EJOLTs, using the Harvard referencing system). Ideally, each quotation should be integrated into the paper by means of critical engagement, rather than being cited as "Look – I've found another author who agrees with me".

Many papers of lesser quality simply add references to the literature, without directly quoting relevant sections of text. These references do not significantly strengthen the author's account but simply indicate books and papers to which the author has referred as general reading when preparing to write their paper. This category of reference should be included in a Bibliography section, following the References section at the end of the paper.

However, there are three types of reference that should be avoided, referred to by Michael Bassey<sup>1</sup> as "... genuflection ... king-making ... and sandbagging". Bassey offers the following (fictitious) example to elucidate his point.

Piaget (1926) showed that children develop in stages and so it is no surprise to find that libraries for children are usually organised according to levels of complexity for readers (Adams, 1980; Brown, 1982; Collins. 1988). In planning this investigation we started with the view stated by Davidson (1981, p.1) that any collection of writings is a library. In designing our questionnaire, we used a modified form of that used by Edwards (1987, p.13).

In this extract, several of the references to the literature are superfluous or superficial. and should not be included. For example (paraphrasing Bassey):

The reference to Piaget can be described as genuflection (meaning ritualistic obeisance to one of the founding parents of educational theory).

The references to Adams, Brown and Collins can be described as sandbagging (meaning adding to a statement inert defences to make it look secure)

The reference to Davidson can be described as kingmaking (meaning giving undue authority to somebody by citing their unresearched utterance).

On the other hand the reference to Edwards is appropriate and necessary; indeed it would be plagiarism not to cite her. This section would better be written as follows:

First published in 1926, Jean Piaget's seminal theory of child development asserts that children develop in stages. Consequently, we find that libraries for children are usually organised according to levels of complexity for readers. In planning this investigation we started with the view that any collection of writings is a library and based our questionnaire on a modified form of that used by Edwards (1987, p.13).

Piaget should be referenced in the Bibliography section; Edwards should be listed in the References section.

Bassey concluded that, '... the purpose of references should be to support the claim to knowledge of the paper, not the claim to being well-read of the author!' (pp.10–11). Therefore, when submitting a paper for publication in EJOLTs, please make sure that:

1. References and Bibliography sections are clearly differentiated.
2. There is no genuflection, king-making or sandbagging in your paper.

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<sup>1</sup> Bassey, M. (1992) Creating Education through Research. *British Educational Research Journal*, 18 (1), 3–16. Presidential address to the British Educational Research Association, 29 September 1991 in Nottingham.