5

Writing the Report

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This chapter will help you to:

- plan the write-up of your study
- understand the purpose of a report
- understand the conventions for producing research reports in an acceptable format.

Planning for writing

At the start of your research project, think ahead – on completion, you will need to produce a report which will inform others about what you did, why and how you did it, how you assessed and evaluated it, what the outcomes were, and what recommendations you would make for the future. The temptation is to leave all this to the very end, and then rush frantically to complete it as the submission deadline draws closer. The best project in the world could be seriously undermined through being presented in a report that has been put together in a hurry, and is consequently poorly constructed and badly written.

Throughout the duration of the project, therefore, it is highly advisable to allocate time on a regular basis for writing up notes, evaluations, thoughts, ideas, reflection, etc., to provide a good, detailed learning journal, as discussed in Chapter 1. In this way, you can record the development and progress of the project, and will have plenty of material on which to call when writing it all up. Allow plenty of time for this when you plan your project, and be disciplined and firm with yourself about sticking to it; it is astonishing how quickly the days and weeks can fly by! Very few people have perfect memories, so it is not wise to rely on being able to remember everything – it is far better to keep written records, even if these are in simple note form.

You will, in fact, find it easier to produce a good final report by drafting parts of it as you proceed through the project. Near the beginning of the project, for example, you will have investigated other literature and research on the subject you have chosen (see Chapter 2). If this information is recorded and evaluated effectively at the time, you will already have formed the basis of your literature review section. As you make decisions about the methodology you will employ, that is, the means and methods for carrying out your research, you can begin to write this up, too. If you write up material as you go along in this way, you can gradually put together a draft outline report, which can be developed, extended, revised and ultimately refined into the final, polished product. This has the added benefit of ensuring that you have made a good start, in case life throws something awkward in your direction at just the wrong time, such as personal illness or family emergencies.

The computer can be both a blessing (when everything is working smoothly) and a curse (when it all starts to go wrong). When word processing, remember to save your work regularly and often, in several different places so that you have a back-up. It is perhaps also a good idea to print a hard copy from time to time, too, in case the electronic resources let you down. There is little more disheartening than the realisation that hours and hours spent on producing your masterpiece have been wasted because some technical problem (or, even worse, a stolen laptop) has made it inaccessible or wiped everything out.

Writing the report – a basic overview

The report is your means of explaining your research project and your findings to others. It needs to be clear, to communicate the content effectively, and the material should be organised into a coherent overall structure. To help you with this, reports of research generally follow a standard format. If you read plenty of academic journals, where research is often presented for the first time, you will notice that the content is organised into sections – you will find this useful to assist in the process of organising your material. The following information on report structure is fairly general, and is for guidance only. Seek advice from your tutor or supervisor, and consult any guidelines provided by your institution to ensure that you adhere to any necessary requirements regarding presentation and structure. Most reports will contain material that can be organised into appropriate sections in some form. The following can be used as a checklist for report writing:

- title-page
- acknowledgements
- contents list
- abstract/summary/synopsis
- introduction/context
- literature review
- methodology

- results
- analysis/evaluation/discussion
- conclusions
- recommendations
- bibliography
- appendices.

Each of these will be considered in more depth later in the chapter.

It is simply not possible to write a perfect first version of a report. You should consider the first or initial draft as exactly that – a rough version that will need considerable reworking, refining, reorganisation of content, etc., to produce a final definitive version. It is often a good idea to put together this initial draft, leave it for at least a day or so, and then return to it with fresh eyes. During the writing process, you may become too involved with the material; you know what is in your head, and what you want to say, but it is easy to read what you *think* you have written, rather than what you actually did write! Getting away from it all for a while helps you to return and review your work more objectively. Ideally, have someone else look at it too. This does not necessarily need to be someone who is familiar with the research material – it is a good proof of clarity and readability if a person with no connection to the content can read and understand it.

If appropriately knowledgeable, your helpful proofreader could also check for spelling and grammatical errors, and ensure that your meaning is clear. The advent of word processing has made it very simple to alter and rearrange words, sentences and whole paragraphs, and this can sometimes lead to errors creeping in unnoticed. Beware also of becoming too dependent on the spelling and grammar checkers provided – these do not always pick up words correctly spelt, but used in the wrong context (e.g., *there*/*they're*/*their*). Take particular care with sentence structure – the information in very long, involved sentences can often be conveyed more effectively in two or three slightly shorter ones (with the proviso that each sentence so formed is actually a grammatically complete sentence). This is where it can be so helpful to have someone else read through your work, to be what is often termed a 'critical friend' who can provide helpful comments on improving your work. However, choose your friend carefully – criticism should be appropriate, helpful and constructive, and not one of the 'forms of advice which can be very depressing and damaging to progress' (Cryer, 2000: 141).

Check how long your report is to be – a word allowance is usually given, and you should try to keep as close as possible to this. When you begin drafting the report, you might find it helpful to look at the sections you intend to include, and then allocate approximate numbers of words for each section. Keep purely descriptive material to a concise minimum. Try to find a good balance; you need to give the reader enough information to put the research into a context, and to understand what the project entailed, but not so much that you use your word allowance ineffectively. Markers tend to place more value on your analysis and evaluation of the material. You can help yourself with this by

putting detailed factual or background information, which is relevant to understanding the report, somewhere else – for example, this could be an appendix at the end of the report, or a portfolio of supporting material submitted with the report. Appendices or supporting material of this sort are not usually included in the word allowance.

Details of the required format for your report will normally be provided, giving information on such areas as width of margins, line spacing, font size, what is to be put on the title-page, overall length, etc. Make sure you read these and follow them exactly.

Writing style

Write in a straightforward, clear manner, using standard English, and avoiding informal language or colloquialisms (the type of phrase you might use in conversation). Avoid the opposite extreme too – students (and, sadly, some academics too) sometimes seem to feel that academic writing requires the use of rather pedantic language, with long, convoluted sentences, packed with polysyllabic (long!) words. If your sentences are routinely spread over five, six or even more lines, you could probably split at least some of them into slightly shorter ones. Clarity and readability are important qualities; bear in mind that the people who mark work will have many reports to read, and do not want to waste time deciphering 'woolly' writing to extract the basic meaning. As Bell (1999: 208) points out, 'good, clear English remains good, clear English, whatever the context. Technical language . . . rarely translates well onto paper and your readers (and your examiner) may become irritated by too much jargon or obscure language'.

You might like to note a small grammatical point to consider regarding singular and plural words met in research:

One *appendix* (singular); two or more *appendices* (plural)
One *criterion* (singular); two or more *criteria* (plural)

Strictly speaking, both *media* and *data* are plurals, and should really be followed by a plural verb: 'different media are used', 'the data show that', although it is becoming more usual to find these used as singular nouns.

As far as possible, try to write with a reasonably intelligent, educated layperson in mind as your target audience, rather than a particular expert in the subject area. Avoid making too many assumptions about what your reader might already know, and be prepared to clarify things that might not be obvious. Most people can be expected to know and understand the more common standard terms used in education, but you may need to consider explaining subject-specific or technical jargon, particularly if it is not in common use, or is unusual or out of the ordinary. For example, most people have a reasonable idea of what the National Curriculum or the Literacy Hour are, but may not be so familiar with terms such as 'synthetic phonics' in connection with literacy, or 'decomposition' when talking about numeracy. This explanatory material has the dual effect of ensuring that your reader understands your meaning and providing evidence that you know and understand what you are talking about.

If you feel that your explanations are taking up too many precious words, perhaps you could provide an appendix with a glossary, a short dictionary listing the words and terms, and defining or explaining them.

Give abbreviations in full the first time you use them, with the short form you intend to use in parentheses after the term, as in 'special educational needs (SEN)'. You can then use the abbreviation throughout the work.

When writing reports of action-research projects, it is generally considered acceptable to use the 'first person' ('I did this, because …', 'it is my belief that…', 'my findings show that …'). First-person writing allows scope for plenty of personal reflection on your own role, and on any possible implications of the work, the findings, etc., for the development of your own practice and of practice within your setting. You are an integral part of the action-research process, so, as Bassey (1995: 68) advises, 'if you think you are in any way likely to be a variable in the conduct of the research and conceivably could affect the outcome, then write in the first person'. However, this is not always the case, as occasionally the passive voice ('it was found that …') is recommended to try to give an objective and neutral tone to your account, by eliminating the personal references. In the past, the use of the third person, that is, speaking of yourself as if you were someone else ('the current researcher felt that …') has been employed, although, as Bassey (1995: 68) rather scathingly comments, this does 'seem simply pretentious. It is an unworthy linguistic device to make the subjective masquerade as objective!' Consult your tutor or supervisor as to what is recommended, and always follow any guidelines provided by the institution.

Confidentiality

A key issue when reporting research that is about real people (particularly children) and real situations is confidentiality. Before embarking on the project work, check with the appropriate people in authority whether any official permission needs to be sought from parties who may be concerned in, or affected by, your work. This is particularly important when working with children, as it is sometimes necessary to obtain parental permission. Be guided by the rules and regulations of your setting, and keep strictly to them. Identities must be protected, and the reader should not be able to identify any participants in the research – use first names or initials only, give a different first name, or use something like 'child A', or 'Mr B' or 'teacher B'. Keep a thick, black, felt-tip pen and/or a bottle of white correction fluid handy to cover identifying names on any documentation you use to illustrate points or provide evidence. Photographic, video or any other electronic evidence also needs to be assessed with care, and any necessary permission sought, before it is used.

Referencing

Within your report, you will be expected to refer to the writing and works of others, for a variety of reasons: to illustrate, support and inform your points; to consider differing opinions and points of view; to offer critical appraisal; or

even simply to demonstrate the thoroughness and range of your background reading and research! Whatever the reason, the key point here is that you identify the source of any reference as clearly and unequivocally as possible, to avoid any suspicion of plagiarism. Plagiarism, the presentation of the work of others as your own, is essentially a form of fraud or theft, and is considered to be one of the most heinous offences in the academic world. Being caught trying to pass off the work of someone else as your own can have serious repercussions, as work can be failed, and students caught have often been ejected from courses and institutions. It is therefore absolutely vital to acknowledge clearly where you have found your information. In brief, the main points are as follows.

Short direct quotations, marked by inverted commas, can be included within a paragraph, with the source's surname, year of publication and page number given in parentheses: 'Playing back tapes or making transcripts can be very time-consuming and expensive' (Hopkins, 2002: 105). Where possible, try to integrate quotations smoothly into your writing: 'Hopkins (2002: 105) makes the point that "playing back tapes or making transcripts can be very time-consuming and expensive", which I have found to be very true.'

Longer quotations should be produced as a small section of text that is separated out from the main paragraph and indented. See an example of this on page 71 in a quotation from Kember. Again, the author's surname, year of publication and page number should be given. Avoid very long quotations – tutors generally prefer to read your own ideas and words, rather than those simply taken from textbooks. You may sometimes need to summarise the key points of larger sections of text or ideas, in your own words. This is acceptable as long as you still explicitly acknowledge the source by adding the author's name and year in parentheses.

For Internet sources, it is not always so simple to identify the actual author, and material can be altered or disappear without warning. However, providing the Web page address and the date you accessed it should be sufficient.

Full details of the sources can then be provided in the bibliography (see page 73). Most institutions will provide helpful information and guidelines for referring to the work of others; find these, read them carefully, and follow them closely.

The report sections

Title-page

This is the first thing the reader will see, so you need to ensure that key information is provided clearly and legibly. This might include your name, any required reference information (such as student number, institution reference number, module/unit number, title or description of the research project, etc.), and any other details which may be needed. Again, be guided by the requirements of your own institution.

Acknowledgements

This section is not usually specifically required, but does provide you with an opportunity to mention key people who have helped you complete the project, and to offer your thanks and appreciation to them.

Contents list

This will be one of the last things to be written, once the main sections of the report have been put together, and you have a better idea of the content, organisation of material, sections, page numbers, etc. It should give the reader a good overview of the structure, organisation and content of the report, and should enable particular sections to be found quickly and easily.

Abstract/summary/synopsis

This is essentially a succinct summary of the contents of the report, limited to 200–300 words or fewer. When reading journals, you will usually find something of the sort at the beginning of each article or contribution, and it is there to give readers an overview of the content – it saves time and effort, as there is no need to read all the way through each article. 'Both the abstract and the paper should make sense without the other' (Bassey, 1995: 71). Your abstract or summary should therefore be as brief and concise as possible, but still communicate the main points of the report. Keep the focus clearly on the key points, eliminating unnecessary detail. It is not always easy to condense a report of several thousand words to just a couple of hundred, so it might be helpful to concentrate on providing answers to these questions:

- What was the rationale for the project, that is, its original starting point; why was the project carried out?
- What were the main aims and objectives of the research discussed in the report?
- What methodologies were used?
- Where there any ethical considerations to take into account?
- What were the outcomes?
- What conclusions were drawn?

Because you are writing about the report, which is still in existence here in front of the reader, rather than the research itself, which may well be finished and therefore in the past, the abstract may be written in the present tense (e.g. 'This report aims to …', 'the evidence demonstrates that …', or 'the findings show that …'). See Chris's abstract below for an example of this. However, a glance at abstracts in journals will often show the past tense being used. Check with your institution's own guidelines, and be directed by these.

Teaching assistants (TAs) writing the report

Chris, a TA supporting children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in a secondary school, carried out an action research project which considered the effectiveness of a programme to help children cope with the transfer from primary to secondary school. In fewer than 250 words, Chris provided a good overview of the content of her 5000-word report. The reader can see at a glance what is in the main body of the text; it is clear why she did the work, how she carried it out and assessed it, what her findings were, and what recommendations she makes as a result of the research.

TASK 5.1

HLTA 1.6 Be able to improve own practice, including through observation, evaluation and discussion with colleagues.

Try some of the following strategies in practising writing abstracts:

1. Two ideas recommended by Blaxter et al. (2001: 261) are as follows:
   - Read a relevant book or article and try to summarise the 'subject … its context, methodology and conclusions', taking 'no more than half an hour'.
   - Find a piece of writing which already has an abstract, and try writing one yourself without looking at the original. Then compare yours to the original.
2. Find a willing partner, such as a fellow student. Each of you chooses an appropriate piece of writing, such as a journal article or book chapter, and summarises its main points. Swap articles and summarise again. Compare your summaries. Are they similar? Have you both selected the same key points? If there are differences, examine these, and discuss why you each made the choices you did. Together, try producing a single summary.

Chris's project report abstract

As a result of the government's inclusion policy (DfEE, 1998c, in Cowne, 2000: 87), more vulnerable and special educational needs (SEN) students are now entering mainstream education than previously. In order for students to progress academically after they enter secondary education, they need to have a positive approach and to feel confident and comfortable in their new setting (Cowne, 2000: 64). This project aims to determine whether a transition programme introduced in the Spring term of Year 6 might have a significant and measurable impact on the progress and attitude of SEN and vulnerable students to their secondary education. Data are gathered through questionnaires to students and teachers, observations and interviews. A draft transition programme of six sessions is trialled, evaluated and reviewed with a group of ten Year 6 students. The sessions (some in the primary school setting, others in the secondary setting) aim to cover the main areas of concern during the transition period. The main findings are that a

transition programme can help vulnerable and SEN students to adjust well and settle into their new school, with the result that they are likely to become better motivated throughout their subsequent schooling. Recommendations are made regarding activities that should be incorporated in the transition programme to ensure that it covers the most common and significant issues that concern primary school students at this time.

Introduction – basic contextual detail, rationale, aims of project

Remember that the person who will read or mark your work will not necessarily be someone who knows you, so, in your introduction, you should provide basic information about the circumstances of the project to give the reader a context. The reader needs some helpful background information to be able to understand the research more clearly. Is the project work set in a nursery, primary, secondary or special school? Is it based in the Foundation Stage or Key Stages 1, 2, 3 or 4? In a large, inner-city, multi-ethnic secondary school with 2000 pupils, or a tiny, rural primary school with under 100 pupils? Who are you and what is your role? Give the basic facts here, keeping the information concise and succinct. More extensive detail can be put into an appendix, supporting portfolio or learning journal.

Chapter 1 explained that action research needs to be 'practical and problem-solving in nature'. In this introductory section, then, it is sensible to identify the problem, challenge or issue, and explain how your proposed 'action' will address it.

Literature review

In Chapter 2, we looked at the importance of reading and research to support, illustrate and inform your project work, and how to evaluate it. In this section of your report, then, you need to summarise the key findings from your investigative reading. Try to give a good critical overview of the key texts and sources you have examined (although keep this as concise as possible – it should not become the main section of the report) that had relevance to your project work. Which sources did you find particularly useful, informative, encouraging or inspiring? Which were not so helpful, or perhaps contradicted or conflicted with others' views? Explain and expand upon your comments; it is not enough to simply state, 'I found Smith et al. very useful' (Haywood and Wragg's 'furniture sale catalogue', 1978: 2); you need to give valid reasons for your views. Keeping reasonably detailed records as you do your reading will ensure that you have a good foundation on which to build this section. Refer back to Karen's work in Chapter 2, and note how she has evaluated the sources she has considered. She has shown that she has consulted a good range of sources, and has selected those that she thinks were most relevant to the project work. You could also use the final paragraph of your review to show how your reading has helped you to formulate and refine your research question.

Methodology

In this section, your main aim should be to explain how you carried out your project: what you did, how you did it and why you chose the particular methods and assessment strategies employed. Initially, it may be helpful to restate the problem briefly, showing how it has arisen, and what the current effects are. With this as a context, you can then explain in more detail what 'action' you intended to apply to solve it, how you hoped this would work, and what the outcomes would be, thus identifying your main aims and objectives. This might be a good point at which to insert some suitable references to the action-research process itself, to demonstrate your understanding of the principles of this investigative paradigm, and their practical application.

Your next step is to describe the methods and means you employed to assess the project work and its outcomes. There should be some kind of initial, or baseline, assessment of the situation, with something similar at the end of the research period, for comparative purposes. When explaining your data-gathering methods, as well as describing them, you should include a rationale for your choices. Why did you choose to issue questionnaires, carry out observations, hold interviews, or use school test results? What did you hope to gain by carrying these out or using them? What was it about the participants, the setting, the situation, etc., that made you select one strategy rather than another? How, and why, did you select a particular group of children to work with, or your target group for questionnaires? As discussed in Chapter 3, it is helpful to be clear in your own mind about your reasons for gathering any particular information, to ensure its relevance to assessing the outcome of the work. Samples of questionnaires, observation sheets, interview questions, etc., can be placed in an appendix or supporting portfolio, so that the reader can examine them there.

You also need to explain what you intend to do with all this data. How will the information you collect be analysed? What will your results show, and how will they do this? This explanatory information will help to demonstrate your understanding of the research process. You are providing evidence to show that you clearly understand why you are collecting this information, what you think it will show, and how it will illuminate your project work, showing the effectiveness of the applied 'solution' to the identified problem.

Results

This section, although important, does not need to be too long. You simply need to state what your findings were. The temptation is sometimes to start analysing and evaluating the outcomes as you present them, but resist this, leaving this discussion for the next section. The presentation of this information is important, as it is at the heart of your research project, and your reader needs to understand clearly what the outcomes of the work were. What you include will of course depend very much on what you did and the nature of the data you collected, and may consist of a mixture of text, in which you describe the end results, and graphical information, such as tables, graphs and charts

etc. Where you put all this information is a matter of choice. You can include it here, within this section of the report, or you can put it in a clearly–identified appendix, and refer the reader to it there. Make sure that any tables and graphs are clear, well labelled and comprehensible, and that their content and meaning is explained. It is also important to check that they are relevant, and really do support, inform or illuminate your presentation of the results. The reader is looking for evidence that you can provide pertinent information clearly and effectively, rather than simple proof that you have mastered the art of producing spectacular graphs on your PC.

Essentially, you are aiming to show how things were at the beginning of the project in contrast to how things stood at the end.

Analysis/evaluation/discussion

So, having identified the issue, thought up a possible solution, carried it out, achieved some results and considered them, what have you found out? Given the initial aims and objectives you set out with, has the project been an outstanding success, a dismal failure or something between these two extremes, a neutral zone with no evidence of either improvement or worsening of the situation? It is important to remember that the actual outcome of action research is not the key issue. In considering the 'process as outcome' Kember (2000: 217) says,

> The experiences of many participants suggest that in many ways the journey was more important than reaching the destination. In fact, it was often those who had to struggle most on the journey because projects did not turn out as anticipated who drew the greatest benefits.

Whatever the results, the point is to analyse and evaluate them, and use them as the basis for taking the work forward. This, then, is the section in which you examine the results presented in the previous one. Was the chosen 'action' successful in addressing the issue originally identified? What do the results tell you? Did they confirm your initial thoughts, showing that your idea was a sound one? Why do you think it all went so well?

If things unfortunately went awry, take heart. McNiff and Whitehead (2002: 90) offer the following comforting view:

> Learning from processes where things do not go right is as valuable as when they do. The struggle to make sense is the research process. It does not matter that an external situation does not go as one hopes. What is important is to be aware of the problematics, to use these as rich opportunities for learning, and to explain the process so that others can learn from the account.

What were the possible causes of the lack of success in achieving your aims? On reflection, if your suggested solution turned out to be ineffective in some way, what might be the reasons for the lack of success? Was it perhaps an intrin-

sic matter arising out of the nature of the 'action' chosen? Your idea may not have provided the hoped-for solution, or may have produced unforeseen and unexpected results, so you need to examine what happened and consider why it all turned out the way it did. Was the outcome perhaps affected by external influences in some way? Inevitably, there will be variables to consider – schools can often be very unpredictable places, and it is not always easy or straightforward to carry out a coherent, sustained piece of research over a reasonable length of time without meeting some problems. A whole host of possible causes of hitches can arise, such as changes to timetables (often a particular problem in the pre-Christmas period, or summer term) or to the TA role, staffing changes, reorganisation, management decisions, and children leaving (or even being excluded) or moving to different groups. All or any of these may have had an effect. Consider the action itself – could you have made different, or better, choices in what you decided to do? Did you have to make a lot of adjustments as you proceeded with the project? Were the data-gathering methods appropriate, giving you sufficient useful information? Students often find that they have collected a lot of information, much of which then turns out to be unhelpful, or difficult to use in a meaningful way.

Reflect on everything that has happened, and show how you understand the results, and any implications these may have for the situation, and for yourself, your role and your practice.

Conclusions/recommendations

You need to bring your report to a satisfactory end, by providing a final section in which you present a summary of your main findings, looking back at your original objectives, and explaining what conclusions you are drawing from the work you have done. Avoid introducing any new material or ideas at this final stage that should really have been presented in an earlier section; this final part is about summing up all that has happened, and finding meaning in it. This section could also present an opportunity for linking your own work to that discussed in your review of the literature, helping to fit your project into a context identified earlier. Having considered these, you can then provide some pertinent recommendations. Here, you can offer suggestions, on the basis of the results of your research, either for improving practice, by taking on board activities, strategies, etc. that were tried as part of the project, or for making any necessary alterations to the 'action' that would take the research forward onto the next cycle.

Bibliography/list of references

You must provide a full, detailed list of all the sources of material you have referred to throughout your report. The exact nature of this will depend on the institution, so ensure that you familiarise yourself well with any guidelines provided outlining the preferred method, which in academic institutions is usually the Harvard system, outlined below, listing works alphabetically by author. What you must include is sufficient information on each source to enable your

readers to locate it and read it for themselves. This information can typically be found on a page at the front of the book, although, occasionally, some elements may be missing, unclear or difficult to locate. If this is the case for a book from the library, try looking it up in the library catalogue, or even the back catalogue often provided on the publisher's website, where you should be able to find the necessary details.

Books

Sources are usually listed alphabetically by authors' surnames. For each type of source, provide information as indicated as in Figure 5.1.

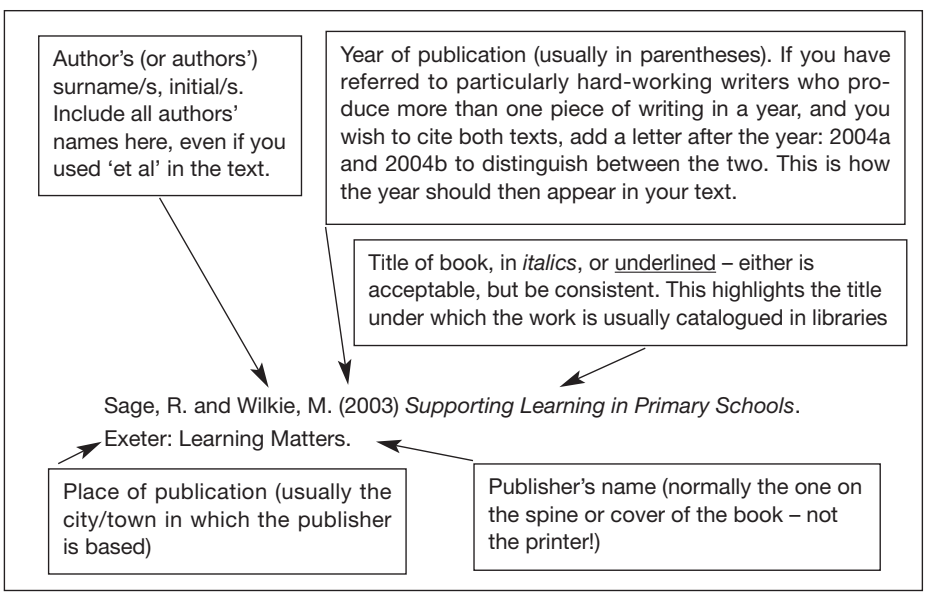

Figure 5.1

Journal articles

As well as the author name/s and year, give the title of the article in the same font style in inverted commas, and then the name of the journal (in italics or underlined, whichever style you have chosen), the volume number, the particular issue name or number, and the first and last pages of the article. For journal articles, the place of publication and publisher can be omitted. For example:

Mumtaz, S. and Humphreys, G.W. (2001) 'The effects of bilingualism on learning to read English: evidence from the contrast between Urdu-English bilingual and English monolingual children', *Journal of Research in Reading*, 24 (2): 113–34.

TASK 5.2

HLTA 1.4 Work collaboratively with colleagues, knowing when to seek help and advice.

Identify the missing information! Look at the following sample bibliography, taken from Sage and Wilkie (2003: 100), which has been severely tampered with! What information is missing from each item? What is wrong with the overall list? Check the correct version in Appendix 5.1.

Bandura, A (1973) *Aggression, a Social Learning Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Ainsworth 'The development of infant-mother attachment' in BM Caldwell and HN Ricciuti (eds), *Review of Child Development Research* Vol 3. University of Chicago Press.

Bee, H (2000) *The Developing Child* (9th Edn). London

Bell, SM (1970) 'The development of the concept of object as related to infant-mother attachment', *Child Development*, 41: 291-31

Bell, N (1991) *Visualizing and Verbalizing*. Paso Robles, CA: Academy of Reading Publications.

Cooper J, Moodley M and Reynell J *Helping Language Development*. London: EA Arnold.

Dale (1976) *Language Development: Structure and Function* (2nd ed). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Binet, A and Simon, T (1916) The Development of Intelligence in Children. Williams & Wilkins.

Borke, H (1975) 'Piaget's mountains revisited: changes in the egocentric landscape', *Developmental Psychology*, 240-3.

Diorio, D, Viau, V and Meaney, MJ (1993) 'The role of the medial prefrontal Cortex in the regulation of hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal responses to stress', *Journal of Neuroscience*.

Bowlby, J, Attachment and loss (Vol 1) *Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.

Brazelton, TB, Robey, JS and Collier, GA (1969) 'Infant development in the Zinacanteco Indians of southern Mexico' *Pediatrics*, 44.

Bruner, JS, Olver, RR and Greenfield, PM (1966) (eds) *Studies in Cognitive Growth*. New York: Wiley.

Cortes JB and Gatti FM (1965) 'Physique and self description of temperament', *Journal*, 20:432-9.

In this instance, 24 is the volume number, and (2) is the issue number.
For websites, give the name of the author and date posted on the Web (if known), and then the *full* uniform resource locator (URL), the unique address which identifies a resource on the Internet, not just the website, along with the date you accessed it:

Smith, M.K. (2001) **www.infed.org/research/b-actres.htm** (date accessed 19 August 2005).

Appendix/appendices

An appendix at the end of the report is the place to put extra material which gives extended, more detailed information, or provides relevant illustrative examples or documentation. Appendix material is not usually included in the word-count of the report; thus it is a sensible idea to put descriptive background and contextual information here, so that you can refer the reader to it in the relevant report sections.

Reviewing your work

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, after working through several drafts, and finally achieving what you think is a reasonable final version, it is helpful to put some distance between yourself and your work – leave it for a while, a couple of days rather than hours, and then return to it and reread it freshly as a whole. Does the report 'read' well? A good test of this is to try to read it out loud, although, as Bell (1999: 209) sensibly advises, 'make sure you are alone or your family may feel the strain has been too much for you!' Check that the content and meaning flow through the sections logically and coherently, with each paragraph following on from the last sensibly. Is the material in each section or chapter appropriate? Be honest with yourself – does your report give a good, clear, comprehensible account and analysis of the development and progress of your research project? Be brave and ask someone else to read it and give their opinions and views. You know what you mean and what you want to say, but until someone else reads what you have written, you cannot be certain that you have communicated your message clearly.

Hopkins (2002: 140) offers several sound reasons for taking care to write up your project thoroughly, believing

> 'that all teacher-researchers need to put their data together in such a way that:
>
> - The research could be replicated on another occasion.
> - The evidence used to generate hypotheses and consequent action is clearly documented.
> - Action taken as a result of the research is monitored.
> - The reader finds the research accessible and that it resonates with his or her own experience.

Once you have completed your report, you could perhaps consider it in the light of these points. Could someone else carry out a similar project with the information given in your report? Have you clearly identified your original aims and objectives, and explained how you worked toward achieving these? Have you applied appropriate actions during the research and observed their effectiveness? Is your account of the work effective in communicating exactly what happened, so that the reader can picture it clearly and relate to it? Be honest with yourself!

All that remains is for you to hand in your work by the deadline, and you can then go and reclaim your life!

Key points

- Be disciplined, and save, save, save!
- Write up notes as you go along.
- Adhere to any advised format carefully, and keep working on appropriate academic style.
- Leave enough time for review by yourself and others if possible to ensure clarity.