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Mary Renck Jalongo
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Scholarly Writing

Publishing Manuscripts That Are Read, Downloaded, and Cited

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ISSN 2366-7672 ISSN 2366-7680 (electronic)
Springer Texts in Education
ISBN 978-3-031-39515-4 ISBN 978-3-031-39516-1 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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Mary Renck Jalongo

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Abstract

This preface introduces the book and addresses six key questions about writing for publication: (1) How has scholarly writing and publication changed in recent years? (2) Who is the intended audience for this book? (3) Why publish yet another book for teacher/scholar/authors? (4) Who is qualified to advise academic authors about writing for publication? (5) What structure does each

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_1

chapter follow? and (6) Why this book at this time? The purpose of the first chapter is to set readers' expectations for the book and assist them in understanding how it is structured to support their scholarly writing and publication efforts.

Keywords

Academic writing • Written composition • Scholarly writing • Academic authors • Writing for publication

We have been writing and publishing for so many years that we remember when cut and paste of a manuscript literally used scissors, glue, tape, and staples. We have been editing for so long that we once assembled issues of journals and edited books by physically bundling them together, sealing them in a box, and mailing the package to the publisher. As professional writing has evolved, we have managed to keep pace, giving us both contemporary and historical vantage points on the publication process. Seven years ago, we envisioned a capstone project that would synthesize the professional literature and any wisdom we had acquired from being immersed in teaching writing, publishing manuscripts, reviewing others' work, and collectively serving as senior editors of journals and book series for nearly 50 years. The result was *Writing for Publication: Tools and Transitions That Support Scholars' Success* (Jalongo & Saracho, 2016). Springer Nature's metrics for the book indicate that the entire text or individual chapters have been downloaded an astounding 5.2 million times.

Based on their familiarity with bestsellers published by the popular press, readers may be wondering if we became wealthy or were able to retire early from our royalties. That did not occur. When we signed the contact, we understood that a major goal of the program was to make textbooks affordable and accessible. It is a nearly universal complaint of college students that their textbooks are too expensive. A survey conducted with 5000 college students suggests that the cost is so prohibitive that, during the pandemic, 65% of students did not purchase the required print text and 21% did not purchase the access codes for an online text; for food insecure students, the rates were much higher: 85% did not purchase a book and 38% did not purchase an access code (U.S. PIRG Education Fund, 2022). We accepted from the outset that any financial gains for us would be quite modest. So here we are again as textbook authors seeking to produce material that is helpful, accessible, and affordable.

Scholarly Writing: Publishing Manuscripts That Are Read, Downloaded, and Cited is a sequel to our first co-authored book on writing for publication. It is not a revision; rather, it is an entirely new book that emphasizes recent research, controversies, and applications of technology in scholarly writing. Through it, we offer an evidence-based, cross-disciplinary guide to authors pursuing publication.

1.1 What Changes Have Occurred in Scholarly Writing and Publishing?

Current trends in Academia–such as the expectation that graduate students will publish, the option for doctoral students to publish in lieu of writing a traditional dissertation, the pressure on scholars from various countries to publish in English, reliance on statistical formulas to assess a publication's impact, and the advent of plagiarism detection software—have exerted an influence on scholarly writing today. Hyland (2021) summarizes these sweeping changes when he writes:

> The last 50 years have seen, perhaps more than at any time since the invention of the printing press, massive changes in research and publication practices. There has been an explosion of journals, papers, and researchers with the globalization of research and the insistent demands of publishing metrics on scholars across the planet. The period has also witnessed the increasing specialization of journals; the concentration of publishing into fewer corporate hands; the growth of multiple, even mega authorship; an increasing strain on the review system with a decline in the reviewer pool, the move to online publishing; the diversification of publishing genres; and the dominance of English as the international language of scholarship. The quantification of research outputs as a basis for funding and career advancement means there is now greater pressure and more explicit incentives among academics to publish. This fiercely competitive context has created an environment in which plagiarism, salami slicing of studies, and paper retractions have all increased. It has also generated a new breed of publisher, established on the basis of the 'writer pays' gold open access model, which threatens research standards and publishing ethics by guaranteeing publication following cursory 'peer review'. (p. 15)

In addition, faculty with responsibility for doctoral programs have been urged to provide systematic instruction in writing for publication to all future members of the professoriate (Kamler, 2008) rather than expecting doctoral students to rely on that lowest form of learning, trial and error. At least some doctoral faculty are resistant to this recommendation. They may view success at publishing as a type of natural selection in which only the strong survive. Research contradicts this view and endorses instead the democratizing the acquisition of academic writing skills so that every doctoral candidate—not only those who attract powerful mentors—is afforded equal access to preparation for the role of publishing scholar (Badenhorst et al., 2014; Kamler & Thomson, 2014). During the pandemic, senior faculty responsible for teaching writing to doctoral students were forced to implement alternatives to in-person class meetings, thereby intensifying the demand for curated online resources. In response to these and other contemporary influences, every chapter of this book includes narratives of experience, self-assessment tools, guided practice activities, reviews of research, and controversies in publishing that are suitable for both traditional and online instruction. The fifteen fourtee chapters also suggest technology tools, links to online tutorials, and training videos that focus on various aspects of writing for publication.

Approaches to faculty professional development in writing for publication have changed as well. The practice of paying a visiting expert to conduct a single training event is being re-considered. In the wake of Covid-19, the financial situation of many postsecondary institutions worsened and "extras"—such as funds budgeted for faculty professional development—were cut. Furthermore, research findings about writing groups (see Writing Groups, 2022 for a collection of research articles) endorse the development of in-house experts. Leadership by local experts has been proposed as a more effective and sustainable form of professional development for students and faculty (Geller & Eodice, 2013). This book can serve as a resource for professional development initiatives in higher education aimed at improving scholars' success with writing for publication.

Scholarly publishing is an ever-shifting terrain for anyone who has been involved in publishing writing, teaching writing, mentoring students and colleagues, critiquing manuscripts submitted for publication, and editing both journals and books. Newcomers to professional writing can find it difficult to get a stable foothold. Missteps are commonplace, costly, and troublesome. Whether authors are just getting started or well on their way, the purpose of our book is to make their publication journeys a bit less arduous. To accomplish this, we deliberately blend theory, research, practice, and first-person accounts of writing experiences. Everyone who contributed to this book is unified by the goal of guiding others in generating scholarly manuscripts that are not only readable and publishable, but also downloaded and respectfully cited by professional peers.

1.2 Who is the Audience for the Book?

To summarize, we have designed the book to have appeal for three main audiences. The first consists of graduate students, particularly doctoral students pursuing careers in higher education. Those seeking to publish for the first time will find many suggestions, examples, and resources. A second key audience consists of doctoral faculty responsible for teaching a required or elective graduate-level course in writing for publication. Especially for programs that are offering a course of this type to graduate students for the first time, the book can serve as a primary text. The third and final audience for the book consists of early, middle, and late career faculty members participating in a writers' workshop/retreat or established authors seeking to enhance the impact of their publications. Whether authors are novices, experienced, or prolific authors, successfully navigating each career stage is heavily influenced by identity work, content mastery, and ongoing refinement of writing skills. Our book takes a strategic approach to developing self-concept as a writer and contributor to scholarly literature.

1.3 Why Publish Another Book on This Topic?

In 1983, Yaroslav Pelikan wrote about scholarship and its survival as it the mission of graduate education. Four decades later, scholarship has been threatened by a global health pandemic that disrupted, delayed, and even derailed the writing plans and products of many scholars throughout the world (Calaway, 2020). An International Association of Universities survey of higher education faculty and administrators from 109 different countries found that 83% had experienced the suspension of international travel, 81% of the scientific conferences were canceled/postponed, and 52% of research projects were in jeopardy of not being completed (Marinoni et al., 2020). These trends surely affected networking opportunities for graduate students and faculty members.

Desperate circumstances throughout society also exerted a major impact on the business venture of publishing. Some companies that were barely profitable at the outset failed. Even those companies that prevailed encountered many unanticipated hurdles to publication. Amid so much turmoil and illness, deadlines for manuscript submission were relaxed and some planned publication projects were scuttled. The international phenomenon of being sequestered in homes also forced changes in communication between and among authors, reviewers, and editors. For professional associations, in-person conference gatherings that supported the publication program were forced into online formats and participation plummeted (Donlon, 2021). In the college textbook market, a national survey conducted in the United States found that 87% of instructors continued to use the print textbooks that that they had used previously rather than switching to an online publication (Seaman & Seaman, 2020). Surprising outcomes like this left college textbook publishers wondering how to maintain or enhance their shares of the textbook market.

Novice and expert authors who are striving to become productive scholars find themselves immersed in a publication pressure cooker. The stakes are high, the support eroded, and the situation is in continual flux. As we argue in the next section, effective guidance about scholarly publication demands more in terms of credentials than one scholar's track record of publications in a single discipline.

1.4 Who is Qualified to Advise Author/Scholars?

It is sometimes assumed that becoming a widely published scholar in a particular field represents sufficient credentials to guide other writers. Yet the unexamined experience of one scholarly author cannot serve as a model for everyone to follow. Writers have distinctive and diverse histories, writing processes, academic writing styles, and institutional expectations—to name just a few of the differences. To illustrate, during a writing for publication seminar offered via Zoom, the leader recommended that aspiring authors make a rank-ordered list of prestigious publications in their respective fields and submit their manuscript to one outlet at a time, beginning with the most competitive. He then went on to say that authors could use feedback from multiple peer reviewers to improve the work. Not so. Editors of leading journals typically do not send everything out for review; rather, they screen manuscripts first and reject those that are unsuitable with a form letter. In fact, the practice is so common that it has a name: desk rejection. Publishing house Elsevier, for example, reports that between 30 and 50 percent of articles submitted to their journals are rejected without peer review (Niktina, 2016). In some instances, editors may read no further than the title and abstract before rendering their decision. The premier publication, *British Medical Journal,* receives over 8000 manuscripts per year and they advise: *Please get the abstract right, because we may use it alone to assess your paper.* The editors indicate that 60–70% of original articles are rejected without external review (Groves & Abbasi, 2004). Clearly, if 8000 manuscripts were sent out to three reviewers each, the workload would be staggering and most of it, futile. Review of others' manuscripts for a scholarly journal usually is an uncompensated professional courtesy and it has become increasingly difficult to recruit reviewers (Flaherty, 2022a). Wasting volunteer reviewers' time with unsuitable manuscripts only exacerbates the problem. The procedure that was endorsed by the workshop leader is bad advice.

"Reaching for the stars" and sending manuscripts to the most prestigious outlets is at odds with the research as well. It is more often the case that not-yet-published authors succeed for the first time by collaborating with a more experienced author or authors (Thomson & Kamler, 2013). Furthermore, academic authors are more likely to publish when they revise based on feedback from a group of known readers before subjecting the work to formal peer review (Aitchson et al., 2010; Steinert et al., 2009). Advising aspiring authors to submit their first efforts at writing for publication to journals with single-digit acceptance rates sets them up to be battered by the system. Some peer reviewers are harsh, unhelpful, and destructive (Herber et al., 2020)—as one experienced book series editor put it, "Those reviews can be brutal, I know." For the less resilient authors, failure experienced at this formative stage may cause them to abandon hope of publication, both now and in the future (Bosanquet & Cahir, 2016).

Contrary to the workshop leader's advice, new academic authors tend to fare better with a less competitive outlet, at least at first. Rather than being deluged with submissions, these journal editors sometimes are seeking manuscripts and may be more willing to work with an author to address minor flaws. Interestingly, the workshop leader later said that, now that tenure/ promotion concerns were over, "I tend to publish in the journals that are nice to me." Why, then, give beginners advice that is likely to yield negative outcomes? Suggestions about how to succeed with scholarly writing need to be grounded in research and current practices in publishing.

In addition to direct experience with writing for publication and editing, those who presume to offer advice about scholarly writing need to address at least five different dimensions, namely: (1) intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects, (2) knowledge of composing processes and ways of coaching writers, (3) boundary spanning experiences and perspectives, (4) insider's insights into various scholarly publishing endeavors, and (5) creative thought processes. These areas form the foundation for the content of the book.

1.4.1 Understanding of the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Dimensions of Writing

Writing for publication involves intrapersonal—within the person—skills and insights that assist in developing an identity as a scholarly author. Attempts to publish are deeply affected by professional identity issues (Cameron et al., 2009) and accompanied by intense emotional responses (Sullivan, 2012). The fragile identity of many aspiring authors requires compassion and generous support if they are to build their self-concept in positive, productive ways (Cohen & McConnell, 2019).

During my first year as a tenure-track faculty member, my dean nominated me to participate in a grant-supported faculty development project. The first requirement was to submit a manuscript in progress. After being accepted, we spent a week in September attending all-day training sessions with the editors of leading professional journals, highly successful grants writers, and other experts. Months later, in January, we were obligated to submit the journal article and grant proposal that we had revised based on feedback from those experts. I still remember some of the comments in the margins: "So what?" "Says who?" and "You did not write a conclusion, you just stopped writing." That did little to improve my self-concept as an author. However, interpersonal skills, in the form of collaboration with another attendee, helped me to address those writing flaws. We critiqued one another's work during the project and continued to collaborate on multiple projects well after the planned experience ended. Those who guide other scholars have an obligation to attend to both the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of writing for publication.

1.4.2 Knowledge of the Composition Process and Success as a Writing Coach

Faculty who offer advice to others about publication need to have some understanding of the writing process and ways to support it—and not just in themselves. An impressive curriculum vita does not guarantee that they are committed to helping others publish nor that they know how to go about improving someone else's manuscript. It seems strange that, in the world of Academia where credentials matter so much, a lack of knowledge about composing processes is largely overlooked in those who presume to teach others how to write for professional publications. There is an entire field devoted to the study of rhetoric and composition. A quick scan of what is taught in the English Department at universities and the topics in leading journals within this field underscore this fact. Over the years, I served on many dissertation committees in the English Department, even though my field was Curriculum and Instruction. It was a source of professional pride that students and faculty accepted me as qualified to share in guiding the research efforts of these students who were studying writing processes. In return for that service, I learned more about writing challenges, such as those faced by students who frequented The Writing Center, teachers of English as a second language (TESOL), and university faculty from different countries.

Even the work of reviewing and rendering judgment about whether a manuscript is publishable or not as a reviewer or editor may be insufficient. Mentors in scholarly writing need to make recommendations that genuinely improve the writing effort. Over twenty-five years of work with doctoral students from various fields in a writing for publication course has provided insight on what types of feedback are most helpful in various situations. When I did what was customary—assigned papers, collected them, and graded them, the quality was uneven. It was not until I began responding to multiple drafts of students' work and engaging their peers in the review process that real progress was evident. Of course, doing this also prevented procrastination, motivated students to improve their work, and helped them to appreciate the importance of revision. Research on written composition is remarkably consistent on this issue: authors benefit most from support while a work is in progress (Murray, 2014). The amount and kind of feedback supplied to doctoral students can be pivotal in getting a manuscript published (Can & Walker, 2011).

To illustrate, while working as an editor for The Rockefeller Foundation's publication, *Narratives* (published simultaneously in English and Spanish), our goal was to disseminate first-person accounts of change in school districts. Nearly every article was written, not by researchers, but by first-time authors who represented different stakeholders in urban public school systems. In fact, one of the most memorable pieces was written by a school custodian who decided to go back to school. His father, who was terminally ill and in hospice care, beamed with pride when the son reported that he had earned his high school diploma. The Editorial Board—consisting of prolific authors–agreed that the story was particularly powerful, and all were eager to support the custodian in publishing his story. They provided detailed editorial feedback and the piece was successfully published. As this example illustrates, taking on the role of writing coach demands insight into the composing processes of others.

1.4.3 Boundary Spanning Experiences

Most of the "writing about writing" books are discipline-specific and surely there is value in learning the academic discourse and genres of a particular field. Although graduate students and faculty tend to doubt that anyone outside their disciplines can help with their manuscripts, there are some shared characteristics of effective scholarly writing–such as clarity of ideas, support of assertions with evidence, presentation of a logical argument, effective organization, and use of examples—that can improve writing across the disciplines.

To illustrate, while working as a Professional Development Institute leader for Phi Delta Kappa, I visited various university campuses and presented workshops on writing for publication that lasted from one to three days. The attendees represented a wide array of colleges, departments, and areas of specialization. I reviewed a manuscript from a senior faculty member in the Health and Physical Education Department. He had remained at Associate Professor rank due to his lack of publications but, after my line-by-line edit of his manuscript, was finally successful in publishing a journal article. The content was not the issue; it was the style. Another manuscript was from a Geography professor; it described the New Madrid Seismic Zone—a fault line that runs close to Memphis, Tennessee. This was news to me and not my field, but I could provide a beginner's mind perspective on the content, suggest a better structure for the abstract, offer advice on organizing the manuscript, and help him with (in his words) "Chinesey English."

Most scholars persist in thinking that there is little to be learned from those outside their fields and allow the dividing lines between departments and colleges to run deep. Yet one of the frequent findings from research with faculty from various departments who participated in writing groups, workshops, and retreats was that colleagues with different backgrounds yielded innovative thinking, provided insight on clarity, raised important questions, and improved manuscripts (Cuthbert et al., 2009; Gray, 2010; Muller, 2014). When writers' groups are well conceptualized and monitored, participants get feedback during the process and reap the benefit of multiple perspectives from "in-house" reviewers before they submit their manuscripts to formal peer review (Hampton-Farmer et al., 2013; Lee & Boud, 2003).

Over the years, my interest in collaborating with students, colleagues, and other professionals has resulted in successful publication in a surprisingly wide range of scholarly outlets—criminal justice, library science, vocational education, and veterinary science—to name just a few. For students and faculty from other departments and programs, I rely on the writer and their disciplinary colleagues to decide whether the content is accurate and innovative. My support has more to do with reviewing the relevant research, discovering a suitable academic writing style, arriving at the most effective organization for the work, inventing visual material (i.e., diagrams, figures, tables and graphs) to present ideas, incorporating examples, and so forth. Contrary to prevailing opinions in Academia, teaching others to write for publication is a boundary-spanning endeavor. It cannot take the narrow view. It needs to be informed by perspectives from psychology, sociology, education, composition, and research methods, and more. To succeed in advising diverse groups of academic authors about successfully publishing their manuscripts, we need to take off our disciplinary blinders and take a wider, longer view on matters.

As the next section describes, we also need to be immersed in the world of publishing through an array of different writing projects.

1.4.4 Insider's Perspective on Publishing

Another area of expertise is an insider's perspective on publishing. Ordinarily, a successful writer has experience with just a few publishing outlets of a specific type—such as professional journals or a university press. Yet those embarking on writing projects need a "guide to the galaxy." Prospective authors may be interested in writing a grant proposal, a college textbook, a practical article for fellow professionals, or an article for the layperson related to their scholarly work. All of these are worthwhile writing endeavors that particular writers may opt to pursue at various times during a career trajectory. Writing for publication workshop leaders without a wide range of experiences are ill-equipped to provide guidance.

When I was struggling to get published, I used to scour through the program of the professional conferences to identify any sessions that focused on scholarly writing. In the United States, most of these "meet the editor" presentations were led by white, privileged, middle-aged male, prolific authors employed at prestigious universities. In many instances, they were field editors, so named because they functioned as an editor-in-chief with a publication but had not quit their day jobs at the university. Many seemed to take the self-congratulatory approach of "look at me, I succeeded—you can too." Yet the people enrolling in these sessions often represented marginalized groups, were doctoral students seeking to demystify scholarly publishing, had heavy teaching loads, and worked at institutions that provided minimal support for scholarly work. At best, it was a mismatch. At worst, it was an encounter between the haves and have nots.

Another downside to the one editor/one publication session is that these individual experiences may not be representative of other publishing outlets. To address such limitations, some conference sessions on writing for publication were presented by a panel of editors of leading journals and/or book publishing companies and noted authors. The goal was to give other scholars a glimpse inside the "black box" of editing and explain why some manuscripts were rejected and others accepted. Yet many of questions that emanated from the audience had more to do with struggling to get to the very first step and have a manuscript suitable for submission. Another drawback to these sessions was that most of these editors were already deluged with articles and had a backlog of accepted articles awaiting publication. These editors certainly were not willing to "fix up" a flawed manuscript or coach authors in how to make the work publishable.

Furthermore, some editors are not authors themselves—particularly if it is a commercial book publisher, such as a textbook company. If the list of books they are responsible for generally is successful, they may know a publishable manuscript when they see one but may not be capable of guiding authors' writing efforts. Usually, editors depend on peer reviewers to provide that type of feedback.

1.4.5 Insights into Creativity

A colleague once remarked that I was an "omnivore" when it comes to ideas. That may be true. I find that borrowing ideas from other fields results in surprising connections and interesting juxtapositions—the very stuff of creative thinking (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Whether you are reviewing materials written for graduate students about thesis/dissertations or the criteria for evaluating journal articles, phrases such as “making an original contribution” and “advancing knowledge in the field” are apt to be encountered. Variously referred to as originality, creativity, invention, or generating new knowledge, it is particularly important. As Germano (2021) argues,

> The object of scholarship is nothing less than new knowledge, and that means nothing less than the ongoing, unfinishable task of reimagining the world. The vehicle for communicating most of that new knowledge is academic work. That’s the reason you’re writing what you’re writing…Good scholarship is always new, always about the new. (p. 34)

Thus, effective coaching of students, colleagues, and other scholars requires some level of understanding about ways to encourage creative thought processes.

1.5 How is This Book Different?

There are four major ways in which this book differs from what is available.

1. *Definition of academic writing*. Narrow definitions of writing for publication that focus only on those times when authors are generating text can be defeating. In this book, we concur with Silvia’s (2018) more expansive concept of what “counts” as writing. It includes anything that moves the project forward: reviewing the literature, taking notes, organizing notes into clusters, analyzing data, revising the work substantively, formatting the paper, responding to reviews, and completing the final edits.
2. *Evidence base*. Some of the books on writing for publication are more memoir than evidence-based methods. They rely primarily on personal/professional experiences as a source for the recommendations made. The drawback to this approach is that, while these stories may be interesting, some of them are not applicable to scholarly publishing, circa 2023. Although we do draw upon personal/professional experience to provide illustrative examples, the foundation for the recommendations made in this book is a cross-disciplinary review of the relevant research.
3. *Applications of technology*. Our review of competing works suggested that few books on writing for publication address applications of technology beyond mentioning word processing or search engines. Fewer still address the controversial aspects of technology, such as predatory publishers, open access journals, and questionable professional editing services. In the wake of a year of lockdown, professors who teach courses in writing for publication were scrambling to find high-quality technology resources to support online instruction. Each of the fifteen chapters includes three technology supports for faculty who teach academic writing skills, leaders of writing groups, and scholars pursuing professional development.

4. *Emphasis on identity work.* Graduate students and faculty often struggle with fulfilling the many different roles and expectations related to writing and publishing within their respective fields. Throughout the book, we explain how authors at different stages meet new writing challenges. The three narratives that introduce each chapter encourage reader reflection on the identity work of authors who are new to writing for publication, those at different levels of experience who are collaborating, and accomplished authors seeking continuous improvement. Identity work is not finished; it persists at every level of experience.
5. *Comprehensiveness.* Our market analysis of competing works suggests that there are four main approaches to writing about publication for higher education faculty and doctoral students: (1) step-by-step workbooks, (2) reflections by prominent editors/authors, (3) discipline specific guides, and (4) audience specific guides. *Scholarly Writing: Publishing Manuscripts That Are Read, Downloaded, and Cited* combines these four approaches. Activities included in each chapter offer step-by-step writing guidelines, such as how to compose an abstract and choose keywords for indexing purposes. The examples emanate from different disciplines and the advice to readers includes many different audiences, such as international graduate students attempting to write in English as a second or additional language. Our goal is to produce a more comprehensive guide that reaches a wider audience and, in so doing, replicate the success of our earlier work.

1.6 What Is the Structure for the Chapters?

Each chapter includes the following five components.

1.6.1 Part One: Three Narratives

Each chapter begins with three short narratives about academic authors with different areas of specialization and at different levels of expertise in writing for publication. The first case describes an early career faculty member. The first narrative promotes reflection in aspiring authors, who many times are struggling with the "imposter phenomenon" in which they regard themselves as unworthy to enter the professional dialogue (Jostl et al., 2012).

The second narrative describes a writing project that involves scholars at different levels of experience. It exemplifies how collaborative writing, when used effectively, can counteract isolation, provide immediate feedback, and increase the depth and breadth of professional insights (Carnell et al., 2008).

The third and final case describes an accomplished academic author. These narratives about prolific authors focus on generating high-impact publications. All three narratives are followed by questions that promote reflection.

1.6.2 Part Two: Activity and Self-Assessment

Recent research on academics writing for publication emphasizes the importance of forging an identity as a scholar/author (Corcoran et al., 2019; Lesley, 2020). Periodically "taking stock" of personal/professional strengths/limitations and instituting new habits supports growth as a writer. Each chapter starts with an activity that could be completed in a group and a self-assessment tool that can be done individually. An example of an activity is a set of criteria for identifying predatory publishers (Chap. 8) and an example of a self-assessment is a checklist of ways to increase a text's readability (Chap. 15).

1.6.3 Part Three: Body of the Chapter and Evidence Base

The third section constitutes the body of each chapter. It is a summary of key findings from the literature on writing for publication and related fields that will serve to demystify the process of writing for publication.

1.6.4 Part Four: Issue in Writing for Publication

Writing for publication is not without controversy. Each chapter concludes with an issue that is the focus of ongoing debate, for example, paying for professional editing services (Chap. 15).

1.6.5 Part Five: Applications of Technology

Every chapter recommends curated online tools, tutorials, courses, checklists, and videos. These additional resources can support authors, reviewers, editors, and faculty responsible for teaching courses in writing for publication as well as provide professional development for faculty. No other book that we reviewed on academic authorship provided more than scant mention of technology tools.

1.7 Why This Book at This Time?

This is an opportune time to offer support to scholars as they pursue scholarly writing goals. Traditionally, faculty members have been evaluated in three broad areas: teaching, research, and service (Seldin and Associates, 2006). There is a long history of debating the time allocated for teaching and service versus the time available to conduct and publish research (Daumiller & Dresel, 2019). The world health crisis has tipped the balance in the direction of the teaching and service aspects because those needs were the most pressing (Salmi, 2020). Faculty members who found it difficult to publish were encountering even more impediments than previously as they coped with new challenges to effective teaching, supervision of internships, and modified plans for meeting program requirements. The decline in research and writing was so pervasive that some institutions gave professors an additional year to prepare their materials for tenure (Htun, 2020), with the caveat that delayed promotion would have negative consequences on income, both for the short and long term (Khamis-Dakwar & Hiller, 2020).

Scholars who have been underrepresented in the publications of their respective fields faced additional challenges. Women academics, particularly those with young children, often experienced greater responsibility for home schooling and household duties that disturbed the work/life balance (Del Boca et al., 2020; Kirk-Jenkins & Hughey, 2021; Minello, 2020). Early projections suggest that the scholarly productivity of females will decline precipitously as a result (Flaherty, 2020).

For scholars writing in English as a second or additional language, the pressure intensified. An expectation referred to as English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) rewards higher education faculty at premier research institutions worldwide when they publish their research in English when it is not their native language (Li & Flowerdew, 2020). As unfair as this additional hurdle to successful publication may be, there is little question that Anglophone outlets predominate in scholarly publication (Curry & Lillis, 2004). In science, for example, 98% of the research publications are written in English (Ramirez-Castañeda, 2020). Thus, faculty members living in an era of globalization of publication need additional support in the academic writing styles that tend to be preferred by Anglophone outlets (Cheung, 2010).

Graduate students have seen their scholarly productivity suffer as well. Many international doctoral students whose long-term goal was to join the professoriate in their fields were physically isolated and deprived of the immersive doctoral culture they had traveled great distances to experience (Peters et al., 2020). National Science Foundation data indicate that Ph.D.s conferred during 2021 dropped by 5.4% (Flaherty, 2022b).

With the suspension of in-person gatherings, serendipitous opportunities for graduate students to identify suitable mentors and collaborators were adversely affected. In addition, many colleges and universities faced declining enrollment or had to make refunds to students (Armour, 2020). Monies once used for support services that benefitted academic authors (e.g., statistical consulting services, writing centers, or writers' workshops) were reallocated to basic operating budgets.

In consideration of these influences, scholars across the spectrum of experience and expertise need a different kind and amount of support in developing their academic writing skills. Our dream for this book is that it will be every bit as helpful to author/teacher/scholars as was our 2016 text that garnered millions of downloads. Collectively, we have devoted a substantial portion of our professional lifetimes to acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of scholarly publishing. Our motivation continues to be building authors' confidence and skills, sparing them from making mistakes, promoting revision as the route to publication, and helping them to produce published manuscripts with a positive impact on scholarship.

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Becoming a Published Scholar: Identity Work of Authors

2

Mary Renck Jalongo

Contents

Abstract

Faculty in higher education invest many years preparing to become professors. The emphasis during graduate school is on mastering specialized subject matter, acquiring the skills and dispositions of a scholar, and demonstrating the ability to conduct research. This background sometimes eclipses other important influences on writing for publication, such as past experiences with writing, skill in written composition, and affective variables (e.g., emotions associated with writing, motivation/interest, and expectancy for success). In this chapter, we examine an emerging theme in research on writing, namely, the identity work of academic authors. From this perspective, writing for publication is more than an academic skill set. Entering the professional dialogue of a discipline also involves the potentially ego-threatening tasks of subjecting manuscripts for review and coping with disappointing outcomes. Developing an identity as

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_2

a scholar/author occurs across the entire career trajectory as new writing challenges are pursued. Authors at all levels of experience have an ethical obligation to ensure that any work attributed to them is original and has not been published previously. Understanding plagiarism—not just blatant examples but also its more subtle forms–is essential. Increasingly, plagiarism detection software (PDS) tools are in use by publishing companies to avoid intellectual property disputes. Building a sense of identity as a contributor to scientific communication relies on addressing obstacles, giving/receiving collegial support, learning from mistakes, and making a commitment to lifelong learning.

Keywords

Writing for publication • Academic writing • Scholarly writing • Identity • Identity work • Plagiarism • Plagiarism detection software (PDS)

Three Narratives

Novice

Post COVID-19, a large cafeteria at a state university has been repurposed as a place for students to gather, both informally and for planned events. One student is seated at a table with benches on either side, staring intently at her laptop screen as if awaiting inspiration before she begins to write. Within a few moments, there will be a stress reduction event sponsored by the university's health and wellness center. As other students trickle in, she greets each one with an account of how she has an important paper due in two days. Her professor's evaluation of that assignment will determine her grade in the course. This student's situation encapsulates many of the issues that make writing a chore—the pressure of deadlines, uncertainty about how to proceed, lack of confidence in ability, and high stakes outcomes.

Question How did you approach writing during secondary school? Undergraduate days? What substantive changes have you made in your writing during graduate study?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

Work that extends beyond one scholar's area of expertise can be accomplished through collaboration. This was the case when a faculty member in curriculum and instruction sought to write a manuscript that had a counseling component. The graduate assistant of the professor from the Counseling Department was invited to join the writing team. From the outset, her stance was "I've never published anything before." She seemed to want to remain in her comfort zone by offering to search for relevant publications or attend a meeting to discuss the project. Even after numerous *extensions to the deadline, she did not produce any writing. Candid discussion indicated that the student had been dealing with some family illnesses and, for financial reasons, continuing with a part-time job while pursuing the master's degree. These surely were valid explanations. Yet it seemed that the student felt she had not earned the right to speak through publication and was worried that her writing would not be good enough. She decided to drop out of the project.*

Question Has fear of failure inhibited you from attempting a writing task, even when support was provided?

Prolific

A widely published professor has been invited to write the foreword for a leading scholar's book. Although she has read many book forewords over the years, this is her initial attempt at writing one. First, she pulls several books from her shelf that include memorable forewords and marks each one with a sticky note. Then she types "how to write the foreword for a scholarly book" into a Google search and finds this helpful explanation from Greenleaf Book Group (2022):

> Forewords are written by someone other than the author. These people are usually experts in the field that the book is about…Name recognition is key. Think of a foreword as the ultimate book recommendation. Having a big name attached to the foreword can be quite helpful when it's time to market your book.
>
> The content provided in the foreword should introduce the author or work to readers, tell readers why they should read the book, and give credibility to the book or author. (unpaged)

The author emails the editor of the book and asks if she would be willing to share an example of a foreword that they considered to be particularly well done. Although the example is instructive, the pressure persists because this comparatively short piece of writing must be expertly crafted and measure up to the book author's and editor's expectations.

Question What about fear of success—have you ever been overly concerned that your current writing efforts would not compare favorably with previous writing achievements?

Activity: Mapping Sources of Author Support

Where can academic authors find support for their writing endeavors? Use the Table 2.1 to identify sources of support.

Self-Assessment: Identity as an Author

Reflect on the following questions for authors.

1. Who am I as a writer? How do I define myself as a writer?
2. Who do I hope to become through publication in professional outlets?

Table 2.1 Sources of author support

Type of support needed	Your efforts	Others who can assist
Motivation to write	Identify when your writing is most productive—is it at a particular time of day? After a walk? Arrange a space that is dedicated to writing and equipped with what you will need. Prepare a physical environment that supports writing	Increase your motivation by being personally accountable to others, for example: "I will have a one-page description of my idea for the dissertation ready on Monday"
Literature search strategies	Look beyond the obvious descriptors and keywords of the topic. Try "backwards" searching—reading not only the article or book, but key sources cited in the reference lists of published work	Work with your reference librarian to conduct an effective search
Evaluating the accuracy of the content, the innovativeness of ideas, and correct manuscript preparation format	Check and double-check all information and use authoritative sources. Scour through the tables of contents of many publications to determine if the material is fresh and original	Try using the three-person review system (Jalongo, 2002). Ask a *subject matter expert* to review the work for accuracy and creative contribution. Ask *an editor* who knows the referencing style of the publication to evaluate format. Invite *a person who reads the intended publication* regularly to respond as your reading audience
Selecting a suitable outlet	Analyze the mission statement of the publisher. Review the tables of contents from previous issues of a journal to get a sense of what has been published. Conduct a search by style, rather than content. For example, if you are reporting on qualitative interview research, look for outstanding articles of this type and follow that format	Ask faculty members who have published prolifically for suggestions about where to submit a manuscript

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Type of support needed	Your efforts	Others who can assist
Help with the mechanics of language—spelling, syntax,	Use Microsoft Editor on the manuscript first and try to eliminate some of the more common errors. Consult a site such as Grammarly.com to answer questions	Native speakers of the language of publication with strong editorial skills can be helpful here. Rather than feeling it is an imposition, exchange services. Perhaps you can do some interview coding or provide statistical support to someone who serves as an informal peer reviewer of your work
Organizing the manuscript	If outlines are too linear for you, try "mapping" out an article using a flow chart or diagram or perhaps generating a list of questions that would be answered by the manuscript. Those headings can always be revised later	A writing coach can provide insight. To illustrate, an obvious structure for a practical article is a review of research, a section on helpful tips, and a section on examples. A more engaging structure might be sections that have a heading stated as a recommendation, followed by a concrete example, and then supported with the research reviewed
Responding to recommendations for revision	Many academic authors give up when they get a "revise and resubmit" decision on a manuscript. Instead, they need to analyze all the reviewers' comments, address each one, point-by-point, and then send in the revised manuscript	Widely published authors with experience as reviewers and editors can go over the critique with you and discuss how to formulate a response
Analysis of data	Get feedback on the research questions, instrumentation, and data collection tools *before* gathering data	Instructors for research courses and graduate students majoring in research methods can provide support and perhaps collaborate with you

3. What are my current strengths as a writer?
4. What genre do I most enjoy reading? writing? How might those reading tastes influence my current writing style?
5. What is it that I want to say to potential readers in the manuscript(s) I am working on?
6. How would I like to grow or change as a writer? What are my short-term goals?
7. What are my long-term writing goals? What do I dream of seeing on my curriculum vita five years from now? (adapted from Hayes, 2017).

2.1 Introduction: Definition of Identity Work

Identity is central to our sense of self. That is one reason victims of identity theft feel so violated; the damage extends beyond the economic consequences of unauthorized uses of credit—as bad as that is. It also has to do with being categorized as disreputable and judged harshly by others—such as when your credit card is declined. In effect, identity theft contradicts the truth of who we believe ourselves to be. A useful definition of identity is:

> an individual's organized constellation of traits; attitudes; self-knowledge; cognitive structures; past, present, and future self-representations; social roles; relationships; and group affiliations. Together these characteristics define who one is, heavily influence how one thinks about the self and the social world, and provide the impetus for many behaviors, judgments, and decisions. (Guenther et al., 2020, p. 2136)

An identity is built as people grow in their understanding of their relationship to the world, construct that relationship across time and space, and use it to explore possibilities for the future (Norton, 1997). Contemporary identity theory emphasizes that who we are is dynamic, rather than static (McCarthey, 2001). It is a complex construct—so much so that there is an entire journal, *Self and Identity* (Taylor & Francis), dedicated to research on the topic.

Usually, identity is constructed by: (1) discovering and developing your potential, (2) choosing your purpose in life, and (3) finding opportunities to exercise that potential and purpose (Psychology Today Staff, 2022). All of this is directly applicable to the goal of academic authorship.

Even before we begin to write for publication, we have a professional identity that is, in fact, one of the major goals and outgrowths of our education and experience. When students begin graduate studies, they must work at thinking and behaving in ways that are consistent with the culture of their discipline. They need to gain greater insight into how they learn, determine how much effort to invest in various tasks, decide who to ask for help, and so forth. The same holds true for becoming published authors.

Appiah (2018) notes that "Not all identities fit their bearers like a glove; sometimes we're talking oven mitts." So perhaps identity as an academic author is a poor fit at this time. How, then, to work toward improving that fit? He advises that, if you are not satisfied with your identity, you need to work with others both inside and outside the group you want to join and "reframe" your concept of self. Becoming a published author through scholarly writing is more than the simple fact that a manuscript was accepted for publication and more than a label; it is a form of role identity. "It demands that we fulfill the expectations of the role, coordinate with role partners, enact behavior consistent with the role, and see others responding appropriately to the behavioral enactment" (Stets & Burke, 2014, pp. 69–70).

Although it might seem unusual to begin a book about writing for publication with a focus on authors' identity work, an inability to imagine oneself as an author is a major impediment to generating a manuscript. Thus, if we label ourselves as unworthy to contribute to the thinking in our fields through publication, we begin with a restrictive view. Further, if we procrastinate about writing because we fear negative judgments of our ideas, we limit the opportunities to learn and gain practice. The discrepancy between our perceived real selves and our possible selves is the space in which identity work takes place (Snow, 2001). At some point, authors need to "take the plunge" and generate written text rather than just talk about writing or seek reassurance that they have potential. They need to negotiate the meaning of their texts with more knowledgeable others and revise writing based on the feedback received. Most people also need to experience positive outcomes from their writing efforts.

2.2 Influences on Identity as an Academic Author

In a doctoral seminar on writing for publication, a student remarked, "We're all in the same boat. None of us have published anything before. Shouldn't it be enough to just complete the program and graduate with our doctoral degree? Expecting us to write for publication seems unreasonable." As a doctoral student, I am certain that I expressed much the same sentiment to one of my professors, a Pennsylvania State University graduate, who encouraged us to do what had helped him to get his tenure-track position–publish three different manuscripts prior to graduation. Nevertheless, the idea expressed by my student—that all novice academic writers confront the same challenges—is unsupportable. The not-yet-published are an exceedingly diverse group.

The reality is that each author has a unique background, skill set, and self-identity as a writer. To illustrate, a college dean never considered herself to be "much of a writer" yet she discovered, after retiring from university life, that her writing style was well-suited to grant proposals. That—coupled with her determination to advocate for marginalized groups—had resulted in an amazing track record in securing major funding for a wide array of projects. At the other end of the spectrum of experience, I taught not-yet college freshmen in summer courses designed to shore up their deficiencies in reading and writing. The pressure was on because they had to demonstrate college potential prior to being admitted to the university in the fall. For many of them, what they lacked in the mechanical aspects of language they more than made up for in their ability to communicate powerful emotions through writing. Again and again, I encountered students who believed that they were "bad writers" when I found their writing to be interesting and evocative. So, each writer's "boat" is different and, to extend the analogy further, there are things that aspiring authors can do to make their vessels more seaworthy.

To begin at the very beginning, consider children's construction of self-as-author. Young children's perspectives on themselves authors are influenced by their: (1) ideas about the purposes for writing, (2) assumptions about writers/

writing, (3) conceptualizations of the process, and (4) perspectives on their competence as writers (Seban, 2015). Some key findings about our first attempts at authorship are surprisingly applicable to adult academic authors:

- Growth as an author is more than practicing skills and transferring knowledge. It is a fundamentally social enterprise because authors interact with others based on the writing they have generated.
- Authors' sense of themselves and others is identified, situated, and mediated as they generate topics for writing, produce manuscripts, review drafts of written work with peers, respond to others' writing efforts, and share the published form (Moje & Luke, 2009).
- Authors understand the writing process by actually producing pieces of writing for different personal and social purposes. This is what enables them to engage in the difficult task of changing their self-image from an incompetent to an accomplished writer (Graham, 2000).
- The sense of identity as an author is influenced by self-perceptions of current competence and future capabilities. The voice authors use in their writing reflects their social identity (Flint & Cappello, 2003).
- Successful outcomes for writing increase task persistence and commitment to growth as a writer (Laursen & Fabrin, 2013).

In their analysis of adults' formation of professional identities, Adams and Crafford (2012) define three concepts that we apply to academic authors in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Concepts of identity in authors

Concept	Definition	Implications for writers
Identity work	The process of negotiating and regulating identity, both personal and social	Trust—the mental state of willing to be vulnerable to others—facilitates sharing of manuscripts (Driver, 2015). We need to find "critical friends"—people who will provide constructive criticism in a kindly way
Work identity	how a person is defined within the context of the employee role and workplace	A strong work identity is associated with increased productivity (De Braine & Roodt, 2011). Writing for publication is part of a university faculty member's role
Strategies for identity work	The decisions and actions taken to construct an identity	Identity work involves the formation, repair, maintenance, modification, and revision of the constructions that define who we are. It aims for stability but is in a continual state of flux (Alvesson, 2010). It also involves self-questioning and struggles (Beech et al., 2016) Developing as an author requires drafting, revising, and completing work products

Although this may sound rather self-focused, Bakhtin (1981) has argued that identities are formed in a dialogic fashion, through interaction with other people. This challenges the "lone scholar" view in which an author sits staring at the computer screen, awaiting the arrival of inspiration. Authors and researchers are part of networks of other scholars, if not in person, then in print.

A good illustration of this is the international effort to develop effective vaccines for COVID-19. Some of these researchers had zero face-to-face contact, yet they were—and perhaps continue to be-engaged in critical dialogue with one another through other forms of communication, including their publications. The professional identities of these medical researchers had been shaped by their ethics/values, commitment to making a contribution, knowledge of the field, competence in conducting research, skill in reporting their findings, determination to solve the problem, and various forms of interaction with other scholars. The stereotype of one determined medical researcher completely cut off from others in a laboratory is challenged by what transpired. Rather, identity and sense of self are formulated into an ongoing narrative construction that is plurivocal and co-performed (Sermijn et al., 2008).

Many times, university faculty members feel pressured to produce empirical research only. While that may be the invariant expectation at the most prestigious institutions, publishing something in a respected peer-reviewed outlet surely is better than contributing nothing. Not all postsecondary institutions are that restrictive. It is important to understand your organization's expectations before ruling out anything other than original, quantitative research. A review of the literature, an editorial, the preface of a book, a college-level textbook, and a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research article each represent unique challenges to academic authorship.

2.3 Time and Support Issues Versus Identity

The nearly universal complaint of faculty for failing to write and publish is insufficient time and inadequate support (Boice, 1990; Murray, 2015). Paradoxically, although publication in peer-reviewed outlets is linked to the reward structure of higher education (i.e., tenure, promotion, sabbatical leave), it is rare for the activity to be calculated into faculty workload. Lack of time is so often cited as the reason for failing to publish that it needs to be addressed immediately and "unpacked", to borrow a term from sociology.

Some points to consider when faculty members protest that they do not have time to write.

1. *Time is fixed*. Everyone on the planet gets 24 hours per day, irrespective of the importance of their work. So, it is not being "given" time; rather it is prioritization. Writing needs a place and space where it can occur. A faculty office with constant interruptions will not suffice. Truth be told, much of the writing that faculty members get done occurs on weekends, breaks, and very early

or late in the day. Support is implicit in the fact that faculty are not required to be teaching a class, in their offices, or attending a meeting from 9 to 5, Monday through Friday. As MacLeod et al. (2012) concluded based on their study of faculty members who attended a writing retreat, successful academic authors have figured out a way to address competing demands and work within time constraints rather than waiting for large blocks of uninterrupted time to materialize.

When faculty *are* afforded more time to write, such as a sabbatical leave, these awards go to those who have already published successfully rather than to professors without any publications in hopes that they will suddenly burst into brilliant work. Be aware too that scheduling meetings to talk about writing can devolve into an avoidance strategy. Someone must commit words to paper and talk will not accomplish this. Even more importantly, that piece of writing must be significantly revised multiple times before it is of publishable quality. So, meetings about writing that become a social event or take on the characteristics of a therapy group generally will not yield a written work product.

2. *Confusing time constraints with negative emotions.* Uncertainty can generate negative emotions (Anderson et al., 2019). Three features of tasks that make them unappealing include (1) risk (future outcomes that seem random or indeterminate), (2) ambiguity (inadequate, unreliable, conflicting/confusing information about task completion), and (3) complexity (multiple causes/outcomes for the task that make it difficult to comprehend) (Han et al., 2011). Given that writing for publication can include all three of these aspects, it is little wonder that it also can be perceived as aversive.

To illustrate the influence of negative emotions on scholarly writing, what if you were *guaranteed* that a manuscript you have written would be accepted for publication. Would you pursue it then? If so, then fear of wasting time by investing it in an unsuccessful venture is the underlying issue. Even when time is available, those without confidence and skills will avoid writing and engage in other tasks at which they believe they have a chance of success. Appraisal emotions kick in as writers assess the match (or mismatch) between their goals and expectations for success; the ease or difficulty of controlling the situation; and barriers caused by others, impersonal circumstances, or themselves (Moors, 2017). With acceptance rates in many professional journals below about 20%, it is easy to see why the task is so daunting. Usually, we procrastinate and avoid a task due to an inability to manage negative moods (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013). Negative emotions associated with writing may include dislike of the task (often based on prior negative assessments), anxiety, insecurity, self-doubt, fear of failure, and/or worries about wasting time. Learning to manage emotions might be far more important than superficial strategies such as putting writing on your calendar.

Taking the high moral ground. Faculty members who publish nothing sometimes argue that they are too dedicated to their other work roles of teaching, student advisement, administration, and service to and participate in the (presumably) self-serving activity of writing for publication. Yet, in my experience, their actions frequently belie their words. They usually are the ones who are pedestrian instructors, generate course syllabi that do not meet the criteria for an accreditation report, fail to show up during their office hours, or neglect their fair share of the committee workload. They disparagingly refer to the "game" of higher education, one in which they vaingloriously refuse to participate. Although they may not perish from lack of publication, they often languish at the lower ranks and become increasingly bitter about it. They scoff at what is published, question its contribution, and protest that their exceptionally high standards of generating ground-breaking work prevent them from joining in. In contradiction of their claim to be focused exclusively on teaching, usually the most admirable faculty members are responsible university citizens who "do it all" well and make a contribution through teaching, research, and service. In research that studied those at the top of their respective fields, Gladwell (2008) concluded that, instead of their paths to excellence being quick and easy, leading experts devoted more—rather than less–time to the same task than others.

2.4 Aptitude for and Attitudes Toward Academic Writing

To the best of our current knowledge, there is no evidence that writing well is innate. A study conducted in Australia that involved 246 recent doctoral program graduates provides some insight on the traits that contributed to their success. Rather than writing the traditional thesis/dissertation, these students had opted to complete their programs by publishing in professional journals. When asked to identify the skills and attributes that supported their success, four clusters of traits emerged:

(1) resilience and patience
(2) determination, focus, and passion
(3) independence and assertiveness
(4) introspection, adaptability, and openness to self-improvement.

If you have managed to successfully complete a graduate program, chances are that you are sufficiently literate to hone those skills into the abilities of a professional writer. The great majority of doctoral students and college faculty members already possess the basic skills that they need to become published authors. Many times, it is more an issue of obstacles that get in the way of developing greater confidence and skills. Some of those obstacles to address are in Table 2.3.

What do we know about the habits of successful academic authors? Reviewing these characteristics—and incorporating them into your behavioral repertoire–can help you to address those habits that are nonproductive. Table 2.4 highlights behaviors that support growth in scholarly writing.

Table 2.3 Obstacles to scholarly writing

• Impatience and procrastination: “I have many other, more pressing tasks that need to come first”
• Inflated expectations: “If I can’t revolutionize the field through writing, why bother?”
• Unwillingness to be vulnerable: “If I share a draft of my writing with others, they might think less of me”
• Resistance to revision: “If my writing isn’t rated as being excellent on the first try, then writing is not for me”
• The gift of time: “I’ll write when I…have more free time…a sabbatical…retire…”
• Dredging up past failures: “I’ve never been any good at writing.”
• Fear of rejection: “What if I invest all of this time and the effort is unsuccessful?”
• Searching for shortcuts: “Surely, someone has figured out an easier way or quicker route to success”

Table 2.4 Habits of successful academic authors

1. I read “widely and well” to internalize the attributes of effective prose (Zinsser, 2016) and, when reviewing the literature, I look beyond the obvious search engine results
2. I tend to work at writing tasks over an extended period rather than “binge write” (Boice, 1990)
3. I have developed ways to counteract writer’s block and continue to work on a project—for example, reviewing my notes, reading more about the topic, formatting the references–even when the writing is not going smoothly (Silvia, 2019)
4. I incorporate powerful, concise examples into writing, moving back and forth between the general and the specific (Strunk, 2018)
5. I study the outlets in which I seek to publish, follow the reference style required of the publication, adhere to the submission guidelines, and attend to the small details
6. I collect copies of superlative manuscripts and use them as models of professional discourse to emulate
7. I ask members of a known audience to read and critique my work prior to sending it out for anonymous peer review
8. When an editor asks me to revise and resubmit, I understand that this is not a rejection. I respond thoughtfully, thoroughly, and clearly identify the changes that I made in response to the reviewers’ recommendations
9. I resist trendiness and seek instead to write with commitment to the subject matter selected
10. I do not rush to submit my work; rather, I let it “sit” for a while and return to it multiple times before sending it off for publication

The next section addresses academic misconduct as it pertains to identity—the appropriation of others’ ideas or recycling of our own previously published ideas through plagiarism and self-plagiarism.

2.5 Plagiarism Among Inexperienced and Published Authors

Teachers warn students about the severe consequences of plagiarism in their written assignments long before entering university (Fischer & Parton, 2014). Why might a writer plagiarize? Table 2.5 identifies some leading reasons.

Graduate students, faculty members, and editors may have disparate views about what constitutes plagiarism. While it is widely understood that intentional, widespread deception—for example, purchasing a dissertation from an online service and representing it as original work—is plagiarism, other situations are more nuanced. For example, prior to pursuing his doctoral degree, a student from China had achieved impressive mastery of the English language because his job was to translate books from English into Chinese. The review of the literature he submitted as his first written assignment had an unacceptably high level of similarity with published sources, yet he had no intent to deceive. As Zimba and Gasparyan (2021) note, novice non-Anglophone authors may have been exposed to educational environments that emphasized imitating the published works as closely as possible to report on it. From a purely zero tolerance perspective, this student could have encountered harsh sanctions; however, the instructor acknowledged that she should not have assumed that all students had a thorough understanding about plagiarism. In consultation with the doctoral program director, they agreed that he would be given an opportunity to rectify the matter. The student graciously accepted the decision and prepared a new, original paper.

There are two social norms that govern decisions about avoiding plagiarism:

Table 2.5 Why writers resort to plagiarism

1. **Being uniformed/misinformed**. Authors may be unaware of the rules governing appropriate use of others' work, so all teachers of writing should assume that students need guidance in proper citation practices (Peters et al., 2021). For example, writers may know how to cite direct quotations but be less clear about their responsibility to cite when paraphrasing
2. **A race to the top mentality**. Haste leads to shoddy work, including mistakes when attributing information to the correct original source. The high retraction rate during COVID-19 serves as an example of this (Yeo-Teh & Tang, 2020)
3. **Pressure of deadlines**. When authors procrastinate and are in a last-minute rush to complete a task, desperation can result in plagiarism, such as thinly disguised pieces from Wikipedia or an unpublished paper. Authors sometimes do very little writing or original thinking; instead, they assemble a paper by collecting pieces from elsewhere and assembling them—a practice referred to as "patch writing"
4. **Task challenges that exceed skill levels**. A lack of creativity and poor academic English skills may cause authors to plagiarize because another writer's thinking and writing is superior to their own (Zimba & Gasparyan, 2021)
5. **The ease of copying**. Access to previously published material that can be lifted and inserted into a manuscript may be irresistible to a desperate writer
6. **Attempts to fast-track**. If authors have published previously, they may try to "recycle" their work (e.g., using essentially the same the review of the literature for a different study). Given that the first outlet commonly holds the copyright, this is both illegal and unethical

(1) the text must be written in full by its presumed author (other than direct quotations with the authors' names appropriately cited)
(2) the text is written for one and only one purpose or publication outlet.

These criteria forbid any recycling of academic text, *including your own.* Some academic authors may find the second norm puzzling—they protest, "If it is my work, why can't I use it as I wish or repeat it elsewhere?" They expect to use previously published material in a subsequent publication without obtaining permission. However, it is just as unacceptable to do this in the publishing world as it is for a student to submit the same paper to two different faculty members in fulfillment of course requirements for two different courses.

Plagiarism is not only a violation of intellectual property rights but also varies in terms of egregiousness, depending upon whether it is intentional and unintentional. Table 2.6 describes various types of plagiarism, ranging from the blatant to more subtle types, how to prevent them, and additional resources.

It has become increasingly easy to check for similarities between a manuscript and other sources. In fact, anyone who uses Microsoft Word for word processing can conduct a plagiarism check. The Review tab has a tool called Similarity that searches online sources and compares them with your document. The publisher indicates that it allows checking up to 30,000 words in one day. The limitation is based on the number of words, whether they are in one or more documents. Once you hit the 30,000-word limit, you'll need to wait another day before you can run the similarity checker again.

There are many other plagiarism detection software (PDS) tools on the market; Peters et al. (2021) indicate that over 20 different programs exist. iThenticate (2022) is in wide use by universities, publishers, editors, and scholars. The use of PDS tools is not without controversy, however. Some have protested that PDS tools cannot identify all forms of plagiarism, establish a "policing mentality" between faculty/students and editors/authors, and are in mandated use by publishers (Geilas & Fyfe, 2020). No matter how sophisticated PDS becomes, it still relies on experts in the field to note discrepancies, interpret the findings, and take appropriate action.

2.6 Conclusion: Rebounding from Failure

Practically everyone who has attempted to write for publication has experienced disappointments—perhaps quite a few of them. Recent research on how scholars cope with failure can be instructive. A research team decided to analyze the massive National Institutes of Health grant proposal data base because it is a repository of human failures (Yin et al., 2019). Existing data sets indicated exactly when an applicant failed, the scores on the proposal, and if/when they succeeded. Their conclusion? It was not persistence alone or time invested, because those who never succeeded sometimes tried again just as many times and presumably worked hard. What separated the two groups was learning from their mistakes and differentiating

Table 2.6 Forms of plagiarism

Type of plagiarism	Description	Ways to prevent
Verbatim plagiarism	Appropriating the work of someone else and passing it off as your own rather than giving proper credit	Begin projects early to avoid last-minute panic Make sure that you understand the written assignment and get your questions answered before you begin the composing process If available, seek support from your institution's writing center
Mosaic plagiarism or "patch writing"	Use of text that is very close to the original. Taking material from numerous sources (usually online) and making the most superficial changes to the wording to piece together a paper from other material, as if making a patchwork quilt	Rather than focusing on a single source, consult several different authors. For example, when defining key terminology, look for several different experts' definitions and make a list of elements from them, citing all sources
Inadequate or uncited paraphrase	Excessive paraphrasing from various texts without citing the original sources	This can result in unintentional plagiarism when authors mistakenly assume that only verbatim quotations require a citation. They may be unfamiliar with citation practices that cite the original source(s) for paraphrased material as well as direct quotations
Uncited quotation	Providing references, but leaving out quotation marks	Use clear note-taking strategies. From the very beginning, find a way to differentiate your ideas from those of others, such as using a different typeface, color, or highlight. Carefully compare your work with that in the sources consulted

(continued)

Table 2.6 (continued)

Type of plagiarism	Description	Ways to prevent
Using the essence of the work	Appropriating others' opinions and ideas as well as graphic representations thereof	Copyright law is not predicated exclusively on lifting large chunks of previously published material. It also has to do with the "essence of the work". So, if a 500- page book includes a table that encapsulates a theory or a diagram that depicts it, the few words must be credited to the author and other authors cannot use the table or diagram without permission
Self-plagiarism	The most blatant form occurs when authors attempt to publish the same work in more than one outlet. A more subtle form is "recycling text" by quoting extensively and repeating work published previously in another outlet	Even published authors are sometimes unaware that they have assigned copyright to the publisher as a precondition of publication. So, even though it is "their" work, they cannot duplicate it elsewhere without permission
Translational plagiarism	Authors who republish the same works in different languages without primary and secondary publishers' knowledge and agreement	Publishers need to comply with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (2022) standards where translations are concerned
Citation manipulation	Authors who fabricate sources or manipulate citations to conceal substantive plagiarism	A rigorous peer review process often identifies misconduct of this type as do reference checking systems such as *Crossref*

Sources Bruton (2014), Harvard Guide to Using Sources, The Lancet Staff (2009), Peters et al. (2021), Roig (2015), Ross (2021), Shen (2020), Thomas (2021), Zimba and Gasparyan (2021)

between what to keep and what to change. Ultimately, their model could predict who would fail based on the time in between consecutive attempts. Applicants for major grant awards who allowed long periods of time to lapse before trying again tended to fail. In two additional applications of their model to (1) innovators of startup ventures and, surprisingly, (2) the casualty statistics of terrorist organizations, the findings were consistent. Those who promptly regrouped and learned from past failures were better able to meet their objectives—for good or evil. The takeaway message, based on an interview with second author Wang, is that the faster you fail, the faster you succeed (Noonan, 2019).

Identity work as an author—both novice and experienced—is about change and growth. Neither persisting at what has been unsuccessful in the past nor self-plagiarism of successfully published work will advance a research agenda. Even accomplished authors can become stale, dated, formulaic, derivative, and redundant if they do not seek continuous professional growth. Regarding yourself as a lifelong and life-wide learner is the surest route to formulating an identity as an academic author that is a successful match with the expectations of your field.

Issue: Confronting the Imposter Phenomenon

Sociologist Howard Becker's book on publishing includes a chapter written by one of his former doctoral advisees, Richards (2020). In it, she is concerned that, because her class assignments to date have focused on reviewing the literature, she is only a cutter, a paster, a borrower, and a fake. She also worries that, when writing is shared with fellow students, they might think less of her intellectual abilities or secretly ridicule her paltry efforts. As a student who seeks to publish, she is well aware that it is not only her writing that will need to be effective but also the originality of her ideas—something that makes writing even more daunting. Like the Wizard of Oz who turns out to be an ordinary man operating from behind a curtain, many authors fear being unveiled as a pretender.

The imposter phenomenon (IP) was first described by psychologists Clance and Imes (1978) in their study of high-achieving women and later popularized in a book for general audiences (Clance, 1985). In this work, high-achieving individuals expressed self-doubt and worried that they would be exposed as a fraud. Whenever they were successful, they tended to give all the credit for their successes to external influences, such as luck or help from others. When they had a setback, they tended to dwell on personal inadequacies as the culprit. Such feelings have been documented in men, women, and various ethnic or racial groups across the professions and are especially prevalent in graduate students (Cohen & McConnell, 2019). In a study of 631 Austrian doctoral students, about one-third of them reported feeling that they expected to be unmasked as a fake, have their incompetence exposed, and perhaps be shunned by peers afterwards (Jostl et al., 2012). Higher education faculty report being affected by the imposter phenomenon as well (Hutchins, 2015).

Some recommended ways of counteracting the imposter phenomenon include:

1. Self-compassion. When a writing project falters or fails, authors need to forgive themselves and decide on a course of action that would change the outcome. Perhaps a more experienced and helpful colleague could go over the reviews with them if "revise and resubmit" was the decision or suggest a different outlet if the manuscript was rejected. Practicing self-compassion is a key strategy in buffering the effects of IP (Patzak et al., 2017).
2. Be growth-seeking. How long has it been since you engaged in any activities to enhance your skills in writing and research? For some, the last time anyone taught them writing skills was as an undergraduate and the last experience with learning to conduct research was in graduate school. In one study of graduate students, direct instruction in the skills in reading and reviewing the

literature reduced imposter feelings by 23% (Cisco, 2020). There are so many opportunities to develop new skill sets that are freely available online (see the Applications of Technology section in each chapter) or during participation in professional conferences. One faculty member, for example, asked a statistics professor for a recommendation on the best way to analyze her data and he suggested discriminant function analysis. She had never encountered this previously, taught herself what she needed to know, and used the method in an article that was accepted for publication.

3. Working with a mentor or coach. In a basic research course, one instructor who had completed her dissertation recently used that experience to explain the process, the reservations about her own competence, and her preparation for the presentation to her committee. By sharing, not only her success but also the challenges—such as how she dealt with criticisms of chapters that sometimes appeared to be conflicting—she provided mentoring to all her students within the context of the course.
4. Emphasizing cooperation over competition in the graduate program. It is important for authors to have a sense of belonging to a supportive group rather than feeling isolated. During the first required research course for doctoral students, the instructor brought the tables of contents for Chap. 2, The Review of the Literature, from ten exemplary dissertations to class. He noted that a common concern for students was how to organize the research that they read in a coherent fashion. As they studied these outlines, the students began to see how headings and subheadings were used to build the argument for the research and establish the need for the study. The activity created a sense of collaboration, over time, with current and future program graduates.
5. Celebrate small successes. Even after experiencing a modicum of success with publishing, authors will sometimes ask when they can be counted as a "real" author—after at least three articles have been published? Do they need to write a book to truly qualify as an author? And so forth. I would argue that having an article accepted in a scholarly outlet with a rigorous peer review process is sufficient evidence that you are a beginning academic author. There is no "magic number".

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Guide to Academic Publishing Ph.D Students' Guide to Publishing: Expert Advice & Resources (gograd.org) (https://www.gograd.org/resources/guide-to-academic-publishing/).

Springer Nature Resource: Author Responsibilities and Ethics Editorial policies-Ethical Responsibilities of Authors | Springer | Springer—International Publisher (https://www.springer.com/gp/editorial-policies/ethical-responsibilities-of-authors).

Online Video: Helen Sword, prolific academic and creative writer, has created a five-day writing retreat online called Helen's Word. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07kKC9mpxNM.

See also the Ethics of Authorship Series from scholars in the field of Management https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3wEmi1rMeQ&list=PL65B059BC12E75502.

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Writing the Literature Review: Common Mistakes and Best Practices

3

Kelly Heider

Contents

Abstract

The literature review is an essential component of academic research writing, providing a comprehensive overview of existing research and informing the development of new studies. However, writing an effective literature review can be a challenging task for many authors, particularly those new to academic writing. This chapter aims to guide authors through the process of writing a literature review by highlighting common mistakes and best practices. The chapter begins with three short narratives that describe difficulties both novice and prolific authors encounter when writing the literature review. A chapter activity follows with steps that guide authors through the process of developing a research question to frame the literature review. Authors are then prompted to complete a self-assessment activity which includes a series of questions designed to build their skills as academic research writers. The body of the

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_3

chapter recommends strategies and techniques to help authors locate and evaluate sources that will serve as the building blocks for a literature review that is thorough, current, and well-written. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the threats and benefits of artificial intelligence-based text production in relationship to academic research writing. Overall, this chapter provides practical guidance for authors looking to improve their literature review writing skills and enhance the quality of their research output.

Keywords

Locating sources • Developing research questions • Constructing search strings • Evaluating sources • Writing the literature review • Analyzing the literature review • AI-based text production

Three Narratives

Novice

A doctoral student in a program with a curriculum and instruction focus writes a paper for her ***Writing for Publication*** *course on the integration of digital technologies into a play-based early childhood curriculum. It receives a low grade because, in the words of her instructor, "Educational technologies become outdated very quickly. Therefore, you need to limit your references to the last five years." The instructor gives her the opportunity to re-write the paper and suggests reaching out to one of the university's librarians for help setting date limitations. So, she sets up a Zoom meeting with the Education Librarian whose first question for the student is, "Where did you go to find your sources?" and the doctoral student replies, "I used Google Scholar." The librarian explains that Google Scholar can be a valuable resource for student researchers if they know how to use it in conjunction with their university library's resources. However, most novice researchers do not understand that they will need to pay for access to current peer-reviewed articles they find through Google Scholar unless they use an on-campus computer or a VPN (virtual private network) on their personal device. As a result, they often bypass the most current sources for literature that is free but dated.*

Visit your academic library's webpage. Is there a link to get help from a librarian? If so, what forms of help are offered? How might you utilize these services to find the most current research in your field?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

A faculty member who teaches graduate courses in criminology invites his graduate assistant (GA) to write a paper with him on racial disparity in state prisons. He asks his GA to begin creating a bibliography of sources for the literature review. The GA does an excellent job gathering current peer-reviewed literature on the topic, but the *faculty member insists that they need to include Michelle Alexander's seminal work,* ***The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.*** *The GA is embarrassed that she didn't include this work in her bibliography, but the faculty member assures her that she had no way of knowing since her undergraduate degree was in a different field. The faculty member explains that a good literature review should always include seminal works.*

Seminal works (also referred to as landmark literature or pivotal works) are books, book chapters, or articles "that initially presented an idea of great importance or influence within a particular discipline" (Phair, 2021, para. 7). How might you identify seminal works when searching Google Scholar? How might you identify seminal works when searching library databases?

Prolific *An accomplished faculty member who teaches literature and criticism decides to write a paper that examines the role of women in Early American literature. She finds a reference to an article entitled* ***The Relationship between the Feminist Movement and Strong Female Characters in Early American Literature****. Her attempt to locate the article through her library's website is unsuccessful, so she requests the article through interlibrary loan. After several days, the interlibrary loan supervisor sends her an email that reads, "I regret that I've been unable to locate this article for you. After some investigation, it looks as though the information provided in the citation is incorrect." The faculty member is disappointed because it seemed as though the article would have been a perfect fit for her literature review.*

Why is it important to document your sources correctly? How might you avoid mistakes in the content of citations, citing the wrong source, style errors, and/or forgetting to cite a source?

Activity: Developing a Research Question in Five Easy Steps Before authors can tackle the literature review, they must choose a topic and develop an initial research question. A well-structured literature review provides a clear and concise overview of the research topic and demonstrates the significance of the research question. To develop your initial research question, complete the following steps:

Step One List a few broad topics you are interested in researching.
(1) …
(2) …
(3) …

Step Two Determine if these issues are covered by research. Conduct some basic searches in the big interfaces to which your academic library subscribes (e.g., EBSCOhost, ProQuest, SAGE Premier) to find out.

Step Three Based on the articles you find that interest you, formulate some questions about each of your topics. Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple yes/no. Instead, consider using language such as:

- *What is the relationship between…?*
- *What factors affect…?*

- *How do the effects of…influence…?*
- *How does…relate to…?*
- *Why is…an issue in relation to…?*
- *To what extent does…affect…?*

Step Four Now, form a purpose statement (the "so what" factor) for each of your research questions. In other words, why is each question important to your field of study? Consider statements such as:

- *This is important/significant because…*
- *This is worth noting because…*
- *This calls attention to…*
- *What this means is…*

Step Five Choose the research question you are most passionate about or the one that has the strongest purpose.

Self-assessment: Critically Analyzing Your Literature Review

Through self-assessment, authors improve editing, writing, and critical thinking skills. The most beneficial self-assessment includes reflection that focuses on the strengths and weaknesses in a piece of writing as well as the writing habits that were most productive. Reflection is something that comes naturally to some writers while others need to practice (Texas A&M Writing Center, 2023).

Revisit a literature review you have written in the past for a class assignment, master's thesis, or dissertation *or* examine the first draft of a literature review you hope to improve after reading this chapter, and answer the following questions, adapted from Mertens (2019):

1. The purpose of the literature review is to place the current research into the "big picture" of what is known and not known about a specific topic. What is the big picture—the research landscape—for your study? What is your central topic? How are you conceptualizing the problem?
2. What is the nature of the literature you've cited?
   - Have you cited existing research that is recent enough to have applicability to your proposed research?
   - Is your review based predominately on primary (empirical) research rather than on secondary (review) research or opinion pieces?
   - Does your review provide a critical analysis of existing literature, recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of previous research, or is it just a summary of previous research?
   - What about synthesis? How well have you pulled together strands or themes in the literature (rather than reporting on each piece of research, one at a time)?
   - Is your literature review well balanced, presenting evidence on both (or all) sides of the issue?

3. Is your review free from bias? In other words, is there any evidence in terms of emotional language, institutional affiliation, funding source, etc. to suggest that you might be biased?
4. To what extent do you establish a need for your study? What is your rationale to conduct this study? What do you know? What do you need to know? Why is your study important (practically and in terms of scholarship)?
5. What is your theoretical or conceptual framework, and what are your research questions? Do you provide enough information to support your theoretical framework and the research question(s) you've posed?
6. Do you provide sufficient information to guide the research procedures, including the identification of subject participants, selection of data collection and analysis processes, and use of appropriate reporting strategies? Are the research question(s) and methods logically connected to the literature review?
7. Are the sources you've cited inclusive of "marginalized" voices? In other words, have you made reference to viewpoints of those with the least power?

Revisit these questions after you have finished reading this chapter and have had a chance to write or revise a first draft of your literature review. Did the quality of your literature review improve? If so, what weaknesses did you address? If not, what do you need to do strengthen your writing?

3.1 Introduction: Common Mistakes

Phair (2021) asserts that there are seven mistakes authors commonly make when writing a literature review:

- using low-quality sources
- omitting landmark/seminal literature
- incorporating dated literature
- describing, instead of integrating and synthesizing, relevant studies
- including irrelevant or unfocused content
- constructing a poorly organized review
- citing sources incorrectly or not citing them at all

Three of these mistakes (including incorporating dated literature, omitting landmark/seminal literature, and citing sources incorrectly or not citing them at all) were addressed in the *Three Narratives* section of this chapter. Quality of sources will be addressed in the *Locating Sources for Your Literature Review* and *Evaluating Sources for Your Literature Review* sections of this chapter, and the remaining mistakes will be addressed in the *Best Practices in Writing the Literature Review* section of this chapter. A recent development in technology—artificial intelligence-based text production—has the potential to both threaten and benefit academic research writing. The chapter will close with a discussion of this controversial issue.

3.2 Locating Sources for Your Literature Review

Revisit the research question you developed in the **Activity** and complete the steps outlined in Table 3.1 to construct an advanced, Boolean search string you will use to locate relevant, peer-reviewed, empirical research articles in the big interfaces to which your academic library subscribes (e.g., EBSCOhost, ProQuest, SAGE Premier):

Organizing Your Sources

To complete a thorough review of the literature, authors will search dozens of databases and read hundreds of articles. Fortunately, advancements in technology have led to the development of bibliographic management tools (or reference managers) that help authors manage their sources and generate bibliographies in multiple citation formats. Widely used interfaces such as EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and SAGE Premier allow users to save citations to a file formatted for direct export into some of the more popular reference managers. Links to those reference managers, as well as YouTube videos that demonstrate how to use them, follow:

Table 3.1 *Constructing a search string*

Steps	Instructions/Questions	Resources
1	Underline the keywords in your research question.	
2	Construct some Boolean search strings (using AND, OR, NOT) with your underlined keywords and conduct some advanced searches for peer-reviewed articles in the big interfaces to which your academic library subscribes.	**Building Search Strings, Part 1: Boolean Operators**—https://youtu.be/rL3JmEgmcSE
3	Which of your search strings was most successful? In which interface did you seem to have the most luck?	
4	If you did not have much luck locating articles that address your research question, try constructing some nesting, phrase searching, truncation, or wildcard search strings.	**Building Search Strings, Part 2: Nesting, Phrase Searching, Truncation, and Wildcards**—https://youtu.be/rSajulSMY34
5	Did any of these strategies yield more or better results? If so, which one(s)?	
6	If you are still struggling to find articles, try doing some advanced, Boolean subject searching using the subject headings that were assigned to the few articles you *are* finding.	**Advanced Searching: Using Limiters and Subject Searching**—https://youtu.be/3BAyzJvyBss
7	Did any of these strategies yield more or better results? If so, which one(s)?	

Note. If you have tried implementing all the above strategies, and you are still not finding enough articles for your literature review, you may have to consider changing your research question to one of the others you developed in the **Activity.**

- **CITAVI**—https://www.citavi.com/en
  - **How to Use Citavi 6**—https://youtu.be/LIkQ3FvIhns
- **EasyBib**—https://www.easybib.com/
  - **A Brief Introduction to EasyBib**—https://youtu.be/SL_ddUHSYC4
- **EndNote-** https://endnote.com/
  - **How to Use EndNote: A Complete Beginner's Guide**—https://youtu.be/XpqGuIJbP2I
- **Mendeley Reference Manager**—https://www.mendeley.com/reference-management/reference-manager
  - **How to Use Mendeley Reference Manager**—https://youtu.be/OzFHGFnAM2Q
- **RefWorks**—https://www.refworks.com/refworks2/
  - **Introduction to RefWorks**—https://youtu.be/J5905oxj02U
- **Zotero**—https://www.zotero.org/
  - **How to Use Zotero: A Complete Beginner's Guide**—https://youtu.be/JG7Uq_JFDzE

Including Marginalized Voices

A tutorial in locating resources for the literature review would not be complete without addressing the issue of marginalized voices. The American social revolution that began in the late 1960s and extended into the 1970s drew attention to the unequal power relationships that exist across our nation's economic, political, social, and cultural landscape. As a result, the term *marginalized* began to be used "to describe the experiences of those who live on the fringe of mainstream America" (Garrett, n.d., para. 1). By excluding marginalized groups of people (MGP) from full participation in society, we risk losing their unique and valuable contributions (Liberties EU, 2021). The same is true of academic writing. If authors do not include the voices of academics who belong to marginalized groups in their literature reviews, they risk presenting biased perspectives on their research topics. According to Miguel De La Torre (2018), professor of social ethics and Latino studies at the Iliff School of Theology, "scholarship can never be cutting-edge if one is ignorant of all aspects of their discipline. Lacking familiarity with the contributions from all marginalized communities does a disservice…to my scholarship" (para. 3). So, how can you be sure you have included the contributions of MGP in your literature review? George Mason University Libraries (2021) offer the following tips:

- Search demographic-specific databases (e.g., Arte Publico Hispanic Historical Collection, Bibliography of Asian Studies, Women's Studies International).
- Search for professors in specific programs that relate to your research topic (e.g., LGBTQIA+ Studies, Native American Studies, Pan African Studies).
- Ask your professors or colleagues to recommend scholars from marginalized groups.

- Search for lists of authors from marginalized communities in your field (e.g., Cite Black Women Twitter Account- https://twitter.com/citeblackwomen, Finding Diverse Sources for Science Stories- https://www.theopennotebook.com/finding-diverse-sources-for-science-stories/).
- Complete a web search for identity (e.g., transgender archeologists).
- Web search authors of articles to see if they are part of the community they are studying.
- Find scholars and authors within professional association diversity groups (e.g., Association for Women in Science, Association of College and Research Libraries Diversity Alliance, Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQIA+ Equality).

3.3 Evaluating Sources for Your Literature Review

The types of sources that should be cited most often in a literature review include peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles and books published by academic publishers. The bulk of the peer-reviewed journal articles included in a literature review should describe empirical research. According to Emerald Publishing (2023):

> Empirical research is research that is based on observation and measurement of phenomena, as directly experienced by the researcher. The data thus gathered may be compared against a theory or hypothesis, but the results are still based on real life experience. The data gathered is all primary data, although secondary data from a literature review may form the theoretical background. (para. 1)

Well-designed empirical research begins with a sound research question, follows a systematic, appropriate research methodology, acknowledges previous research on the topic, uses relevant, empirical data and proper data analysis methods, and includes a sample that is representative of the target population. Another characteristic of a well-designed study is its external validity. Studies with high external validity have findings that can be generalized to a larger population. Good studies are also replicable, reproducible, and transparent. Replicability ensures that other researchers can test a study's findings. Studies are reproducible if researchers achieve consistent results using the same data and analysis methods. For studies to be replicable and reproducible, the research process must be transparent, or clearly described, so that other researchers know exactly how data was collected and analyzed and how conclusions were reached. Finally, well-designed empirical research acknowledges its limitations, provides suggestions for future research, and is carried out according to research ethics (Bouchrika, 2023).

Low quality sources that should rarely be cited in a literature review include blogs, personal and commercial websites, publications from advocacy groups, daily news (print and online, tv, radio), and general audience books. Mediocre quality sources, such as high-quality mainstream media (e.g., national newspapers, news magazines, political and current affairs magazines), books published by non-academic publishers, and government and education websites, may be used sparingly depending on the focus of the literature review (UCCS, 2022).

Even the most trusted sources in academic writing, peer-reviewed journal articles, should be scrutinized for their authority and credibility since not all journals are created equal. Authority refers to the credentials of the author(s) of the source as well as their level of expertise and knowledge about the subject. Credibility means that a source is trustworthy.

An excellent open educational resource that may be used by researchers to evaluate the credibility of journals is Scimago Journal and Country Rank (https://www.scimagojr.com/). Scimago is:

> a publicly available portal that includes the journals and country scientific indicators developed from the information contained in the Scopus database (https://www.scopus.com/home.uri). These indicators can be used to assess and analyze scientific domains. Journals can be compared or analysed separately. Country rankings may also be compared or analysed separately. Journals can be grouped by subject area (27 major thematic areas), subject category (309 specific subject categories) or by country. Citation data is drawn from over 34,100 titles from more than 5,000 international publishers and country performance metrics from 239 countries worldwide. (Scimago Lab, 2022a, para. 1)

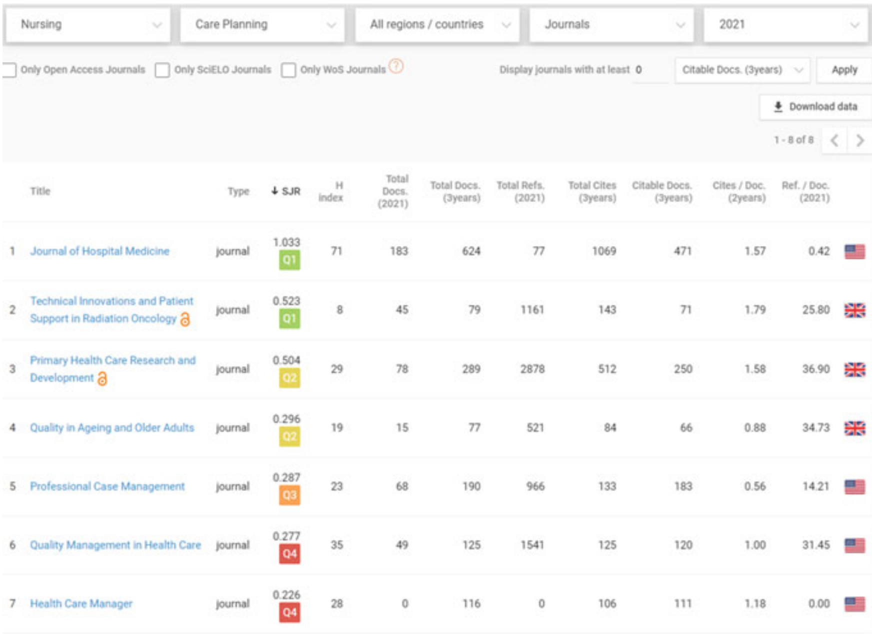
Scimago uses its own journal rank indicator (SJR), the H-index, and various other metrics to measure the scientific influence of scholarly journals. The SJR measures a journal's impact, influence, or prestige. "It expresses the average number of weighted citations received in the selected year by the documents published in the journal in the three previous years" (Scimago Lab, 2022b, n.p.). The H-index is "a standard scholarly metric in which the number of published papers, and the number of times their author is cited, is put into relation. The formula is based on the number of papers (H) that have been cited, and how often, compared to those that have not been cited (or cited as much)" (Elsevier Author Services, n.d.a, para. 3).

Journals are also given quartile rankings in Scimago. Those rankings appear as a green Q1 box, a yellow Q2 box, an orange Q3 box, or a red Q4 box. The top 25% of journals in a rankings list are given the Q1 designation; the Q2 designation includes journals in the 25–50% group; the Q3 designation includes journals in the 50–75% group; and the Q4 designation includes journals in the 75–100% group.

The following Figure 3.1 is a screenshot of a Scimago ranking for journals in the field of nursing care planning:

By clicking on the title of any journal in the result list, a Scimago user can view the full record for that journal which includes a wealth of information about the journal (e.g., publisher, ISSN, dates of coverage, scope) as well as visualizations of the data provided on the ranking page.

In addition to providing a means by which researchers can evaluate the credibility of journals in their field, Scimago may also be used to find a journal in which authors can publish. Ideally, authors want to publish in a top tier (Q1) journal



Nursing | Care Planning | All regions / countries | Journals | 2021

Only Open Access Journals | Only SciELO Journals | Only WoS Journals | Display journals with at least 0 | Citable Docs. (3years) | Apply

Download data

1 - 8 of 8

	Title	Type	SJR	H index	Total Docs. (2021)	Total Docs. (3years)	Total Refs. (2021)	Total Cites (3years)	Citable Docs. (3years)	Cites / Doc. (2years)	Ref. / Doc. (2021)
1	Journal of Hospital Medicine	journal	1.033 Q1	71	183	624	77	1069	471	1.57	0.42
2	Technical Innovations and Patient Support in Radiation Oncology	journal	0.523 Q1	8	45	79	1161	143	71	1.79	25.80
3	Primary Health Care Research and Development	journal	0.504 Q2	29	78	289	2878	512	250	1.58	36.90
4	Quality in Ageing and Older Adults	journal	0.296 Q2	19	15	77	521	84	66	0.88	34.73
5	Professional Case Management	journal	0.287 Q3	23	68	190	966	133	183	0.56	14.21
6	Quality Management in Health Care	journal	0.277 Q4	35	49	125	1541	125	120	1.00	31.45
7	Health Care Manager	journal	0.226 Q4	28	0	116	0	106	111	1.18	0.00

Fig. 3.1 *Nursing care planning journal ranking in Scimago*

to make the most impact in their field and/or increase their chances of achieving tenure and promotion at their university. However, novice authors might consider a Q2 journal as an entry point into the world of academic publishing—especially since high-impact journals have an acceptance rate anywhere between 5 and 50% (Elsevier Author Services, n.d.b). Scimago provides a convenient "how to publish in this journal" link in the record (see Fig. 3.2) of every journal it indexes.

Evaluating Peer-Reviewed Journals and Journal Articles Using Scimago

Although peer review is a widely accepted indicator of quality scholarship in a discipline or field, there have been questions raised about the peer review process. Specifically, Bohannon (2013) published an article in *Science* describing a sting operation he carried out by purposely writing a scientific paper with serious flaws. He then submitted it to 304 peer-reviewed, open access journals. Half of these journals were on Beall's List of Potential Predatory Journals (https://bealls list.net/standalone-journals/). Shockingly, 157 of the journals accepted the article. Bohannon claimed that "any reviewer with more than a high-school knowledge of chemistry and the ability to understand a basic data plot should have spotted the paper's short-comings immediately. Its experiments are so hopelessly flawed that the results are meaningless" (p. 60). In response to Bohannon's findings, The Directory of Open Access Journals (https://www.doaj.org) removed 114 journals from its database (Gyles, 2014).

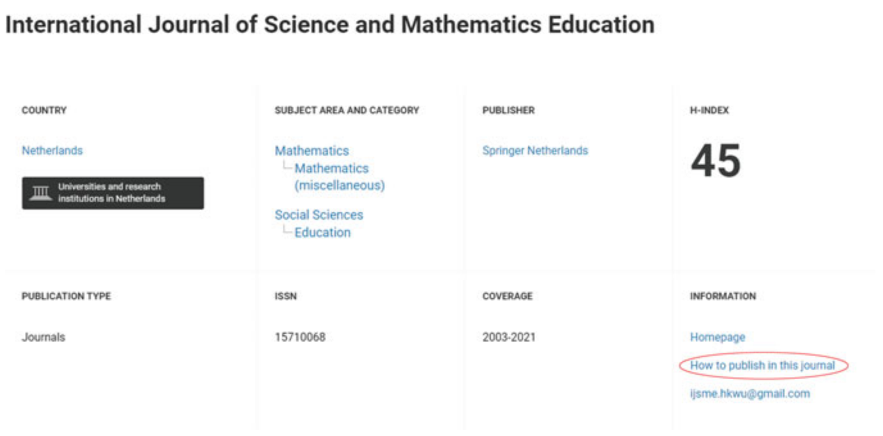


Fig. 3.2 *Partial scimago record for the international journal of science and mathematics education*

According to Gyles (2014), the causes of a breakdown in the peer review process include "journals favoring what appears to be dramatic new findings, lack of interest in funding or publishing studies that replicate previous work, overworked academic reviewers, increasing specialization resulting in small pools of experts, reliance on the assessment of only 2 or 3 persons, and the rise of journals that will publish almost anything for a fee" (p. 110). No matter the reason, it is important for researchers to understand that now, more than ever, they need to question what they are reading and evaluate sources (even peer-reviewed sources) with a critical eye.

Revisit the reference list of the literature review you examined for the **Self-Assessment**. Choose three peer-reviewed journal articles that were published in different journals from your reference list and use the *Viz Tools* (https://www.scimagojr.com/viztools.php) feature in Scimago to compare them.

Viz Tools instructions:

- Scroll down to the "Compare" section.
- Click on the orange "Compare Journals" button.
- Enter each journal title you would like to compare.

Answer the following questions by examining the *Viz Tools* graphic comparisons:

H-index

- Which journal has the highest H-index?

Quartile Citation

- Which journal cites other journals the most?
- Which journal has been cited by other journals the most?

Journal Inter-citation

- Which journal cites the other two journals the most?
- Which journal has been cited by the other two journals the most?

Citation Network

- Which journal has the largest citation network?

SJR

- Which journal has the highest Scimago Journal Ranking?

% International Collaboration

- Which journal has the highest percentage of international collaboration in the articles it publishes?

Cites/Doc. (4 Years)

- Which journal has the highest number of cites per article over the last 4 years?

Total Cites

- Which journal has the highest total number of cites?
- Based on the data you compared in *Viz Tools*, which journal do you trust the most? Why?

Now, let us turn to the articles themselves. Complete the following activity for each of the three peer-reviewed journal articles you selected from your reference list.

Evaluating the Authority and Credibility of Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Classification
Type of Article* (circle one): **Conceptual/Theoretical** **Review** **Empirical**

*For a more detailed description of the different types of scholarly articles, watch *Types of Scholarly Articles* (https://youtu.be/uEsAKqXSfbY) on YouTube.

Methodology Used* (circle one): **Quantitative** **Qualitative** **Mixed Method**

*For a more detailed description of the different types of research methodology, watch *Quantitative vs. Qualitative Research* (https://youtu.be/a-XtVF7Bofg) on YouTube.

Authority

- What are the author's credentials (e.g., title, degree)?
- What is the author's institutional affiliation? Might this pose a problem (i.e., bias)?
- Is there contact information for the author?
- Does the journal provide any biographical information for the author?
- If there is little to no information provided regarding the author(s), were you able to find anything about the author(s) online?

Credibility—Is the information presented in the article unbiased and backed by best practice? Does the article have authoritative/credible references and sound methodology?

- **Beall's List of Potential Predatory Journals and Publishers** (https://beallslist.net)
  - **Indexing**—Is the journal indexed in Beall's List? If not, can you find the journal's website online or link to the journal's homepage from Scimago (https://www.scimagojr.com/)?
  - **Publishing History**—How long has the journal been around? For newer journals, is the journal mission clearly stated? Is it supported by a reputable publisher or scholarly society?
  - **Peer Review**—What kind of peer review is used? Who reviews the submissions? How long does the process take? Is this a reasonable time frame for quality assessment? Does the journal screen for plagiarism?
  - **Acceptance Rate**—What percentage of article submissions are accepted for publication?

Based on the information you gathered for all three journal articles you selected from your reference list, which journal article is the most authoritative and credible? Was that article published in the journal you trusted the most after comparing all three journals using Scimago's *Viz Tools* feature? If not, why do you think there's a discrepancy?

3.4 Best Practices in Writing the Literature Review

Knowing how to locate and evaluate authoritative and credible peer-reviewed journal articles are important steps in crafting a high-quality literature review. However, before authors begin to write, they need to understand the function and purpose of the literature review.

What is a Literature Review?

A literature review is "an overview of the key literature that's relevant to your research topic." It covers "research that has already been done, what is known, what is unknown and what is contested in relation to your research topic" (Jansen & Warren, 2020, para. 4). Novice researchers often wonder how they will know when they have incorporated enough key literature into their review. As a rule of thumb, the amount of literature reviewed should match the magnitude of the study. For example, a team of researchers studying the side effects of a cancer drug will have to review a lot more research than a doctoral student writing a dissertation on some aspect of patient care. Currency of topic also determines how much literature a researcher will need to review. The more current the topic, the less likely numerous articles have been published on that topic. On the other hand, researchers who want to challenge or build upon a long-standing theory will have to describe the development of that theory and work their way forward to the present day. In addition, every theory has opposing arguments, and each of these arguments should be covered in the literature review. Finally, the chronology of the literature review leads up to the justification of research questions. Gaps or leaps in that chronology necessitate more reading and the inclusion of more studies in the literature review (Enago Academy, 2022). Authors must always keep their research question(s) in mind as they choose which studies to include in their literature review as reviews should relate directly to the research questions.

The Purpose of the Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to provide a thorough and up-to-date overview of existing research about the topic being studied. Through a literature review, authors: (1) demonstrate what they have read about the research that has been done on a given topic, (2) identify any gaps in the existing research, (3) lay the foundation for their theoretical framework, (4) fine-tune research questions, and (5) decide what methodology they will use to answer those research questions (Jansen & Warren, 2020).

Demonstrating Topic Knowledge

Simply summarizing the research articles that have been published on a given topic does not demonstrate topic knowledge. According to Rudestam and Newton (1992), "your task is to build an argument, not a library" (p. 49). Authors of literature reviews must move their writing from the descriptive to the interpretive. In other words, good literature reviews do not just describe how researchers conducted their studies and what they found. Instead, they analyze and explain the researchers' methodologies and interpret their findings by: (1) stating the findings' importance or significance (see **Example 1**), (2) supporting or refuting the findings by synthesizing the work of other researchers (see **Example 2**), and/or (3) responding to the findings with critique (see **Example 3**) (University of Melbourne, 2017). In the following examples, the descriptive text is in regular font, and the interpretive text is in italicized font.

- **Example 1**: Stating the Findings' Importance or Significance
  In the next section, production analysis became the focus. In her analysis of production, Evans (2001) showed that the method was successful, *and this was significant because it represented a major shift from prior research moving the*

focus back to personnel away from more traditional process concerns. (University of Melbourne, 2017, 5:08–5:27)

- **Example 2**: Supporting or Refuting the Findings by Synthesizing the Work of Other Researchers
  In relation to efficacy of method, Weng et al. (2003) then re-interviewed each participant, and in doing so, found a revealing, new set of responses emerging. *Bruce* (2016) *argues these findings were crucial as they highlighted a significant set of secondary level responses that still provide clinical practitioner guidelines today.* (University of Melbourne, 2017, 5:34–5:57)
- **Example 3**: Responding to the Findings with Critique
  In a 2011 study, Brent found that elderly patients were increasingly unable to recall key information sets and had to be prompted, indicating strong likelihood of memory loss. *Her study, however, was limited in its application as she chose to focus on a small sample size drawn solely from one high-care facility.* (University of Melbourne, 2017, 6:38–7:02)
  The next example expands upon **Example 3** and shows a layered approach to writing the literature review. Again, the descriptive text is in regular font, and the interpretative text is in italicized font. But this time, a solution to the original study's limitation is offered in boldfaced font as well as support for that solution using the findings of yet another study in underlined font.
- **Example 4**: A Layered Approach to Writing the Literature Review
  In a 2011 study, Brent found that elderly patients were increasingly unable to recall key information sets and had to be prompted, indicating strong likelihood of memory loss. *Her study, however, was limited in its application as she chose to focus on a small sample size drawn solely from one high-care facility.* **It may have been more illustrative to broaden the scope of the study to high *and* low care patients from a range of facilities**. James (2014) did precisely that in her pivotal longitudinal, multi-facility, broad-scope study… (University of Melbourne, 2017, 6:38–7:52)

This layered approach to writing is the strongest as it not only moves from the descriptive to the interpretive but shows different methodologies being applied to the same research topic. "Bringing the findings and conclusions of studies together (synthesis) and commenting on trends and shortcomings (analysis), as well as relating these to the need for your study, provide an overall argument for your research problem and why your study is needed" (Statistics Solutions, 2023, para. 2). Analyzing the shortcomings, or deficits (University of Melbourne, 2017), of a study can help identify research gaps which are defined as "topic(s) or area(s) for which missing or inadequate information limits the ability of reviewers to reach a conclusion for a given question" (Robinson et al., 2013, p. 1).

The Online Campus Writing Center (OCWC) at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (2023, *Templates for Synthesis*) suggests asking yourself the following **questions to generate synthesis** as you develop each paragraph of your literature review:

- What is my topic for this paragraph?
  - What is its significance to my overall argument?
- What resources/sources talk about this topic?
- What are the important things my reader should know about this topic?
- What is the relationship between my sources? Do they agree or contradict?

Note the first question as well as its follow-up question. Authors who continue to ask themselves these questions as they write the literature review avoid including irrelevant or unfocused content which is easy to do as literature searches often produce so many results that it is difficult to know where to draw the line. According to O'Byrne (2018), "a literature review that tries to cover too many areas quickly loses purpose and utility" (para. 9).

In addition to questions that generate synthesis, the OCWC (2023, *Templates for Synthesis*) has also developed a **checklist for synthesis**:

✓ I introduced a clear topic in the first sentence.
✓ I used more than one source to describe my topic.
✓ I described important findings about the topic rather than describing the studies.
✓ I used transitions between each study to show how they relate to each other.
✓ I finished the paragraph with a summative connection to my paper's main argument.

The following paragraph on information literacy (IL) incorporates all the elements included in the checklist above:

> Skills for IL can be taught by librarians in a multitude of ways, the evidence base for which is conflicting. **[Introduced clear topic.]** One teaching method is embedded librarianship (Drewes & Hoffman, 2010). This model sees librarians become active members of their users' community, rather than waiting for questions to come to them (Shumaker, 2009). **[Used more than one source to describe topic.]** An example of this in an academic context would be librarians attending classes and actively involving themselves in class discussions (Shumaker, 2009). In an embedded librarian model, IL teaching is not seen as separate from, or as an optional supplement to, an existing course, as it is in "one-shot" sessions. **[Used transition.]** Instead, librarians work as equal partners with faculty members to embed IL into the course over its duration (Hoffman et al., 2017). Embedded librarians can offer support to students with developing their searching competency and with critically appraising the information they find (Larsen et al., 2019). **[Described important findings about the topic rather than describing the study.]** However, several researchers (Bowler & Street, 2008; Koufogiannakis et al., 2005) caution that embedded librarians have significant time and resource costs, which would not be sustainable by all libraries. **[Finished the paragraph with a summative connection to the paragraph's main argument.]** (Aylward et al., 2020, p. 218).

Note that the content of this paragraph does not include a deficit (limitations) or positive (strengths-based) critique (University of Melbourne, 2017). Although it is not necessary to include a critique of every study mentioned in a literature review,

Table 3.2 *Example synthesis matrix*

Initial research question:					
	Methods	Concept 1:	Concept 2:	Concept 3:	Gaps, Problems, Unresolved Questions and/or Notes on Sources
Source 1:					
Source 2:					
Source 3:					

Note. Originally developed by the WI + RE (Writing Instruction and Research Education) Team at UCLA Library and modified by Megan Fitzgibbons at Concordia University Library (2021)

critiques of key studies—especially those that have obvious limitations—can help authors identify gaps in the existing research.

Identifying Gaps in Existing Research

Another way authors can identify gaps in existing research, as well as organize their sources, is to develop a synthesis matrix. A synthesis matrix is a visual representation of the articles an author has reviewed categorized by key concepts, themes, or main ideas. It allows authors to compare studies and see what is missing from the existing body of research. See Table 3.2 for an example of how an author might structure a synthesis matrix. The last column provides a place to take notes on each source. Page numbers should be recorded for any direct quotes during the article review process so authors do not have to track them down later.

Laying the Foundation for a Theoretical Framework

"Researchers use theoretical frameworks to explain the theories they're using within their research and provide their own research with context by identifying the assumptions that inform their work" (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022, para. 5). Some research topics do not lend themselves to a theoretical framework. However, those that do should be rooted in the literature review.

If a researcher wants to identify the drivers of a certain negative outcome—for example, the factors that contribute to teacher burnout—he/she would develop a theoretical framework that explains the potential factors (e.g., low autonomy, lack of resources, feeling overworked, lack of appropriate compensation, encountering classroom management difficulties, and/or poor workplace relationships), as well as the outcome (burnout). Those factors come from the articles reviewed by the researcher and NOT the researcher himself/herself. To clarify, the literature review process enables the researcher to pinpoint each of the factors which are then modelled into a framework (Jansen & Warren, 2020). Table 3.3 illustrates how the example synthesis matrix might look if it were used for a literature review of teacher burnout. Note that each concept becomes a factor the reviewed studies suggest contributes to teacher burnout.

Table 3.3 *Synthesis matrix for teacher burnout*

Initial research question: What are the most common factors that contribute to teacher burnout?

	Methods	**Concept 1:** Emotional Exhaustion	**Concept 2:** Low Levels of Needs Satisfaction	**Concept 3:** Irrational Beliefs	**Gaps, Problems, Unresolved Questions, and/or Notes on Sources**
Source 1: Yilmaz, K., Altinkurt, Y., Guner, M., & Sen, B. (2015)	Quantitative: The data was collected using the Emotional Labor Scale and the Burnout Scale.	Due to regulation of emotion followed by a lack of personal accomplishment and depersonalization	N/A	N/A	This study considers emotional labor as a role that should be taken by teachers as a part of their occupational professionalism. However, it is possible that the roles expected from teachers may be based on dominance, non-professional or unethical behaviors. Thus, it is important to reveal the reasons behind teachers' surface acting behaviors. Therefore, designing such studies on the basis of a qualitative approach will contribute to a deeper understanding of these behaviors.

(continued)

Table 3.3 (continued)

Initial research question: What are the most common factors that contribute to teacher burnout?

	Methods	**Concept 1:** Emotional Exhaustion	**Concept 2:** Low Levels of Needs Satisfaction	**Concept 3:** Irrational Beliefs	**Gaps, Problems, Unresolved Questions, and/or Notes on Sources**
Source 2: Maior, E., Dobrean, A., & Păsărelu, C. (2020)	Quantitative: Eighty-one high school teachers ($M_{age} = 42.48$, $SD = 7.97$) completed questionnaires measuring their burnout levels, rational beliefs, social-emotional competencies, and basic psychological need satisfaction.	Due to deficits in social-emotional skills	Offering choice, constructive feedback, positive school climate can meet these needs	Rational beliefs that teachers hold seem to have a significant role in the relationship between the perceived psychological need satisfaction of teachers and their depersonalization level.	One of the major limitations of the study is the relatively small sample size.
Source 3: Jin, Y. Y., Noh, H., Shin, H., & Lee, S. M. (2015)	Quantitative: A total of 345 Korean school teachers in middle and high school participated in this study. Each participant filled out a Korean version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey and Mini-Markers, which is a simplified version of the Goldberg Unipolar Big-Five Questionnaire	Makes engagement with students quite difficult	N/A	Resulted in depersonalization	Self-reporting–future studies should use multiple measures (e.g., direct observation) to assess the teacher burnout variable. Can these results be generalized to teachers in the United States?

Fine-Tuning the Research Question

Note that both the *Example Synthesis Matrix* and the *Synthesis Matrix for Teacher Burnout* provide a space to write an initial research question. Researchers may begin a review of the literature thinking they know what they want to research (research question) and how they want to research it (methodology). However, depending on what they discover through the literature review, their research question(s) and methodology may change. For example, what if the researcher who began creating the *Synthesis Matrix for Teacher Burnout* finds that emotional exhaustion is overwhelmingly the most common factor contributing to teacher burnout? She may decide to focus her study specifically on that factor and dig deeper into why so many teachers find themselves emotionally exhausted. Furthermore, she may have initially planned to do a quantitative study but found, through the literature review, that there is an overabundance of quantitative studies and that several previous researchers recommended qualitative studies to fill research gaps. For these reasons, the literature review is instrumental in fine-tuning the research question(s) and choosing a methodology.

Deciding What Methodology Will Be Used to Answer the Research Question

Choosing a research methodology and methods of data collection are essential to research design. Walker and Solvason (2014) describe how one impacts the other. “If all of the builders came to the site with their tools and materials but no plans, they could attempt to build the house; however, without the architect’s design it would be likely to fall down” (p. 62). Your research questions should guide your choice of methodology and methods of data collection. To choose the right methodology, consider three important factors: the nature of your research question, the methodological approaches taken in the existing literature, and the constraints of your study (Jansen, 2021).

The Nature of Your Research Question. According to Jansen (2021), “each type of research (and therefore, research methodology), whether qualitative, quantitative or mixed, has a different purpose and helps solve a different type of question” (para. 11). Exploratory research allows researchers to gain a better understanding of an issue and potentially develop a theory about that issue. Confirmatory research helps researchers confirm a potential theory or hypothesis by testing it. If researchers want to build a potential theory or hypothesis and then test it, they should mix exploratory and confirmatory research. Typically, exploratory researchers adopt a qualitative approach, whereas confirmatory researchers tend to use quantitative methods. Researchers who combine a mix of both adopt a mixed-methods approach. Figure 3.3 illustrates Jansen’s (2021) method for determining which methodology matches your research question.

The Methodological Approaches Taken in the Existing Literature. Not only does a literature review provide an overview of existing research about the topic being studied, it also provides the reviewer with information about the methodological approaches that have already been taken by previous researchers. “Oftentimes, within a discipline, there is a common methodological approach (or set of approaches) used in studies. While this doesn’t mean you should follow the

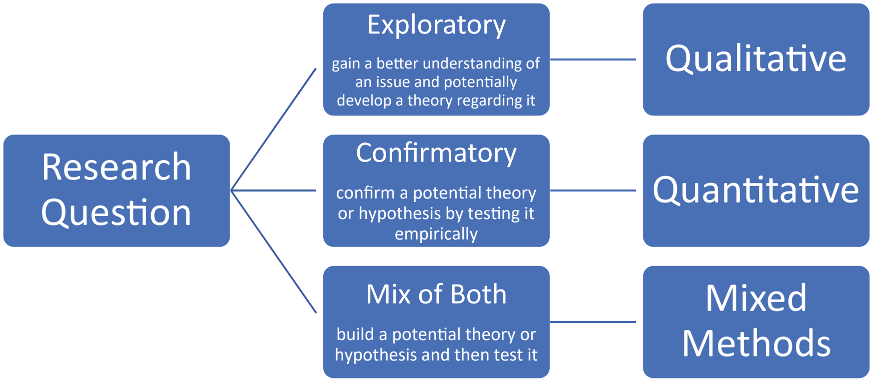


Fig. 3.3 *The link between research question(s) and methodology*

herd 'just because,' you should at least consider these approaches and evaluate their merit within your context" (Jansen, 2021, para. 20). For example, there are many disciplines within the social sciences, and each has its own norms when it comes to research methodology. Table 3.4 compares the methodological approaches different social scientists might take if researching the topic of retirement from the workplace.

Another advantage to reviewing the existing research in your field of study is the possibility of finding a research instrument you can borrow to replicate a study or modify to address a research gap. Especially in quantitative studies, instruments may be adopted (with the permission of the original author) negating the need for a pilot study (Jansen & Warren, 2020). It is important to remember, however, that adopting the methodologies and/or data collection tools of other studies in your

Table 3.4 *Discipline-specific methodological approaches in the social sciences*

Social Scientist	Research Question	Methodology	Data Collection
Anthropologist	To what extent is retirement a "life stage" unique to Western culture?	Qualitative	Interviews, participant observation
Gerontologist	What is the relationship between gender and the number of retirees who pursue "encore" careers?	Mixed methods	Surveys, interviews, employment data analysis
Psychologist	How does mandatory retirement affect the emotional integration of U.S. males?	Qualitative	Interviews, assessments, observation
Sociologist	What is the difference in the rate of participation in volunteer work for male and female retirees?	Quantitative	Surveys, employment data analysis

Note. Adapted from figure, *Retirement through a Social Sciences Lens* (University of Maryland Global Campus, n.d.)

discipline can only work if those methodologies/tools align with your research question(s). Jansen (2021) warns, “Don’t fall into the trap of adopting the methodological ‘norm’ of other studies just because it’s popular. Only adopt that which is relevant to your research” (para. 22).

The Constraints of Your Study. After you’ve considered both the nature of your research and the methodological approaches taken in the existing literature, you’ll need to consider the constraints of your study because “there will always be a tension between doing what’s theoretically best (i.e., the most scientifically rigorous research design) and doing what’s practical, given your constraints” (Jansen, 2021, para. 23). Table 3.5 outlines the constraints that should be considered before deciding on the methodological approach you will take in your study.

Structuring the Literature Review

All literature reviews should have an introduction, body, and conclusion, but how you organize the body depends on your topic and research question(s) (Jansen & Warren, 2020). “There is no single ‘correct’ structure for the content of your literature review – every review is shaped by the nature of the field being reviewed and the specific argument the review is supporting” (Monash University, 2023, para. 2). Figure 3.4 illustrates a suggested structure for the literature review that can be modified to suit different topics and research questions.

The pattern of organization you choose for your literature review determines the type of review you will compose. Table 3.6 describes the different types of literature reviews that exist in academic writing.

No matter the pattern of organization you choose for the body of your literature review, it should be logical, relevant to your topic and research question(s), and easily understood. Authors of literature reviews should always assume that readers will not be experts in their field of study. Therefore, definitions of terms and descriptions of theories, methods, themes, and trends should be included (Jansen & Warrren, 2020).

3.5 Conclusion: The Literature Review is a Critical Component of Academic Research

Writing a literature review can be daunting, but it is an important and essential component of academic research writing. This chapter presented examples of some of the most common mistakes authors make when writing literature reviews and provided best practices to help avoid these pitfalls. It explored thoughtful approaches to locating and evaluating sources and provided several strategies for demonstrating topic knowledge, identifying gaps in existing research, laying the foundation for a theoretical framework, fine-tuning research questions, and choosing a methodology. Additionally, a suggested structure for the literature review was presented as well as a graphic that illustrated the different types of literature reviews.

Table 3.5 *Constraints, questions, and considerations*

Constraints	Example Questions	Considerations
Access to Data	Are you considering qualitative research using in-person interviews to collect data?	• The number of people you will need to interview • How you will locate subjects • Where you will conduct the interviews
	Are you considering quantitative research using surveys to collect data?	• What type of data you will need to collect • How much data you will need to collect • How you will deliver the survey
Time	Will you be conducting a cross-sectional or longitudinal study?	• Cross-sectional studies take less time because data are collected at one point in time. • Longitudinal studies can take quite a bit of time because data are collected at multiple points in time to assess how the phenomenon under study changes during a specified time frame
Money	What kind of a budget will you need to complete your study?	• Promotion costs (e.g., advertising a survey to attract respondents) • Incentive costs (e.g., providing a prize or cash payment incentive to attract respondents) • Equipment & software costs if your institution or employer cannot provide them • Travel costs • Food & beverages
Access to Equipment and/or Software	Does your institution or employer provide access to the equipment and/or software that you will need to conduct your study?	• Bibliographic management software • Survey hosting services • Recording equipment • Lab equipment • Data analysis software • Transcription services

(continued)

Table 3.5 (continued)

Constraints	Example Questions	Considerations
Your Knowledge and Skill Set	• Are you more of a "numbers" or "words" person? • How much do you know about the analysis methods you will potentially use (e.g., statistical analysis)? • How much do you know about the software and/or hardware that you will potentially use? • Are you excited to learn new research skills and gain new knowledge?	• The methodology that will provide an answer(s) to your research question(s) • The kind of software/ hardware training you've had • Whether you have access to an applied research lab • How much time you will have to learn new skills

Note. Adapted from "Factor #3: Practicalities" in Jansen's (2021) *How to Choose Your Research Methodology*

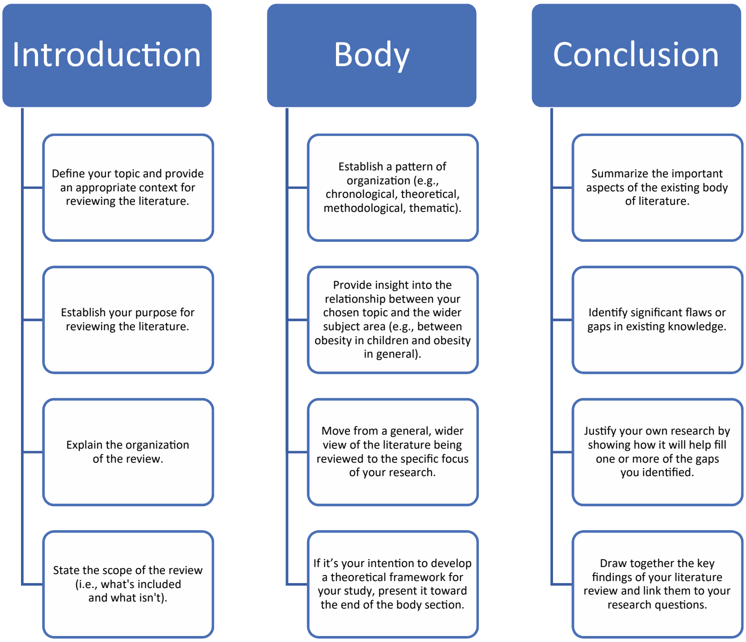


Fig. 3.4 *Suggested Structure for the Literature Review Note.* Adapted from Monash University (2023), Rommelspacher (2020) and Royal Literary Fund (2023)

Table 3.6 *Types of literature review*

Type	Purpose
Argumentative	Examines and analyzes literature in order to support an argument
Integrative	Critically reviews the literature to add new perspectives on a topic
Historical	Analyzes historical literature to show relevance with the recent developments and identify the directions for future research
Methodological	Provides a framework for analyzing literature at different levels
Systematic	Critically evaluates and summarizes all the existing research work to define a research problem
Theoretical	Examines the available theories and the relationships among them to develop a new hypothesis

Note. Adapted from Nova (2017)

Because the literature review is such a critical step in academic research, it should be approached with care and attention to detail. By incorporating the practices and strategies outlined in this chapter, researchers can produce literature reviews that contribute to the advancement of their field and enhance the quality of their research.

Issue: AI-Based Text Production in Academic Research Writing

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a relatively new technological development that can be used to support academic research writing, particularly reviews of research. Although it holds promise as a research tool, there are also concerns that AI-based scholarly writing could threaten not only the integrity but also the creativity of academic research writing. ChatGPT, an advanced chatbot developed by OpenAI (a nonprofit research company founded by Elon Musk and Sam Altman in 2015) has been at the center of much controversy as of late because of its ability to produce academic papers using artificial intelligence-based text production that have fooled academics and academic journal publishers (Hern, 2022; Lucey & Dowling, 2023; TechTarget, 2023). To demonstrate ChatGPT's capabilities, consider its response to the question, "What is artificial intelligence-based text production?".

> Artificial Intelligence-Based Text Production is a process where machine learning algorithms are used to generate written content such as articles, product descriptions, social media posts, and more. It involves training machine learning models with vast amounts of data to learn how to generate human-like text automatically.
>
> The process can involve different techniques such as Natural Language Processing (NLP), deep learning, and neural networks to analyze and understand language patterns, grammar, context, and semantics. The resulting AI-generated text can be used for a wide range of applications, including content marketing, chatbots, language translation, and more.

> One of the main benefits of AI-based text production is that it can help businesses and organizations automate their content creation process, saving time and resources while producing high-quality content. However, it is important to note that AI-generated text may not always be perfect and may require human editing and review to ensure accuracy and coherence.

This response was produced by ChatGPT in about ten seconds. According to Anson (2022), "cutting and pasting all or part of this auto-generated text into a new text box can continue to prompt further content. The material is not plagiarized from existing sources but freshly composed. For this reason, it usually evades plagiarism-detection programs like Turnitin" (p. 40).

How Might AI-Based Text Production Threaten Academic Research Writing?

Obviously, computer-generated text that evades plagiarism-detection programs threatens the integrity of academic research writing. Some academic publishers have already banned or limited the use of AI-generated text in papers submitted to their journals (Lucey & Dowling, 2023). However, that is easier said than done. OpenAI recently developed a tool that attempts to distinguish between human-written and AI-generated text to prevent chatbots like ChatGPT from being abused, but it is only 26% effective (Wiggers, 2023).

Lucey and Dowling (2023) tested the credibility of ChatGPT by having expert reviewers examine papers produced by the chatbot. First, they asked ChatGPT to generate four parts of a research study: (1) research idea, (2) literature review, (3) dataset, and (4) suggestions for testing and examination. They chose a broad subject and instructed the chatbot to create a paper that could be published in "a good finance journal" (para. 6). Second, they pasted 200 relevant abstracts into the ChatGPT search box and asked the chatbot to consider the abstracts when generating the four-part research study. Finally, they asked academic researchers to read both versions of the AI-generated text and make suggestions for improvement. A panel of thirty-two reviewers read all versions of the four-part research study and rated them. In all cases, the papers were considered acceptable by the reviewers, although the chatbot-created papers that also included input from academic researchers were rated higher. However, "a chatbot was deemed capable of generating quality academic research ideas. This raises fundamental questions around the meaning of creativity and ownership of creative ideas—questions to which nobody yet has solid answers" (Lucey & Dowling, 2023, para. 10).

How Might AI-Based Text Production Benefit Academic Research Writing?

Despite several publishers deciding to ban the inclusion of AI-based text production in submissions, some researchers have already listed ChatGPT as a co-author on their papers (Lucey & Dowling, 2023). There are many who believe there is no difference between the way ChatGPT produces text and the way authors synthesize studies in their literature reviews. In fact, the chatbot's review is much more exhaustive because it can analyze "billions of existing, human-produced texts and, through a process akin to the creation of neural networks, generate new text based on highly complex predictive machine analysis" (Anson, 2022, p. 39).

There are other advantages to using AI-based text production. It has the potential to aid groups of researchers who lack funding to hire human research assistants such as emerging economy researchers, graduate students, and early career researchers. According to Lucey and Dowling (2023), AI-based text production "could help democratize the research process" (para. 18). Anson (2022) also sees the potential in AI-based text production to "spark some new human-generated ideas" (p. 42), extract keywords, and create abstracts. The development of AI-based text production might also force instructors to change the way they teach academic writing. Instead of trying to detect or prevent the use of chatbots like ChatGPT, "a more sensible approach could involve embracing the technology, showing students what it can and can't do, and asking them to experiment with it" (Anson, 2022, p. 44). In other words, students could be asked to write about writing which leads to a deeper understanding of the writing process and the ability to transfer that understanding to any writing project (Wardle & Downs, 2019).

The Responsible Use of AI-Based Text Production in Academic Research Writing

The responsible use of AI-based text production in academic research writing involves understanding the technology's capabilities and limitations, as well as considering its potential impact on the research process. Researchers must carefully evaluate the intended purpose and context of using AI-generated text and make certain they are not compromising the authenticity and integrity of their research work. To ensure responsible use, it is essential to balance the benefits of increased efficiency and new insights with the need for originality and critical thinking in academic research writing. Researchers must also be transparent in disclosing the use of AI-generated text when submitting their work for publication. By adopting a responsible and thoughtful approach to the use of AI-based text production, researchers can maximize the benefits of the technology while maintaining the quality and authenticity of their research.

Applications of Technology

How to Write a Paper in a Weekend: https://youtu.be/UY7sVKJPTMA

- ***Note***: University of Minnesota Chemistry Professor, Peter Carr is not advocating for procrastination. This video outlines a strategy for generating a first draft after you have all your reading and notes assembled.

Research Gap 101: What Is a Research Gap & How to Find One: https://youtu.be/Kabj0u8YQ4Y

Using Google Scholar for Academic Research: https://youtu.be/t8_CW6FV8Ac.

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Writing for an Audience: Discourse Communities

4

Mary Renck Jalongo

Contents

Abstract

Authors of every type are advised to know their audiences and that recommendation is equally applicable to scholarly writing. Each discipline and specialization within it have a veritable network of different discourse communities that include, for example, groups aligned with a particular philosophy, qualitative researchers, or practitioners in the field–to name just a few. In this chapter, we guide authors in determining the audience for a publication outlet and fashioning a manuscript suited for that readership. During graduate studies, papers typically are written for an audience of one—the professor who made the assignment. Venturing into scholarly publication completely changes that because the potential readership most often is large, diverse, and international. Based on research with journal editors, inattention to a publication's intended audience is a major reason for rejection of manuscripts. Understanding the audience also answers many of the questions that authors have about how much background their readers probably would need to understand the concepts presented in a manuscript. Matching manuscripts to clearly defined groups

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_4

of readers increases the likelihood that the work will earn positive reviews, get published, and be discovered by communities of practice most interested in the information.

Keywords

Scholarly writing • Academic authorship • Writing for an audience • Audience awareness • Discourse community • Communities of practice

Three Narratives

Novice

Scheduling conferences between teachers and the parents/families of students in their classes is a widely accepted practice in education. A doctoral student decides to interview participants in these conferences and her findings suggest characteristics of these interactions that made the meetings mutually beneficial. Her dissertation chairperson has prior experience writing for the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), so they propose a brochure suitable for families that could be distributed by teachers. Converting a lengthy document written primarily for the dissertation committee members into a three-panel list of recommendations for the layperson is a challenge. They want the advice to be research-based yet avoid too much professional jargon. As a first step, they make a list of the points that would be most helpful to parents/families. Next, they must convey those ideas clearly and succinctly. The PTA publications staff review the manuscript, the authors revise it accordingly, and the organization creates an attractive design for the brochure that is disseminated nationwide.

What experiences have you had with explaining scholarly material to different audiences? For example, as a doctoral student, how did you describe your study idea to those outside your field or to laypersons?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

Editors of books written by many different authors have several key roles to fulfill. First is arriving at a unifying theme for the compilation. Next is inviting chapter authors for the volume and explaining the project's focus. After the chapters are submitted, the editor is responsible for providing feedback and, in some instances, communicating the disappointing news that a chapter is not suitable. This was the situation for a book series editor. One author's chapter appeared to have been written for some other purpose and simply was not a good match for the project. The timeline for submission of the manuscript was short, so the editor rejected the chapter. This decision was contested by the author who had been counting on the book chapter for tenure/promotion purposes. In the volley of emails that followed, the author conceded that she had written the paper as part of a training she completed rather than as a *chapter for the edited book and was hoping to save time by using something she had written previously.*

Why might someone decide to submit a manuscript that failed to fit with a project? What could have been done to avoid losing this opportunity on the part of the author?

Prolific

The general purposes of theory are to use evidence to better understand a phenomenon, explain/predict/modify behavior, and stimulate further research (Quora, 2022). Instructors of undergraduates often find it challenging to help their students appreciate the theory/ research/practice connection. A professor responsible for teaching a course in early childhood language arts included the developmental progressions for children's listening, speaking, drawing, writing, and reading because teachers need to understand what children know currently to take appropriate next steps in teaching. To make the material relevant, she designs an assignment in which students obtain parent/guardian permission to interview a young child between the ages of 2 and 8 years, take observational notes, and collect a sample of the child's attempts at drawing and writing. When the students arrive, the developmental stages and brief descriptions are posted around the room. The college students position the children's work at the correct stage, conferring with other students and the professor if they are not sure. Then the whole class reviews the stages. When presented with examples of children's work on the final exam, these future teachers not only remembered theories but also could apply them to other samples of children's work. After the faculty member secures a contract with a leading publisher to write a college-level textbook, she obtains permissions and includes activities such as this one in the book and in the instructor's manual. The book gets positive reviews and survives to a 6th edition, even in the intensely competitive early literacy market (Jalongo, 2014).

Looking back on your experience as an undergraduate, what were your major complaints about some of your textbooks? How did audience awareness contribute to the success of this textbook?

Activity: Using a Publisher's Information to Identify Audience

A doctoral student who was an administrator at a small college initiated a way to expedite the approval process for new academic programs. Her "take" on the issue was that many colleges and universities could not respond nimbly to instituting innovative programs because the route to getting new offerings approved was multi-layered, arduous, and particularly time-consuming. She had worked within the system to retain a rigorous approval process, yet streamline the vetting of new programs. Her academic advisor suggested that she consider the Springer Nature journal, *Innovative Higher Education*, as an outlet for this manuscript. Their mission statement on the masthead reads:

> *Innovative Higher Education* features research on current innovations and provocative new ideas with relevance for action for higher education institutions, including innovations at the

> organization and policy level as well as innovations that improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. We also focus on innovative approaches to teaching and learning and the potential influence of such innovations on students and faculty.
>
> *Innovative Higher Education* publishes diverse forms of scholarship and research methods by maintaining flexibility in the selection of topics and methods deemed appropriate for the journal. It strikes a balance between practice and theory by presenting articles in a readable and scholarly manner to both faculty and administrators in the academic community.
>
> We seek manuscripts that:

- Present fresh ideas in higher education in a straightforward and readable fashion
- Feature research on current innovations and provocative new ideas with relevance for action beyond the immediate context in higher education
- Strike a balance between theory and practice

The student's original manuscript did not address the third bullet point, so she went back to reviewing the literature to compose a section on theories of innovation in institutions.

What can you infer about the audience for *Innovative Higher Education*? Might there be a project of yours that would mesh with this journal's purpose and readership?

Evidently, the doctoral student's idea did "tick all the boxes" because it was accepted.

Have you ever studied the mission statement of a journal prior to submitting a manuscript there? Search for several publishers' mission statements that align with a manuscript that you have completed or are drafting. Make a list of suitable matches.

Self-Assessment: Writing for a Clearly Identified Audience

A common mistake of beginning academic authors is to write as if they were preparing an assigned paper for a graduate class. Such assignments tend to be rather general treatments of broad topics that typically are read by just one person: the professor who assigned it. The intended audience changes dramatically when writing for publication. Strategies for defining your audience include:

- *"Psych out" your reader*. Successful college students have learned to figure out what a faculty member expects, commonly referred to as "psyching out" your professor. This includes studying the syllabus, raising questions, and even checking out the instructor's credentials. The same strategies can be applied effectively to writing for publication. Most publications have a statement of purpose that describes the intended audience, submission guidelines for manuscripts, perhaps a Q & A for contributors, and prior publications that amply illustrate what they will accept.
- *Think about the target audience.* Decide who would be *most* interested in your manuscript—for example, fellow researchers, policy makers, college instructors, preservice or inservice professionals, or a more general audience. As Pautasso (2013) explains, the target audience is sometimes defined by the specific topic;

for example, an article about web services in computational biology is written for computational biologists; however, that same topic may also be of interest to neighboring fields such as computer science or biology.

- *Make a list of keywords for indexing purposes.* What keywords appear in the title of your manuscript? Who would be familiar with this terminology and be drawn to reading this? How much background would those readers be likely to have? Even with terminology that is in wide use, there may not be general agreement on what the words mean. Early in the manuscript, make it clear how you define the main concepts.
- *Identify the manuscript type.* Failure to determine the type of manuscript at the outset can interfere with reaching the right audience. Some useful categorizations of professional journal articles include original empirical research that is quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method; conceptual/theoretical “think pieces” that address trends, issues, and controversies; reviews of published research that synthesize the literature; descriptions/evaluations of exemplary programs; or practical articles that attempt to persuade practitioners to improve their methods. If you are writing for fellow researchers, the manuscript will differ considerably from one written for professionals working in the field.
- *Study the publication outlet.* Who are the readers of this publication? Is it mainly leading scholars/theoreticians, or does the audience appear to be a mixed group of teacher/scholar university faculty focused on preparing college students for the profession? What is the mission of the sponsoring organization? Editors are responsible to the audience for the publications that they represent, so paying attention to this will win you some points. If it is a book publisher, scan your bookshelf and search their catalog. What can you infer about what they would or would not be interested in publishing? Asking published and helpful colleagues to suggest suitable outlets can increase chances for success as well (Shaikh, 2021)
- *Put yourself in the reader’s position.* Set aside your manuscript for a few days and return to it later. Read it with fresh eyes. Turn on the read aloud function of your word processing program as you perform some routine household tasks. Why? Because this simulates your audience’s internal mental process as they read. Take note of where the material bogs down or your interest begins to wane. Academic writing needs to have a logical flow; otherwise, your reader will be confused. Does the manuscript make a steady progression or does the work drift off course? A well-written paragraph typically has the structure of beginning with an assertion, providing evidence/support, and then making a smooth transition to the next paragraph. Analyze your paragraphs to see if they follow this format.
- *Do a test run.* After you have determined your primary audience, ask someone who is part of that audience to read your manuscript and provide you with feedback. Present the content to a real audience. Their questions, comments, and examples can help to refine the written manuscript. You may discover that one aspect of the presentation generated the most discussion and this might help you to arrive at a focus for your manuscript.
- *Consider secondary audiences.* If there are other potential readers of your manuscript who would need more information, this can be accomplished through

such devices as citing another source, using a footnote, or suggesting an online link that would provide background.

- *Identify an audience outside your major area.* When editors and reviewers critique manuscripts, they look for work that is original. If the primary audience in your field is already well-acquainted with the material you want to write about, cast a wider net to identify a new audience. For example, a medical researcher who has studied the consequences of a "sick building," in which dangerous mold has compromised the health of workers in the facility, might write for business leaders or school administrators to provide evidence-based recommendations. Changing the audience yields a manuscript that is distinctive from one that would be directed to medical professionals.

4.1 Introduction: Determining the Readership for a Manuscript

Novice authors sometimes harbor the hopeful dream that "everyone will want to read" something that they have written. Yet if you visualize yourself searching the literature, you skim and skip over published work that is not relevant or fails to meet expectations for quality of presentation. Such experiences as a reader are a touchstone for understanding audience. Readers of academic publications have an astonishing array of choices. Jinha (2010) attempted to estimate how many scholarly articles were in existence and estimated that there were 50 million. Today, the motto of the publisher of this book, Springer Nature Group, is that their company alone offers "over a billion scholarly sources at your fingertips." What usually occurs is that readers are making hundreds of rapid decisions about whether to pause and read on. When we write for an audience, this makes the manuscript more likely to be discovered and put to use by fellow professionals.

Why do people choose to read nonfiction? Typically, it is because they are seeking authoritative information, have an interest in the subject matter, are in search of evidence to support their assertions, seek to stimulate their own thinking, want something to discuss with colleagues, or some combination of these. If you confuse, bore, or insult readers, you will lose them. This makes it more important than ever to identify a specific focus for your writing and match it to a clearly identified audience. As Germano (2021) points out, you need to become immersed, not only in the subject matter, but also in your intended readership:

> Writing turns out to be something collective, something that operates between you, all your experiences and ideas, and your sense of the writing you admire. That's all part of what we can call *writing practice*…You do this so language and ideas might stay in place long enough that others—unseen, unnumbered, unknown others can engage with that language, those ideas. You want to write better so that others can read your writing better…but when you're writing well, you're writing *among*, not alone. Not just *for* your readers, but *among* them. (p. 17)

Table 4.1 Questions to determine the audience

•	Who is your primary, target audience? Might there be other audiences?
•	Is the topic itself so specialized that it suggests an audience? Journal titles, such as *Trends in Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease,* sometimes clarify the audience
•	What does your audience need? want? value? Conversely, what are they least likely to care about?
•	What ways of organizing your argument would best help your audience understand? For example, if you are drafting an empirical research article, the headings of Introduction, Materials & Methods, Results, and Discussion (IMRaD) is a common structure (Nair & Nair, 2014)
•	What parts of your work would be familiar to your readership and what might be unfamiliar or surprise them?
•	What do you want your audience to think, learn, or assume about you? What impression do you want your writing or your research to convey? (Adapted from The Writing Center at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, 2022)

How do writers go about tailoring manuscripts to fit a group of prospective readers? Imagine that you are describing a research project to four different people: a fellow researcher, a colleague from a different field, an undergraduate student, and a community member without a college degree. Each explanation would need to be quite different to communicate the message effectively. Think about just one issue—the use of professional jargon. For the fellow researcher, it might serve as a sort of shorthand for conveying information; however, for the other people listed, it would fail to communicate. As a leading authoring on scholarly writing, Helen Sword (2017), notes.

> A vast body of scholarly literature explores the practical, theoretical, and rhetorical challenges of writing for different kinds of audiences . . . Who are the readers for whom we are really writing, and how will we know when we have reached them? How can we reconcile what we want to say with what we think our readers and reviewers want to hear? These are complex questions that many academics have never been trained to address or indeed been encouraged to consider closely…unless doctoral students are pursuing a PhD by publication, most write for an audience of just a few people, namely their dissertation adviser and the members of their examining committee. Even published academics may find it difficult to imagine real people—interested people rather than pejorative judges—sitting at the end of their sentences. (p. 117)

Questions that help writers identify their audience are in Table 4.1.

4.2 Advantages of Audience Awareness

Suppose that you are giving instructions to three different people about an item you want at the grocery store. The first is a young child, the second is an adult who has never seen a supermarket, and the third is a person who shops at the store regularly. Each change of audience requires a very different sort of orientation and explanation. As a writer, knowing your audience helps you to make decisions about what information you should include, how you should arrange that information, and what kind of supporting details will be necessary. It also influences the tone and structure of the document. To develop and present an effective argument, you need to be able to appeal to and address your audience (University of Maryland Global Campus, 2021). Audience awareness also helps you to decide which points require further elaboration and/or an example. Writing for a readership also suggests a suitable focus for your work that avoids unnecessary digressions.

When drafting the manuscript, it is sometimes helpful to create main headings written as questions your readers would be likely to have and answer only that question in that section.

The following example explains why a question/answer approach can help to focus writing. Many doctoral programs include exams that have both a written portion and an oral discussion with a group of faculty members who have read the paper. The expectation is that students will support their responses with authoritative research evidence from their papers rather than rely on opinion or practical experience. Sometimes, a faculty member asks a question, and the student does not have a ready answer. Rather than responding with “I don’t know,” students might stall for time with, “Could you repeat the question?” or talk about something that they had rehearsed mentally, even though it does not answer the question. A similar mismatch occurs when academic authors attempt to publish something that interests them with little attention to the readership of the publication. Just as the faculty members will not be satisfied by inadequate responses, editors are apt to reject writing that ignores the audience’s needs.

Fashioning an entire manuscript without a clear audience in mind is as effective as tailoring an article of clothing and then searching for someone to fit it. Although it is *possible* to find a match, the process is very inefficient. It far better to tailor a garment to predetermined measurements. Some initial ways to achieve this goodness-of-fit are to ask:

- Who do you want to say something to and why? What makes this material important to the readership rather than trivial?
- Why bring this material and readership together? If it is a practical article, for example, how will help them to become more competent professionals?
- How much is this group likely to know about this already and what amount of background is necessary for the “average” reader?
- How might readers benefit from taking the time to read what you have written? Make a list of several key benefits.

If you have not answered these questions, you are apt to get caught up in a lengthy cycle of cut-and-paste that is frustrating, even for an accomplished academic author. Audience is so important, in fact, that each time you change your audience, you have a new manuscript. For authors seeking to capitalize on the time investment made in a body of work, this is good news (see Chap. 6 for more about multiple spin-offs).

To illustrate, consider the perennial question, "How do young children learn to read?" It is a line of inquiry in the field of literacy with complex, divergent, and widely debated answers. Imagine how a teacher/scholar might formulate a response for parents whose children struggle with reading, future teachers responsible for teaching children to read, or policy makers producing legislation that affects public schools. Each of these groups of readers has unique needs. The parents' major concern is how to avert academic failure for their children. Prospective teachers will want to know how, exactly, to teach a child to read—practical advice and effective methods of instruction. Politicians would be interested in how to improve their country's standings in the international literacy rates and evidence to guide more enlightened policies. Each audience would require a distinctive approach and emphasis. For the writer, that means a different article with each change of the intended readership. When you take the time to analyze your audience before you prepare a manuscript, you also enhance your chances of acceptance, disseminate findings in a timely fashion, and increase the potential impact of your work (Iskander, Wolicki, Leeb & Siegel, 2018).

Consideration of the needs of your audience is like planning for overnight house guests. Hosts strive to make them comfortable and point out where things are located. Writing for an audience does this also. Organization in writing reassures readers that they are in good hands so that they can get comfortable as they spend time thinking along with you. Effective use of headings is like showing guests where the items they might need are located because headings are directional signposts. As Germano (2021) asserts,

> Readers aren't just people out there who buy, borrow, or download your written words. Readers engage with texts, giving them a life those texts otherwise lack. Readers, we might even say, *create* writers…Remember that readers want the writer's attention in exchange for their own. And who can quarrel with them on this point? Readers expect argument and persuasion, but that comes with risk, especially for us academic types, eager to press a point. Readers expect to be argued *with* and persuaded *by*. They don't want to be told, repeatedly, what they already know and they're rarely tolerant of being lectured *at*. Writing happens among; writing is an exchange. (p. 30)

In the case of academic writing, the suitability of that exchange for a specialized group is determined by the discourse community, as the next section describes.

4.3 Understanding Discourse Communities

Swales (1990) is credited with developing the concept of a discourse community. Discourse communities are defined as collection of people or groups working toward a shared goal through communication. They have a specialized vocabulary (i.e., professional jargon), communicate through various genres, and operate within a power structure (Fig. 4.1).

People belong to multiple professional discourse communities. Doctoral candidates in counseling, for example, are part of the discourse community of practicing

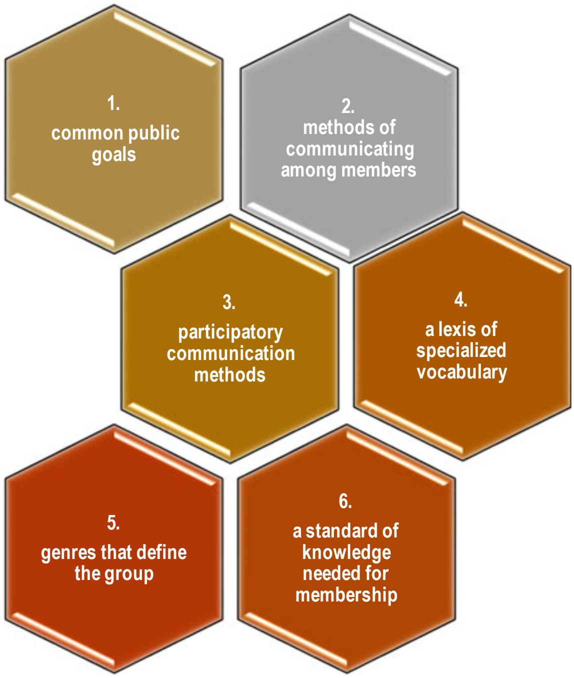

Fig. 4.1 Six characteristics of discourse communities (Swales, 1990)

professional counselors and of fellow graduate students. As they progress through their program, the goal is for them to join the discourse communities of researchers and university faculty members. Casanave (2003) contends that academic writing is part of a socio-political process in which writers, as the owners of power, try to be acknowledged and recognized by a discourse community. Those seeking to publish need to be savvy about the specific discourse community or communities represented by a publication outlet, because neglecting this step is a major reason for desk rejection. As any experienced journal editor can attest, many of the manuscripts they receive suggest that the author is not familiar with the publication and its readership.

For an academic author seeking to publish an article, think of the journal as your textbook and learning about the outlet as part of your homework. Before sending a manuscript to a professional journal, visit the journal's website. What types of articles do they publish? Now look through tables of contents for different issues of the publication. Increasingly, titles of articles that have been accepted but not yet published are posted as well. Look at a few of the top downloaded articles—either by using the publisher's website or a Google Scholar search. Choose a few interesting examples that match, not necessarily the content, but the *format* of what you hope to publish there. For example, if you conducted a survey, look at other survey research, irrespective of the specific subject matter. By studying what has been accepted, many of your questions as an author will be answered. Suppose that you have a very thought-provoking quotation from a participant in a

Table 4.2 Levels of formality in language

•	*Formal language*–the audience is potentially much larger and unfamiliar. Traditionally, this material is written in the third person, uses the passive voice, and avoids contractions. It is polite and respectful, allowing readers to think for themselves rather than telling them what to think. Formal language is apparent in published empirical research that is written primarily for fellow scholars
•	*Semi-formal (professional) language*–the audience consists of professional co-workers or others in various business or professional roles. First person language is used a bit less. Semi-formal language is evident in business correspondence, e-mails sent to groups of colleagues, and reviews of manuscripts by "critical friends."
•	*Informal (casual) language*—the language of everyday speech. The audience consists of an inner circle family, neighbors, close friends. First person (i.e., I, me, my, we) is acceptable. May include slang, colloquialisms, dialects. Informal language often occurs in social media such as blogs, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook

qualitative interview study. Would it be acceptable to begin your manuscript with that? You identified six themes in your research. Might it be possible to begin each section with a quotation or to compile shorter responses from each interviewee into a table of themes? Again, looking at what has already been published in the outlet can spare you developing material that you cannot use. Given that lack of time is the number one complaint of academic authors, you surely do not want to labor long and hard on something that is later deleted.

Knowing the discourse community also provides writers with some guidance about the level of formality in the writing. As an author, you will want to avoid talking "over their heads" or "talking down" to your readers. One tool in the current version of Microsoft Editor checks the tone of your writing. Authors can choose one of three styles: (1) formal, (2) professional, and (3) casual. The program will flag language that is inconsistent with the level of formality selected. These three levels of formality in language are explained in Table 4.2

To illustrate the difference in levels of formality, consider these examples of letters that authors sent to a journal editor. The first one read: "Hi Mary. I'm just wondering if you might be interested in an article that I wrote. Please let me know as soon as possible because I need to get something published right away." The second one read: "Dear Dr. Mary Renck Jalongo: It would be an honor and privilege to be published in your esteemed journal…" Clearly, the first one is too casual while the second is exceedingly formal and attempts to flatter the recipient. Somewhere between these two extremes is a professional, business-like tone.

Where academic writing is concerned, formal language predominates in scientific communication, partly because it wants to lay claim to being objective and authoritative. Nonetheless, there is a gradual shift toward greater acceptance of a somewhat more personal voice in at least some scholarly writing. As Simandan (2010) points out,

> academic writing had been considered as being dry and impersonal. This kind of writing involves an objective exploration of ideas that transcend the individual. Numerous textbook

> and style guides advised the writers to leave their personalities aside and subordinate their views to rigid conventions of anonymity. However, recent research has shown that academic writing is no longer regarded as distant and impersonal, but as a genre where the writer's presence is felt more and more significantly. (unpaged)

Even researchers, for example, might disclose a bit more about themselves, such as sharing their reasons for an interest in the topic.

Another shift in formal language use has to do with active and passive voice. A sentence written in active voice identifies who is performing the action. Conversely, a passive voice sentence does not specify the actor; rather, it is implied. Iskander et al. (2018) give this example:

Active voice	Authors who use the active voice write more clearly.
Passive voice	Clarity of writing is promoted by the use of the active voice.

Active voice constructions are preferred by some referencing styles, such as American Psychological Association, because they can improve clarity and tend to use fewer words.

Nevertheless, authors need to decide what sentence structure works best in a particular context. To find passive voice sentences in a manuscript, use the Review tab on Microsoft Word, then scroll down to the refinement category and click on the label "clarity." It will identify the passive voice constructions for you, and you can decide whether to rewrite the sentence in active voice.

Studying the intended publication outlet offers guidance about what level of informality is acceptable. For example, some editors would balk at first-person reports of research such as: "In the fall of 2023, I conducted in-depth interviews with 15 top ranking female military officers that focused on their leadership qualities." A more conventional way of reporting this in formal academic writing would place the researcher in the background. The editor might prefer instead, "To investigate the leadership qualities of top-ranking female military officers, the principal investigator conducted 15 in-depth interviews during the fall of 2023." Again, what has been published previously in the intended outlet during that editor's tenure will offer guidance in these matters.

Discourse community considerations also affect how examples are presented. Academic authors may assume that examples have no place in a research paper; however, skillful use of an example can be highly effective. A study of university faculty working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic began with:

> Fleeing from the Great Plague that reached Cambridge in 1665, Newton retreated to his countryside home where he continued working for the next year and a half. During this time, he developed his theories on calculus, optics, and the law of gravitation—fundamentally changing the path of science for centuries. Newton himself described this period as the most productive time of his life [1]. Is working from home indeed the key to efficiency for scientists also in modern times? A solution for working without disturbance by colleagues and being able to manage a work-life balance? What personal and professional factors influence the relation between productivity and working from home? These are the main questions

that the present paper aims to tackle. The Covid-19 pandemic provides a unique opportunity to analyze the implications of working from home in detail. (Aczel et al., 2021)

By harkening back to a time when health concerns forced one of the great thinkers—Sir Issac Newton—to be isolated, the authors capture readers' interest and set the stage for their study of scholars sequestered in homes during mandatory lockdowns.

As Goodson and Gill (2011) assert in their description of their book on narrative:

> It is widely recognized that we are living through an 'age of the narrative'. Many of the constituent disciplines in the social sciences resonate with this trend by using life history and narrative approaches and methods. As we move on from the modernist period which prioritized objectivity into the postmodern regard for subjectivity, this resort to narrative is likely to become more apparent and explicit in academic…discourse. (unpaged)

Particularly for an audience of practitioners, an example presented in narrative (story) form can illustrate an important concept. I used the following anecdote to introduce a book chapter on intergenerational volunteering:

> *Felicia and her husband Herb moved to Florida and lived in a housing development for retirees. Now that her children and grandchildren were grown, the one thing she did not like about her new lifestyle was the age segregation and she said to her daughter, "My arms just ache to hold babies again." Herb had begun volunteering at the vocational school in the auto mechanic shop and, one day, while dropping him off, Felicia saw a woman pushing six babies in a stroller. She went over to speak with her and found out that there was a childcare facility on site and the woman was a teacher. The teacher explained that the program served two important purposes; first, it cared for the babies so that their teenage mothers could complete high school and second, it gave students interested in working with young children practical experience. Felicia immediately went through the process to become a volunteer and get involved. Each day, she would greet the young mothers with their infants in carriers. The mothers could attend classes and know that their babies were receiving excellent care. During lunch break, the high school students came to visit with their babies, the volunteers, and the staff. The relaxed, informal exchanges during this time gave the new mothers an opportunity to share concerns, ask questions, and see positive role models of infant caregiving in action. Felicia was dedicated to this program because "the moms and little ones count on me to be there." The experience gave her a new identity and an important role in supporting young families. Her commitment to the program was so strong that, several years later, when her oncologist delivered the devastating news that Felicia had lung cancer, the first thing she said was, "I volunteer in a program at the school and take care of babies so that their mothers can finish high school. Am I still going to be able to do that?"* (Jalongo, 2021).

This narrative supported the theme of the volume; namely, the contributions that older adults can make to the lives of young children. It is a true account of my parents' volunteer service, and I used it to make a point to a readership that consists primarily of university faculty in colleges of education and their undergraduate and graduate students.

For a general audience, a powerful, first-person account can immediately grab readers' attention. Clear (2018) begins his best-selling book with a personal account of a devastating injury to illustrate the power of making many, many incremental changes as a route to recovery.

On the final day of sophomore year of high school, I was hit in the face with a baseball bat. As my classmate took a full swing, the bat slipped out of his hands and came flying toward me before striking me directly between the eyes…The bat smashed into my face with such force that it crushed my nose into a distorted U-shape. The collision sent the soft tissue of my brain slamming into the inside of my skull. Immediately, a wave of swelling surged through my head. In a fraction of a second, I had a broken nose, multiple skull fractures, and two shattered eye sockets (p. 1).

He uses the story of his painful rehabilitation to illustrate how striving for as little as a 1% improvement each day can result in new habits and impressive progress over time. With those first few sentences, he engages readers in wondering how he managed to survive and thrive.

Each of these examples illustrates that the author is aware of the audience and has deliberately chosen an approach that invites the intended audience to stop, read, and keep on reading.

4.4 Academic Authors in Communities of Practice

The term "communities of practice" refers to groups of people who share a concern or a passion for a topic, a craft, and/or a profession (Wenger, 1998, 2006). These individuals deepen their knowledge and expertise through regular interaction with each other that engages them in collective learning (de Paiva Duarte, 2013; Wenger, 2006). When academic authors publish, they need to establish their credentials as members of a specific community of practice. Of course, the ways in which scholars represent themselves varies by discipline. Those in the social sciences and humanities tend to reveal more of the personal and use the narrative mode more so than those in the "hard" sciences. Even so, scholarly manuscripts can be conceptualized as narratives; for example, a superlative review of the literature on a topic tells the story of that line of inquiry, both past and present. Even when an article is based on complex quantitative analysis, the publishable piece often does a better job of chronicling the investigation. As one editor remarked, after reviewing a revised manuscript, "I now understand the story of your research much better." Judicious use of the narrative mode does not suggest that academic writing devolve into unsubstantiated opinions, however. Academic writing relies on evidence.

Scholarly writing is grounded in a logical argument. When students first hear the word "argument," they sometimes think of the common use of that word in which people strongly disagree. In the context of scholarly writing, however, argument has a different meaning. Rather than emphasizing contentiousness, it refers to a logical, evidence-based progression of ideas sufficient to persuade readers that the author's stance is valid. Argument is so basic to scholarly writing that one book about academic writing, now in its ninth edition, has the title *Everything's an*

Argument (Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz & Walters, 2021). Building a logical argument depends on a different vocabulary as well.

In their book that has survived to a fifth edition, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing,* Graff and Berkenstein (2021) list some of the verbs that are commonly used in academic writing, such as:

- Verbs to make a claim—argue, support, observe, suggest
- Verbs to express agreement—concur, support, acknowledge, concede
- Verbs to disagree—contradict, question, refute, challenge
- Verbs for making recommendations—recommend, urge, call for, advocate.

Two important dimensions of scholarly writing that vary, depending on the community of practice, are stance and engagement. Stance refers to how writers present themselves and communicate their "take" on the matter (White, 2003). Engagement "is an alignment dimension where writers acknowledge and connect to others, recognizing the presence of their readers, pulling them along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties, including them as participants, and guiding them to interpretations" (Hyland, 2005, p. 176).

Hyland (2015) has studied scholarly writing by analyzing the strategies that authors use. He categorizes them as *interactive* resources that guide readers through the text, such as:

- frame markers (finally, to conclude)
- evidentials (according to X)
- transitions (in addition, thus)

He also describes *interactional* resources that engage readers in the argument, such as:

- hedges (might, possible)
- boosters (in fact, it is clear that)
- engagement markers (consider, you can see that)

The following abstract for a research article illustrates skillful execution of these moves/strategies. It was, at last count, accessed 32,000 times and cited 217. The article title is: "COVID-19 and Digital Disruption in UK Universities: Afflictions and Affordances of Emergency Online Migration" (Watermeyer et al., 2020).

> COVID-19 has caused the closure of university campuses around the world and migration of all learning, teaching, and assessment into online domains. The impacts of this on the academic community as frontline providers of higher education are profound. In this article, we report the findings from a survey of $n = 1148$ academics working in universities in the United Kingdom (UK) and representing all the major disciplines and career hierarchy. Respondents report an abundance of what we call 'afflictions' exacted upon their role as educators and in far fewer yet no less visible ways 'affordances' derived from their rapid transition to online provision and early 'entry-level' use of digital pedagogies. Overall, they

> suggest that online migration is engendering significant dysfunctionality and disturbance to their pedagogical roles and their personal lives. They also signpost online migration as a major challenge for student recruitment, market sustainability, an academic labour-market, and local economies. (p. 623)

Note how the abstract supplies an overview of the argument that is tailored to readers who would be interested in articles published in *Higher Education.* These researchers are aware of the more general discourse community and more specific communities of practice who would constitute that audience.

4.5 Conclusion: Crafting Manuscripts for an Audience

When people want to check the weather forecast, there are many options. It might be sufficient to view the snapshot predictions that pop up when you first turn on the computer or to quickly check for any severe weather alerts prior to traveling. If you are a gardener deciding whether to water the plants, you might prefer a five-day projection. For those hosting an outdoor gathering, an interactive radar map that moves from hour to hour or even "the granularity of 15-min forecasts" could be useful. It depends. Similar considerations apply when academic authors write for an audience. The needs, interests, and purposes of groups differ, and the requisite amount of detail and explanation varies accordingly.

Too often, inexperienced authors approach the task of writing as simply generating words without much forethought about the intended readership or the structure of the argument. Yet, just as the rings inside a tree's trunk are a maker of each year of growth, there are layers underneath a skillful piece of writing. The argument is equivalent to the heartwood—the very center. The next layer of academic writing style is suitability, both for the audience and the outlet. If you don't get the two aligned, the rest doesn't matter much. To illustrate, an author who was overjoyed by becoming a grandparent for the first time began a chapter from her perspective. Although it was lovely and heartfelt, it suggested that every grandparent was delighted to be spending time with their grandbabies. As the editor, I commented that the experiences of grandparenting were far from universal. What about if the grandchild's parent is an adolescent without any material resources, addicted to drugs/alcohol, or has severe mental health issues that prevent the parent from being responsible for the child? Consider too the thousands of grandparents who are beyond retirement age, barely surviving financially, and have both a child and grandchild depending on them? What if the child was conceived as the result of sexual violence perpetrated on the mother? What if the family is living in a war-torn country where the ability to protect children is severely compromised? The author's chapter introduction was a poor fit for a scholarly outlet with a diverse readership. I suggested that she save that piece of writing for another purpose and audience.

Where scholarly writing is concerned, knowledge of discourse communities and communities of practice results in more successful matches between manuscripts, audiences, and outlets. It helps authors to decide how to represent themselves and communicate their ideas through writing. It leads scholar/writers in finding their voice and developing an academic writing style that earns the approval of the intended community of practice.

Issue: Social Media Platforms for Professors and Researchers

Should an academic author's media presence matter in scholarly contexts? As Ovadia (2014) notes, some scholars see these tools as frivolous or pointless while others regard them as important assets. Just as there is a difference between a magazine article and a scholarly journal, there are differences between popular social media (e.g., TikTok, Instagram, Facebook) and *academic* social network sites. Most of the latter are geared toward disseminating publications, supporting collaboration amongst scholars, and tabulating the impact of published work. Although scholars' patterns of use of Academic Social Networking Sites vary from one discipline to another, their main functions are creating personal academic profiles, sharing publications with interested readers, and interacting with peers (Yan, Zhang, Hu & Kudva, 2021).

Johannah (2022), a blogger for SCI Journal, suggests that scholars use an academic social networking site to:

- keep current on the latest research and news in a field
- connect scholars with shared interests
- pursue new research opportunities and collaborative ventures
- find useful resources such as textbooks and teaching materials
- post questions and learn from others' experiences
- stay in touch with friends and colleagues
- chat about new findings and research trends

Yet, as with other online venues, things can go wrong. In a review of the literature on use of Academic social networking sites from 2001 to 2020, Majumdar (2022) noted that these online environments can be sites where age and gender discrimination, snooping, academic cyber bullying, and promulgation of substandard literature occur. Scholars need to use these tools appropriately and judiciously. Some of the most widely used academic social networking sites follow.

academia.edu

Used primarily in the social sciences and humanities, Academia.edu allows users to create an academic profile, upload publications, follow other researchers, generate analytics on their publications, communicate with other scholars, and so forth.

ORCID

Provides a unique digital identification—the ORCIDiD—that distinguishes you from every other researcher. Creates a professional profile that links to scholarly work.

Scopus Author Identifier (Elsevier)

The Scopus Author Identifier groups together all the documents written by one author with a unique Scopus number.

Publons (Clarivate Analytics)

Establishes a link between authors and all their published work. Is also used to tabulate the peer reviews conducted by scholars.

ResearchGate

Provides an online repository for sharing work and facilitates collaboration with other scholars. Tabulates metrics on the work posted there that indicate how many other ResearchGate users have accessed or cited specific publications.

Xing

With more than 80,000 specialist groups, Xing can help scholars to find others with similar interests and propose collaborative ventures. Members can meet and discuss ideas, learn about job opportunities, and join in networking events.

Google Scholar

Scholars can search their publications to see how often they have been downloaded and cited. Students can use the site to learn more about the interests and publications of faculty members at their respective institutions. Published authors can create a profile that links readily to their publications and is updated frequently.

Impact Story

This nonprofit website supports researchers in investigating the online impact of their work. Scholars develop a personal profile page where they can include their articles and/or social media activity.

LinkedIn

Supports networking with other researchers at their own institutions as well as others. Job postings, funding streams, and collaborative research projects are publicized so that scholars can find resources, research partners, and potential students. LinkedIn also has a section for academic institutions to identify research partners and potential students.

Mendeley, Zotero, and Cite U-Like

The primary use of these online tools is to gauge the impact of publications; however, they also provide social networking options (Ovadia, 2014).

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Cabell International's Journalytics ***Cabell's International—About Journalytics (cabells.com)***

Springer Nature Resource: Journal Suggester ***Springer Journal Suggester***

Online Video: In this video from Steven Pinker, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University and best-selling author, talks about Linguistics, Style and Writing in the twenty-first Century https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV5J6BfToSw

Enroll in Stanford University's School of Medicine Massive Online Open Course (MOOC), Writing in the Sciences, to learn more about publishing in the sciences.

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Choosing a Topic: Focus and Title

5

Mary Renck Jalongo

Contents

Abstract

Successful graduate students quickly learn to avoid over-generalizations when participating in class discussions. Socialization to the standards of their respective fields leads them to replace a statement such as "Many people think that…" with a clearer, more supportable statement such as "Although the evidence is mixed, there is some research to suggest that…" The same caveat against overgeneralization holds true when they begin to write. Selection of a topic, identification of a focus, precision in language, and support of ideas with evidence are essential tools for academic authors. This chapter guides scholars in narrowing their topics for writing projects into something matched to the task and purpose. A common complaint of reviewers and editors is that the title of the manuscript is unclear or that the manuscript fails to deliver on what the title promises. Graduate students cannot be expected to "just know" how to write suitable titles or narrow their topics sufficiently. This chapter addresses the limitations in academic preparation of scholarly authors. It guides them in

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_5

choosing topics matched to their strengths, sharpening the focus, and crafting effective titles for scholarly writing projects.

Keywords

Topics for scholarly writing • Writing titles for research • Research on effective titles • Focus in professional writing • Narrowing a topic • Selecting a topic

Three Narratives

Novice

In a writing for publication course that is a requirement for doctoral students, the professor announces that they will be working on writing titles. She distributes a list of titles for ten journal articles published by former students. On the reverse side of the paper, there are ten titles of dissertations that were successfully defended. One student remarks, "I don't think anyone has ever taught me how to write a title like this—these are much more specific." Another student says, "Is it possible to get too specific—I mean, so many limits on the topic that it gets to be almost unimportant?" Yet another student observes, "It looks like a colon is used to avoid some unnecessary words and make the title more descriptive" and another student chimes in with, "I never tried to use a colon in a title because it seemed pretentious, but I can see what you mean, it does make the most of the few words you have to work with." An international student observes "In our country, published manuscripts put a period at the end, but not here." With the reminder that the style manual they are using, American Psychological Association, recommends a 15-word limit on titles, the students begin drafting titles for the journal articles they are planning to write.

What experiences do you have with writing specific titles for manuscripts? Scan through the reference list that you have prepared for a manuscript. What do you notice about the titles?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

A book series editor is producing a volume on the interpersonal relationships between young children and older adults. She invites two faculty members and a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology to prepare a chapter that would help teachers and families to understand diverse types of memory loss, including dementia. In keeping with the purpose of the Series, the editor also requests some practical advice on ways to support positive interactions between young children and older adults with memory loss. The three members of the writing team have worked extensively with a clinic at the university that provides services to local families. Together, they produce a highly informative and helpful chapter written for educators with the title "Explaining

Dementia and Memory Loss to Young Children in Developmentally Appropriate Ways" (Gernant et al., 2021).

In this case, the invitation suggested the focus of the chapter to the authors to determine if it would be of interest to them. Many times, conferences, journals, and calls for papers specify a theme. How can you use this information to arrive at a more specific focus for a manuscript that you have written or are writing?

Prolific

Two faculty members from different universities meet at an international conference where they are making a presentation together. Both want to get more involved in writing, so they attend an open meeting of the Publications Committee. The agenda announces that the organization will publish two thematic, guest edited issues of the journal next year and they are seeking formal proposals that would include a list of scholars who have agreed to contribute an article. The Director of Publications emphasizes that authors must understand that the invitation is not a guarantee of publication. As with all articles published in the journal, their work will be subjected to editorial and anonymous peer review. After the meeting, the two professors who attended agree on a topic that would be of interest to the membership. They work on the proposal, contact possible authors, revise it many times, and submit it for review. After it is accepted, the editor-in-chief begins coaching them. They will have professional editing services available, so the co-editors' main responsibility is to select suitable content, work with the authors, notify them about their decisions, and keep them updated on the project. The special issue of this international journal is well-received by the membership and the co-editors have gained insight into the work of editing a professional journal.

How important is the topic and focus for projects of this type? What strategies could you use to identify a timely topic?

Activity: Narrowing a Topic

Perhaps as a child, you learned to go from general to specific with something such as: "I live in the solar system. My planet is Earth. My continent is_____. My country is _____. My state/province/region is _____. My town is _____. My street/road is____. My address is _____."

A comparable situation occurs when graduate students are planning a thesis or dissertation; they begin with a general label or category and then need to narrow it down. Try the strategies in Table 5.1 (adapted from Ball, 2021; Thesis Helpers, 2022; Grand Valley State University Libraries, 2022) to accomplish this.

Example:

Writing for Scholarly Publication as "Tacit Knowledge":
A Qualitative Focus Group Study of Doctoral Students in Education
(Jalongo et al., 2014).

Abstract

Table 5.1 A strategy for narrowing a topic

1 Write down your domain of interest and broad topic	
2 Make a list of keywords	
Who	
What	
Where	
When	
How	

Table 5.2 Example of narrowing a topic

Who	Doctoral candidates and those at the dissertation writing stage
What	Their ideas about writing for publication
Where	At three universities—one in the USA, in Canada and in Australia
When	Over the course of one year
How	Focus group interviews

Expectations for academic writing and publication have intensified in Academia. Doctoral students in colleges of education are advised to publish even before they graduate, and evidence of successful publication is influential in hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions. The purpose of this research was to study the process of writing for professional publication from the perspective of a diverse group of 30 doctoral students in colleges of education in the United States, Canada, and Australia. The group ranged in experience from those enrolled in their first doctoral-level courses to students who had very recently defended their dissertations. Interview data from the participants provided strong support for: (1) providing at least one doctoral-level course on writing for professional publication, (2) beginning instruction in scholarly publication earlier and continuing it across all stages of the program, (3) designing class assignments that are better aligned with the expectations for scholarly publication, and (4) providing extensive opportunities for peer and instructor review of manuscripts. From the perspectives of these 30 doctoral students, acquiring the constellation of knowledge, skills, habits, attitudes, and values associated with successful publication of scholarly work requires both formal and informal networks of validation and support.

Keywords: Academic writing; Scholarly writing; Publication; Doctoral students; Doctoral programs.

In Table 5.2, we use the grid to illustrate how this topic was narrowed.

Self-assessment: Topics that Match Individual Strengths

Topic selection needs to take an author's strengths into account. A particularly fertile area for ideas often exists in the intersection of formal education, work experiences, and personal interests (Jalongo, 2001). This can be visualized as cogs in a wheel, as shown in Fig. 5.1.

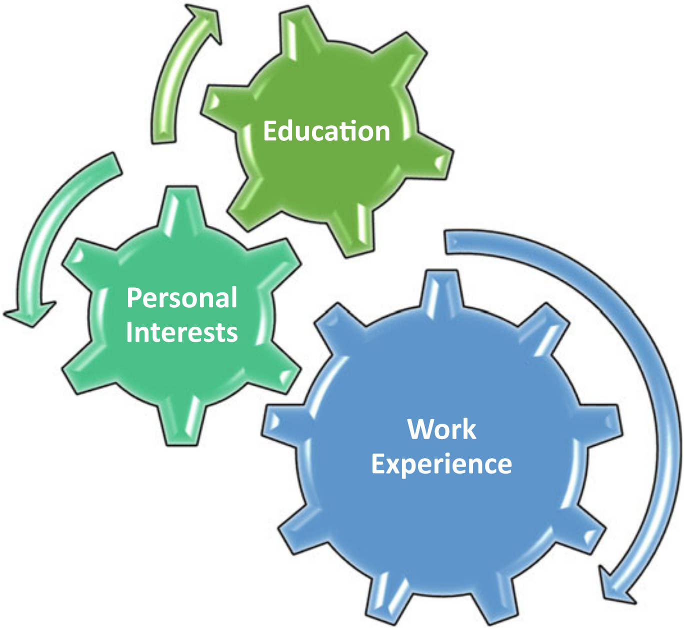

Fig. 5.1 Matching writing topics to professional strengths

Fill in the cogs and then generate ideas for topics. Do any of them reflect all three areas? If so, they might be more fruitful than other possibilities. Academic authors sometimes choose topics that are attracting attention currently. The International Literacy Association (2021), for example, publishes an annual report on What's Hot in Literacy. Yet popularity of a topic may not be the best decision. Trendy topics may not only get lukewarm or cold by the time an article is written, but also may fail to match your strengths. Further considerations are that a perennial debate or topic can be approached with a fresh perspective and a topic that is innovative is not yet on the radar. In the words of Samuel Johnson, an 18th Century British author poet, playwright, essayist, and editor, "The two most engaging powers of an author are to make new things familiar and familiar things new" (Quote Investigator 2019). This ability is particularly valuable in the writing of academic authors.

5.1 Introduction: Identifying Suitable Topics

During my 25 years as editor-in-chief of a scholarly journal, I sometimes received messages from academic authors who wanted me to suggest a topic for their writing. These authors seemed to think that, if the editor chose the topic, then the manuscript surely would be accepted. This is wrong-headed for at least five reasons.

1. *It is not only the topic, but also how well it is presented that determines acceptance.* For example, when a topic is being discussed extensively in a particular discipline, it is common to receive multiple manuscripts about that subject matter. Other variables, such as the academic writing style and insights about the topic, will influence which papers are superior to others.
2. *Academic writing is not assigned to authors as it might be for newspaper reporters.* Although editors might invite a leading authority on a topic to submit a manuscript or encourage a conference presenter to submit a research article, the authors are responsible for selecting a topic and focus suitable for the outlet/readership.
3. *Manuscripts published in reputable outlets must go through a peer review process.* Even if an editor is enthusiastic about a topic, that will not ensure acceptance of the manuscript. It would be sent out to reviewers, and the final decision would be based on their responses.
4. *Authors need to have a strong commitment to and passion for their subject matter*. A topic identified by the editor might fail to interest or motivate the writer. Topics need to be sufficiently captivating to writers to sustain them through the literature review, the double-digit rewrites to generate a manuscript, the (nearly) inevitable revise/resubmit, and the final proofreading.
5. *Most editors function less as writing coaches and more as "brokers"* (Kamler, 2010). They are intermediaries who manage assets—in this case, publishable manuscripts–that meet the standards for the outlet. Like a real estate broker, they represent a professional organization or company, and their primary role is to arrange and negotiate agreements. Editors are not in the habit of telling writers what to write about. Even if an editor did "assign" a topic, and the article was later rejected, the author would be understandably upset. Topic selection is the authors' responsibility.

Nevertheless, when faced with identifying a topic and focus, academic authors have numerous concerns, including:

- Being without an idea for a topic or, conversely, having many ideas and difficulty in deciding which one to pursue
- Questioning their qualifications and expertise
- Worrying that they are raising the wrong questions or narrowing the topic so much that it is trivial
- Feeling intimidated about pursuing a particular type of writing task (e.g., grant, article, dissertation, book)
- Sensing that someone else, such as a co-author or dissertation advisor, is pushing them in a particular direction
- Wondering if the topic and focus will be regarded by peers as a timely, significant contribution (adapted from Mullaney & Rea, 2022)

Table 5.3 Checklist of criteria for a topic (Adapted from Morton, 2019)

	Yes	No
Is the key terminology clearly defined at the outset to avoid misinterpretation?		
Does the manuscript offer new information or a unique perspective on the topic?		
Is the subject matter sufficiently narrowed so that it can fit the selected format (e.g., article vs. book)?		
Is there a clear purpose that unifies the work?		
Does the author *show* readers why this is important and answer the "so what?" question?		
Is the topic/focus a good match for the intended readership?		
Does the author provide sufficient information and a balanced review? (e. g., classic and current sources, research that supports and research that does not)		
Is the information synthesized and is the evidence from previously published sources analyzed and critiqued rather than merely reported?		

Revisit the topics you identified in the Self-Assessment for this Chapter. Table 5.3 provides additional criteria to guide you in selecting a general topic.

5.2 Making the Manuscript's Focus Explicit

There is a useful difference between a topic and a focus, as the Activity for this chapter illustrated. A subject is a domain of interest and a general category or label. These broad subject areas need to be more specific before they are manageable as writing projects. To illustrate, consider a concept from counseling—wellness. Modern concepts of wellness include not only physical health but also mental health. This makes wellness an encyclopedic topic, and a major reference work could be written about it. Suppose that it is narrowed down to wellness in college students. Now you would have enough material for a book. When the goal is to draft a research article, it must be narrowed further. Otherwise, you risk producing a very superficial treatment of the topic of a manuscript that is far too long. An example of a focused, journal article length manuscript might be how first-year college students make decisions about using the services of wellness centers at their postsecondary institutions. The body of a typical journal article is twenty-something pages of 12-point Times New Roman print with everything double-spaced. Those length limitations demand a narrower focus.

One strategy you can use to begin narrowing your topic is "the writing bullseye" (Germano, 2021). First, describe the project in ten words, not written as a sentence. Next, write a declarative sentence that describes the problem. Third, write a question asking about the problem you have identified. For graduate students trying to select a topic and focus for a thesis or dissertation, consider the additional questions in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Questions for graduate students to focus a thesis or dissertation

1	Do I find the subject matter engaging and capable of sustaining my interest over an extended period of time?
2	Have I avoided choosing the obvious, "hot" topic that may go quickly out-of-fashion and focused instead on something that will contribute to the field?
3	Have peers in my graduate program understood and responded favorably to the proposed topic/focus?
4	Is the type of work I would be doing to conduct research with this topic/focus (e.g., analysis of variance, individual interviews, large scale survey, naturalistic observations) a good match for my strengths?
5	Have I discussed the topic and focus with my advisor and committee members? Do they approve of my idea?
6	Is the study manageable and achievable, given the resources available to me?
7	Did I explore approaches that might make the research more feasible—such as a replication study, new analysis of an existing database, or investigating an original idea related to my advisor's line of inquiry?
8	After gaining support on the topic/focus from my advisor/committee members, did I prepare a one-page overview for my study and invite their feedback prior to generating lengthy documents?

The expectation that dissertations and publications will advance thinking on a topic can be intimidating. An original contribution, according to Madsen (1992), will

> Uncover new facts or principles, suggest relationships that were previously unrecognized, challenge existing truths or assumptions, afford new insights into little understood phenomena, or suggest new interpretations of known facts that can alter people's perceptions of the world around them. (p. 38)

One route to achieving this is to identify gaps in the existing literature. The good news is that fellow researchers frequently do some of this work for you when they suggest directions for future research at the end of a research article. Wallis and Wright (2020) have identified three basic types of gaps that help to identify an original contribution. Figure 5.2 describes these gaps and supplies an example of each one.

How might you use this gap analysis strategy to refine your topic and focus?

5.3 Matching Writing Tasks to the Focus

Yet another way to sharpen the focus is to consider the type of publication that you plan to undertake. Table 5.5 is an overview of several types of academic writing projects.

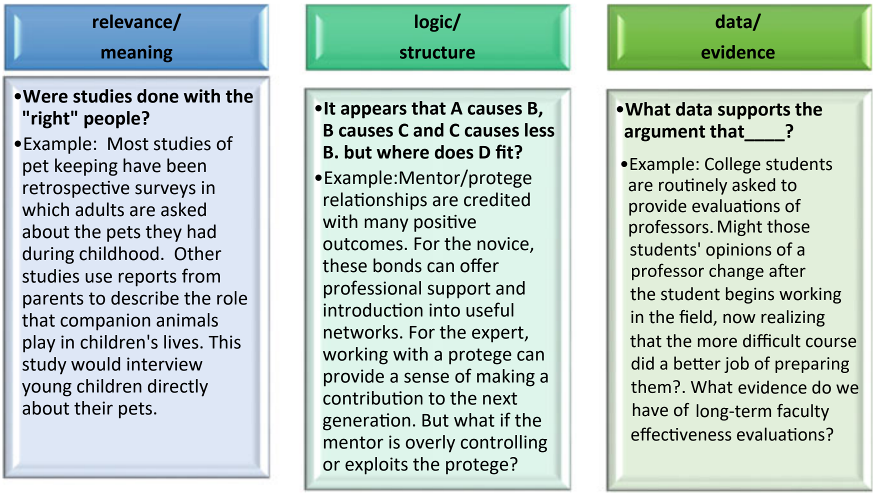

Fig. 5.2 Using gaps in the literature to focus research

5.4 Writing an Effective Title

The title is apt to become the most read feature of your manuscript both prior to and after publication. After reading the title, readers will make assumptions about authors' "creativity, preparation and expertise, so it is important to spend some time crafting a good one" (Yale College Writing Center, 2022). To provide a dramatic example of this, consider what happens if the title contains an error in spelling, syntax, or punctuation. Like a coffee stain on a curriculum vitae, it will create a negative impression. It will also raise questions about authors' attention to detail. The expectation that editors will "catch" errors for an academic author is not supported by the publication contracts that authors sign. Responsibility for accuracy rests with authors, in fact, many journal editors now require authors to initial every page and "sign off" before the work appears in print.

In an editorial about titles, Hays (2010) writes: "Titles hold a special place of prominence in the scientific literature. They sit atop every article; they are searchable by every major indexing service" (p. 101). Effective titles also make a difference in grant proposals and, evidently, many applicants lack skill in writing them. The National Science Foundation reported that the staff change the titles of approximately one-quarter of its projects, mostly to improve clarity. Experts on writing major grants for the National Institutes of Health recommend that applicants review and critique titles of funded proposals to improve their chances of success (Gerin et al., 2017). The titles of books are important as well. With thousands of books to choose from, an effective title can make one book stand out. Dissertation titles can likewise influence readers' decisions about which abstracts to read or when to request the entire document. Titles create a first impression—positive, neutral, or negative.

Table 5.5 Writing tasks and manuscript focus

Task and primary purpose	Intended audience	Common elements/structure	Discourse style	Caveats
Journal articles				
Practical—recommends a change in professional practice based on evidence and expertise. The goal is to enhance professionals' knowledge, skills, and dispositions	Written for those working in the field and their instructors, the practical article is designed persuade readers to institute changes that enhance professional effectiveness	Often begins by defining the innovation, then progresses to a research-based rationale for the change, addresses common objections to changing practice, and describes successful implementation strategies	Think of it as a training or workshop on paper. It should be especially helpful and include powerful examples, recommendations for further reading, checklists to guide practice, and so forth	In scholarly writing, the practice being endorsed needs to be supported by research rather than just a list of "tips" for others to follow
Reviews of research—selects published research, and results in a useful "landscape" of the research on a particular topic	Written to deepen and update knowledge of a particular topic that would benefit scholars, from novice to expert	Clarifies the search strategy, the parameters for inclusion, clusters it into themes, reports on the analysis, and describes the implications. There are many distinct types of reviews (e.g., systematic, meta-analysis, etc.)	Think of it as a time-saving service to other scholars. The review supports them in understanding trends in the research without reading every article included in the review	A piecemeal review of individual studies is unlikely to be published; the expectation for a publishable review is a high level of synthesis
Theoretical—a "think piece" that challenges prevailing ideas or explains an innovative concept of importance to the field	Written primarily for well-read practitioners and scholars. Many professional organizations publish position papers or white papers that describe what a group of leaders endorse for professionals in the discipline	Often provide a history of the trend, issue, controversy, or professional practice under discussion, point out flaws in logic, describe how the concept has evolved, fill in gaps, and provide a fresh perspective	Think of it as a tool for reflection. Readers are encouraged to weigh the evidence, consider their stance on the matter, and discuss it with fellow professionals	The fact that it is theoretical does not mean it is vague, impenetrable, or without practical application

(continued)

Table 5.5 (continued)

Task and primary purpose	Intended audience	Common elements/structure	Discourse style	Caveats
Research (quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method)—reports on an original research project in a concise, yet comprehensive way that enables other researchers to assess the rigor of the investigation	Written for other researchers as a contribution to new knowledge about a subject and to recommend directions for further research	Quantitative research often uses the IMRaD Many of the research articles that are published report on more than one investigation—such as a pilot study followed by the main research study or a series of inquiries into a phenomenon	Think of it as advancing knowledge in the field. These articles tell the story of the research using statistical data (quantitative), narratives of experience (qualitative) or both (mixed-methods)	Research needs a conceptual framework and rigor in data collection/analysis
Project reports—describes an exemplary project (often grant supported)	Written mainly for others who are seeking to implement similar initiatives so that they can learn from the project and adapt it to their context. It is important to candidly discuss the challenges as well as the positive outcomes	A common organization is: (1) needs assessment, (2) planning, (3) implementation, (4) assessment, and (5) implications	Think of it as a model for others to follow that will spare them some of the pitfalls encountered by the project. The project needs to be exceptional in some way to establish credibility	Exemplary projects typically have major grant funding, the leadership of a noted expert, affiliation with a top-tier university, and/or impressive results

(continued)

Table 5.5 (continued)

Task and primary purpose	Intended audience	Common elements/structure	Discourse style	Caveats
Books				
College-level textbook—the goal is to "translate" theory, research, and practice for novices (undergraduate textbook) or for experienced practitioners (graduate textbook)	Written to educate the next generation of professionals at the undergraduate or graduate level	Early on, the author(s) need to arrive at a consistent structure for each chapter that will serve as template for chapter content	Think of it as "a college course in a box." Undergraduate textbooks typically include many ancillaries—chapter objectives, a glossary, test items, PowerPoint slides, discussion questions, in-class activities, and suggested major projects for students to complete	More than ever before, material—including the textbook itself—is online to make the textbook more affordable (students rent the book for the semester) and to support online instruction
Book chapters and edited books—compiles the perspectives of a group of authors on subject matter of interest to the discipline	Readers are drawn to edited books because they find the topic/focus interesting and they recognize at least some of the contributors' names	The editor's level of involvement in writing chapters varies, ranging from little writing (perhaps a brief introduction) to collaboration on many chapters	Think of the edited book as a plurivocal representation of the theme that analyzes all the relevant aspects	Before agreeing to contribute to these books, make sure that the publisher is using a reputable peer review process

(continued)

Table 5.5 (continued)

Task and primary purpose	Intended audience	Common elements/structure	Discourse style	Caveats
Handbook or Encyclopedia—provides a resource that compiles information into a single, comprehensive reference tool on a topic in the field	The audience for handbooks and encyclopedias is varied, ranging from novice to expert. The goal is to quickly orient readers to experts' perspectives on the field	Handbooks and encyclopedias require a hierarchical arrangement of subject matter than is arranged from more general concepts down to more specialized topics. Entries typically include authoritative definitions of any key terminology that could not be found in a general dictionary	Think of it as a reference tool for members of the profession at different levels of experience	These projects can be massive undertakings. The level of involvement varies—a scholar might write one or more entries for the book, coordinate a subsection of the book, or function as editor-in-chief
Monograph—shorter than a book but longer than an article, the format is suited for a superlative research project or review of research on a specialized topic	Readers want to delve into a concept further than a short journal article can accomplish. The goal is to do a "deep dive" into a concept	The monograph may report on one particularly important research project or multiple projects	Think of it as publication written for a special interest group	Usually, authors of monographs have an established reputation in the field

(continued)

Table 5.5 (continued)

Task and primary purpose	Intended audience	Common elements/structure	Discourse style	Caveats
Association publication—many organizations have their own publication programs. They publish books that are affordable on topics of interest to the membership	Members of the professional group, ranging from novice to expert, are the intended readership. They presumably share the mission and goals of the group with which they are affiliated	Professional organizations often survey their membership to identify topics that would meet the needs of the group. A concise, logical explanation of the topic that is supported by theory, research, and practice is the goal	Think of it as a tool for professional development of the members of the group	Most professional organizations regard these publications as a service to the group, so there may not be any financial rewards (e.g., honorarium, royalties) involved. However, the editorial staff may provide more support to authors than commercial publishers and the publications do contribute to name recognition in the field
Short pieces of writing				
Editorial—addresses an issue of concern to the readers of the outlet. Usually, the editor-in-chief writes them but guest editorials written by well-respected experts—invited or unsolicited—may be published as well	Readers of editorials want to know what those in charge of a publication outlet or other noted authorities think	Many times, editorials by the editor-in-chief: (1) offer advice on aspects of publishing in the outlet, (2) provide an overview of content in one issue of the publication, or (3) address a current controversy in the field	Editorials rely more on expert opinion than on citation of references. They may be written in first-person, include vignettes or narratives of personal experience, use metaphors or similes, and have a less formal academic style, overall	Although an editorial in academic writing can have an undercurrent of passion about the subject matter, it should avoid an angry overtone

(continued)

Table 5.5 (continued)

Task and primary purpose	Intended audience	Common elements/structure	Discourse style	Caveats
Foreword or preface	Written for potential purchasers and borrowers of the book. It needs to be especially engaging and interesting	Adopts a more personal style by a leading expert who respects the author and endorses the project as reading material. A foreword is written by someone else; a preface is by the editor or author	Think of it as a way to build readers' enthusiasm for reading the book	Both a preface and a foreword are marketing tools. A foreword is a "celebrity endorsement" of the book
Book review—an evaluation of a published book	Written for those considering purchasing/reading the book or, if it is textbook, adopting it as a primary or secondary text for a course	Includes the complete reference for the book, the reviewer's institutional affiliation, and a discussion of the book's strengths and limitations	Think of it as a balanced assessment of the book	Most publishers will not waste space and engender hostility by printing a harsh criticism of a published book
Brochure for a professional organization—the goal is to provide basic information to the readers and produce succinct, accurate explanations that professionals can use in their work	Written to be disseminated to general audiences and support professionals in their work with them. For example, a subject such as *Understanding Grief Counseling* might be shared with students, distributed in the waiting rooms of professionals' offices, and made available at community events	Published as a three- or four-column overview of a topic. The space limitations of a brochure mean that complex ideas need to be clearly and concisely explained. Brochures sometimes use a question-and-answer format	Think of it as a quick guide to a concept that would build background about a topic	Check the publications of your professional organizations to see what has been published. Determine the procedure for proposing a new brochure to the group

The old saying "you are what you eat" has a corollary in writing: "you write what you read." This applies to writing titles as well. School administrators, for example, usually read the news regularly to keep informed about their communities. When I taught a group of them who were pursuing doctoral degrees in a writing for publication course, the titles of their articles frequently reflected those reading habits. Authors cannot be expected to write a suitable research article title unless they have read and analyzed quite a few of them and internalized features of effective titles. Different forms of published writing have expectations for titles that do not apply to others. To choose the type of title that is the least applicable to scholarly writing, think about the headlines of the scandal sheets displayed next to the checkout lines at the supermarket. Those titles try to grab attention with sensationalistic and provocative content—the very opposite of what scholars seek to do.

Figure 5.3 highlights the purposes that effective titles fulfill in academic writing and research that supports these findings.

Students have little knowledge of how to write a title that speaks to the discourse community of their profession (Anderson & August, 2020). One way to reduce the pressure to write the perfect title is to use an abbreviated "working title" at first and then refine it several times, as the project takes shape. Revisiting the title as a final step prior to submitting a manuscript is advisable also because—particularly for research articles—the emphasis may have changed now that the data have been analyzed.

One of the highly-rated activities that I did with my first-year doctoral students was called "playing with titles." Each student would draft a title for a practical article and post it so that other students could ask questions, write comments, or

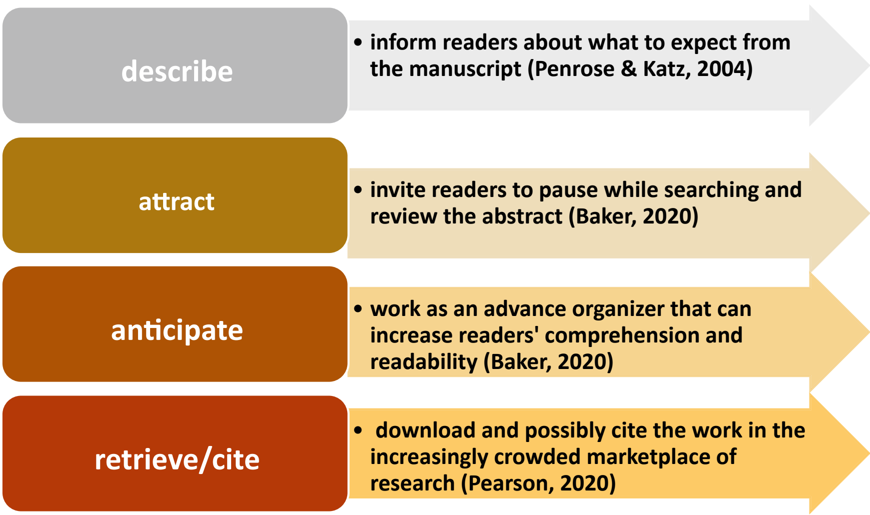

Fig. 5.3 The purposes for manuscript titles

suggest edits. Then I would review the input and make recommendations. At each juncture, we kept checking back with the authors for their opinion about whether the title had been improved. Some of them invested time in inventing an acronym or attempted to write “catchy” titles such as those they encountered in the popular media. It was a challenge to write a title that was simultaneously descriptive, interesting, and succinct. Most of the titles generated were far too general, and article titles sounded more like book titles. As Fig. 5.4 describes, research has identified features of article titles that make them more likely to be cited by other authors.

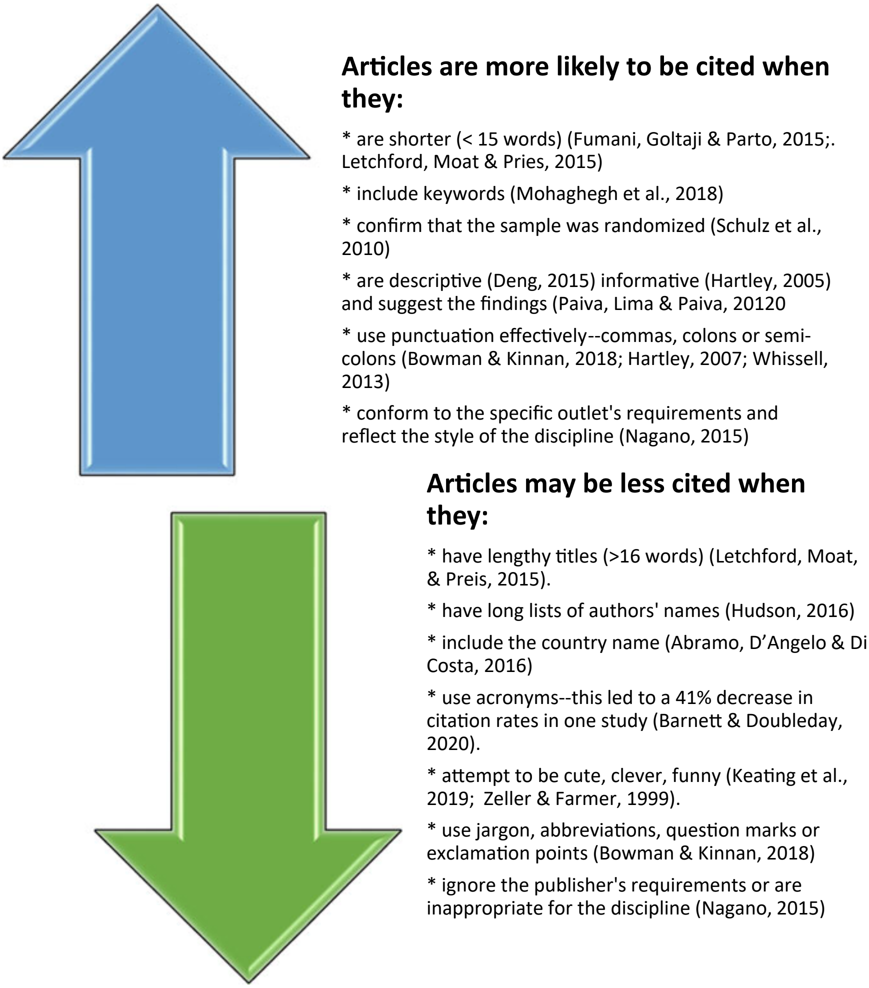

Fig. 5.4 Features of article titles that are more likely to be cited

As a rule, effective titles summarize the content, attract interest, adopt the right tone for the publication, include keywords, and are concise.

If the title does *not* work well, several negative outcomes are possible. The work may:

- fail to surface during the search process
- appear to be irrelevant to the reader's needs
- cause the reader to stop reading
- be forgotten later when the reader is reviewing notes
- not be cited because the title was not clear

Ideas about appropriate titles clearly are affected by the discipline and outlet, so studying titles of published work is worth authors' time (Afful, 2017). Even within a discipline, titles can be controversial. For example, many qualitative research papers use a short, pithy quotation from a single respondent in the title of the research article. Parkin and Kimergård (2021) object to this practice, arguing that it overemphasizes one small piece of data rather than capturing the depth and duration of data collection and multiple perspectives valued in rigorous qualitative research. Even though scholars may differ on their opinions about and preferences in titles, there are some generally accepted strategies that can be used to arrive at a title for a research project.

1. Briefly explain the topic, methods used, focus of/participants in the study, and major findings.
2. Make a list of keywords.
3. Craft a title around those keywords.
4. Remove any nonessential words and avoid repetition.

After expending so much effort to prepare a manuscript, it surely is worth it to craft an effective title. Try writing three or four different titles, ask colleagues to read them, and then explain what influenced their choices. Sometimes the best title is a combination of elements from different title possibilities.

5.5 Conclusion: Clarifying a Topic and Focus

Throughout decades of teaching writing for publication to doctoral students, the final assignment of the course was for students to imagine a book that they might edit or write in the future. Instead of requiring a full-blown book proposal, they were responsible for several building blocks. The first was market analysis. They searched for other books on the topic, created a compare/contrast table that analyzed key features of previously published works, and then described how their idea represented a stride forward. At times, they would discover that someone else had already written the book they presumed did not exist. Rather than giving up, I encouraged them to think about how they could pursue the same general topic, but with a different focus or perhaps a different audience. The second part of the assignment was addressing a need. Students were to consult the literature of leading organizations in the field and key research findings to identify current trends, issues, and controversies that demonstrated a need for the book. They were instructed to answer the time-honored question, "Why this book at this time for this audience?' The final part of the assignment was to present a one-minute explanation—a "commercial" if you will—about the book to the class. The idea was to rehearse proposing an idea for a book to an editor at a busy conference. Afterwards, we would say if we were convinced about the potential of the project and, if not, what might improve it. In a few instances, doctoral students were completing this course as an elective while they were writing dissertations. Their advisors and committee members in the English Department had encouraged them to make their dissertations more "book like" from the start, based on their superlative writing skills. I encouraged them to write an entire book proposal, shared examples of my book proposals that had been awarded contracts, and offered to review these proposals for them. A few of them were successful in securing contracts from university press publishers. Others collaborated with me on edited books within their areas of expertise and I served as co-editor to orient them to the process of assembling an anthology. Although writing or editing a book seemed out-of-reach at first, these experiences helped them to imagine future writing projects.

There is little question that academic authors need to acquire skill in identifying suitable topics, narrowing them sufficiently, and writing descriptive titles. Reliance on these abilities matters across the spectrum of experience ranging from aspiring author to prolific scholar. Given the ongoing explosion of scientific knowledge that includes billions of publications, authors' attention to topic and focus will influence whether the manuscript attracts the intended audience, engages them in reading, and finds its way into the reference list of subsequently published works.

Issue: Should Students Be Required to Submit Papers for Publication?

As a journal editor, I sometimes received a batch of papers written by students enrolled in the same section of a college course. Evidently, their instructor required them to submit their work for publication and was operating on the mistaken assumption that class papers were suitable as journal articles. These manuscripts were fraught with difficulties. Some common problems were ignoring the recommended length, making numerous grammatical and reference style errors, using copyrighted material without permission, and neglecting to provide an abstract with keywords and a cover letter. In some instances, the course number and professor's name were still on the cover sheet.

There were more substantive issues as well. The students tended to briefly review a few sources from the literature on a broad topic, so the papers lacked the clear focus of a journal article. Most of these course assignments relied on what one of my professors referred to as "stringing pearls"—many quotations from other sources with the writer's work serving as the lowly "string" that gathered them together. As a result, the students' work did not provide original content that might advance thinking on the topic. Not one paper of this type was accepted for publication. That outcome surely was disappointing to the students who had been misled by their instructors to think that having a manuscript accepted for publication was a matter of luck, like winning the lottery. I felt sympathy for students who were pushed into submitting their work. It was like throwing them into the deep end of the pool when their only prior experience was paddling around in the shallow end.

Fulton (2018), from the field of critical nursing care, argues that there is a useful distinction between *preparing* a manuscript for submission and *submitting* it for review because

> Preparing a manuscript is a teaching strategy involving the student and faculty. Submitting a manuscript engages a journal staff, editors, and peer reviewers. Before submitting to a journal, student manuscripts must receive faculty review and approval. Engaging journals in reviewing poorly prepared student manuscripts is involving editors and reviewers, without consent, into becoming part of a school's course requirements…Students need mentoring to understand author guidelines, learn the norms of authorship, and reply to reject or revise responses from the journal editor. (p. 57)

Scholars who have studied composition recommend that professors regard graduate students' manuscripts as "disciplinary becoming" (Curry, 2016) and part of a developmental trajectory (Tarabochia & Madden, 2019). The support individual students need at various stages in their writing differs considerably (Casanave, 2014; Simpson et al., 2016).

As doctoral students near program completion, they frequently are encouraged to publish (Guerin, 2016), often by collaborating with a more experienced mentor. There is some evidence that such success with scholarly writing early on is predictive of later productivity (Horta & Santos, 2016), perhaps because the experience helps to demystify the process, build confidence, and develop skills.

At the dissertation stage, doctoral programs may give candidates the option of publishing their work—usually three journal articles—rather than writing the traditional thesis or dissertation (Badley, 2009; O'Keeffe, 2019; Rahman & Jahan, 2020). Doctoral candidates who imagine their dissertation becoming their first book often are surprised to learn that this occurs very seldom. Dissertations are notoriously difficult to transform into articles and books (Harman, Montagnes, McMenemy & Bucci, 2003; Luey & Thatcher, 2007), due in part to the fact that they are a first effort to conduct independent research. For most of us, the dissertation study functions as a dress rehearsal. In fact, if you talk candidly with professors who went on to publish, it is unlikely that they will view their dissertations as their best work.

Even when a faculty mentor does work with a student on developing an assignment into a publishable piece, there are many aspects to consider. In Hall and Liva's (2021) focus group research with 54 graduate students, they described working with a mentor as a transformative experience that smoothed their paths and helped them to attain their aspirations. Of course, the nature of this relationship and how the contributions of each will be recognized has to be sorted out from the beginning. Mutual trust and respect are essential. It is not appropriate for a faculty member to claim first authorship for minor contributions, nor it is appropriate for the student to disregard the time the faculty member has invested. [For a detailed analysis of best practices in allocating credit, see Eggert, 2011].

Another issue is what happens next if the paper is rejected, despite the mentor's input. This leaves decisions about whether to pursue it further and what role each author will play. Premature attempts at publication waste editors' time, leave students feeling defeated, and call into question the faculty member's ability to successfully mentor a student.

Applications of Technology

- **Tech Tool**: University of Southern California Home|USC Libraries
- **Springer Nature Resource**: Titles, Abstracts, and Keywords. Check out the free video tutorials at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pj2Q7y_egS4
- **Online Video**: On the Craft of Writing Effectively with Larry McEnerney from The University of Chicago has been viewed over three million times. He argues against invariant rules and focuses on experts as writers. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtIzMaLkCaM

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6 Starting Small: Abstracts and Overviews

Mary Renck Jalongo

Contents

Abstract

Given the online presence of publications and contemporary search strategies, the quality of the abstract is crucial if readers are going to pause, read, and download the work. Contrary to the assumptions of many academic authors, writing abstracts and overviews is not a routine function. Rather, these short pieces of writing (often as few as 250 words) may be the authors' first and only chance to engage readers. A common mistake with abstracts is that authors sometimes resort to what is most familiar and attempt to review the literature. This defeats the purpose of the abstract because it does not provide a concise summary of the entire manuscript. Another misguided approach is to keep readers guessing about the findings and the implications rather than include this vital information that makes the contribution of the work clear. Sometimes, authors

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_6

assume that writing the abstract will be easy because it is a short piece of writing. They are shocked by the amount of time and number of revisions necessary to reduce a work to its very essence. In this chapter, we guide authors in ways to craft abstracts and overviews that will encourage the intended audience to read on.

Keywords

Abstracts • Overviews • Keywords • Indexing • Structured abstracts

Narratives

Novice

*The editor/co-author of a book in the Criminal Justice field happens upon a dissertation abstract that piques her interest. In it, the student states that she interviewed and surveyed 37 prison inmates who learned to be professional dog trainers. Through this program, service dogs were prepared to assist people with disabilities. The editor/author is favorably impressed by the 2016 thesis that is posted on Proquest and contacts the doctoral program graduate, Carmaleta Aufderheide. The experienced writer invites her to collaborate and together they produce a chapter for a book on dog training programs in correctional facilities (*Jalongo, 2019a*).*

Proquest is used by most graduate schools in the United States to index theses and dissertations. What attributes of the abstract would influence a reader to request a copy of the entire document or, as in this case, suggest a collaborative writing project?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

An international research team consisting of 10 authors from different countries has invested a year of study into studying the characteristics of effective support services for children with special needs in rural areas—such as the provision of food, vaccinations, social services, and interventions for children. When the corresponding author—the first author's doctoral student and graduate assistant—is tasked with writing the abstract, she experiences a sense of panic. She is reluctant to admit that she does not know how to do this and worries that the abstract she produces will not earn the approval of the team members. The graduate assistant's initial attempts far exceed the 300-word limit and cutting it down is frustrating. She is surprised that she has spent almost as much time on this short piece of writing as she has on some important class assignments, but it still is not ready–and the deadline is approaching. Finally, she decides to tell her supervisor that she is struggling. He apologizes, saying that he "should have provided more direction". The student later says, "We met together to go over what I had written so far. He was able to cross out *nonessential words and phrases and improve the organization, plus get it whittled down to the word limit. It was amazing, really".*

Have you had any prior experience with writing abstracts? What have you noticed about the characteristics of effective abstracts while reviewing the published literature in your field?

Prolific
Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, a faculty member contacts her former dissertation advisor who is a book series editor. She proposes a book about the effects of the crisis on education. At first, the editor wonders if they know enough about the consequences, but as they begin to conceptualize the project, an international lockdown occurs and publications on the topic begin to emerge almost daily. They produce a Call for Papers and invite researchers to submit abstracts. Over 125 abstracts come in, but not all of them adhere to the guidelines. The co-editors requested a 500-word abstract with 5–7 keywords. They also supplied an example from a previously published book in the series. Those chapter abstracts will serve multiple purposes. First, they will be used to determine if the proposed chapter fits the editors' vision for the work. Second, they will become part of the book proposal when it goes out for peer review. Finally, they will be published with each chapter when the book is assembled and ready to go into print. Nevertheless, some authors ignore the guidelines and submit several pages of text or even entire manuscripts. After the or chapters are accepted, another issue with the abstracts surfaces. When the authors first proposed their chapters, many of them had not yet completed their research. Now that these projects are finished, the abstracts need to be revised to describe the findings, implications, and contributions of the research. Several authors have neglected to do this.

Why is it important to check each publisher's guidelines for abstracts before you begin to write one? What kinds of changes would be necessary for an abstract written prior to data collection/analysis and the one that is suitable after completing the study?

Activity: Using a Template to Write an Abstract for a Conference Proposal
Baker (2017) explains how to "pitch your idea" for presenting your research at a conference. Review the five steps and use them to draft an abstract for a dissertation, conference presentation, journal article, or book chapter.

Step 1: start with the current state of knowledge in the field

What do we think we know?

Step 2: move the narrative forward

What is wrong with what we think we know?
Luckily, someone's just done some research about that…

Step 3: offer a solution

Table 6.1 Structure for an abstract (Welllington & Torgerson, 2005)

Abstract	Sequence
One of the key professional concerns for staff working in higher and, to some extent, further education is to be involved in scholarly publishing. Within that concern, as a direct result of recent research assessment exercises, is the question of 'what counts as a high status journal'?	Current situation
The question is a vitally important one for lecturers and researchers who are striving to achieve highly in research ratings. Yet it has not been the subject of either wide debate or extensive empirical work	The gap in the existing knowledge
In an attempt to provoke discussion on this issue, this article reports and discusses a recent survey of professors in both the UK and USA which aimed to elicit their views on the criteria for eminence and high status and asked them to name journals that come into this category	The concept for the study
Although the responses show that there is some degree of consensus, large differences exist between the views of individual respondents. In addition, a large number of journals are named as being of 'high status'. Important differences between perceptions in the UK and USA are also highlighted	The results
The aim of the paper is to open up a debate on journals and their status in a way which might be valuable for personal and institutional development in the future	The nature of the contribution

What are we going to do about this?
Here's the strategy…

Step 4: response

What did you do to address the issue?
There was a problem; you Did The Thing; and now we're somewhere different than we were before.

Step 5: resolution

We got there—show the reader what you're contributing, in a way that resonates with what already matters to them because of what field they're in.

Table 6.1 is example of an abstract for a journal article "Writing for Publication: What Counts as a 'High Status, Eminent Academic Journal'?" (Wellington & Torgerson, 2005). It follows the same basic sequence:

Compare/contrast this strategy with what you have done previously when preparing an abstract. If it is for a manuscript that was rejected without review, revisit the abstract to determine how it may have failed to meet the editor's expectations for a well-written abstract.

Self-Assessment: The Concise Summary

The following example is an abstract for a literature review (Jalongo, 2019b).

It was submitted as a a chapter for an edited book titled *Story in Children's Lives: Contributions of the Narrative Mode to Early Childhood Development, Literacy, and Learning* (Kerry-Moran & Aerila, 2019). As you read it, note how it fits in with the theme for the book. In terms of structure, it begins more broadly and gradually moves toward the specific. Visualize this as an inverted triangle that establishes background and then quickly moves to the point of the chapter. The first sentence establishes the importance of the topic. The next two sentences address commonly held misconceptions. The abstract then moves into the thesis of the chapter and follows with a preview of the main headings of the chapter. It concludes with a statement that revisits the theme of the work.

Book Chapter Title

Personal Narratives: Young Children's Stories of Their Own Lives

Mary Renck Jalongo, Ph.D.

Abstract

The loss of memory due to traumatic brain injury or illness is widely regarded as a tragedy; therefore, the opposite process—namely, the construction of memory that commences in early childhood—merits careful study. Memory formation is much more than mental storage of experience over time. Memories are formed as the individual identifies significant life experiences and produces event-structured descriptions of these events, referred to as personal narratives. These remembered stories of one's own life are told and retold, interpreted, and reinterpreted, and become part of a life script. Participation in this process during early childhood contributes to the young child's narrative abilities as well as to an emerging sense of self in relationships with others. The thesis of this chapter is that research on personal narratives during the early years offers important insights that can serve to deepen and widen families' and educators' understanding of the very young. It begins with definitions of memory, autobiographical memory, and personal narrative that draw from disciplines as diverse as child development, neuroscience, medicine, and literacy. It then discusses key narrative abilities and a developmental sequence for personal narrative skills during the early years. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of four strands in the research literature and implications for early childhood educators. Collectively, these evidence-based recommendations result in practical strategies that can be used to optimize the young child's abilities in recalling, constructing, and sharing the stories of their lives.

Keywords memory; autobiographical memory; narrative; personal narrative; story

Now return to a paper that you have written, such as a conference proposal, class paper, journal article, or book chapter. If it had an abstract, did it provide a clear, concise summary of the entire work? If not, how could it be improved? If the abstract is for a research article, consult the Indeed Editorial Team's (2022) advice on abstracts at https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-an-abstract.

6.1 Introduction: What an Abstract Is—and Is Not

It is commonplace for undergraduates to focus on the length of a written assignment with questions such as "How many pages?" "How many references?" "Can you cite the same reference more than once?" Presumably, shorter is easier. Not so when it comes to writing an abstract. Distilling a work to its very essence is a major challenge. Furthermore, authors may have almost no experience in writing abstracts. As one faculty member commented to colleagues, "These kids can't write abstracts"—and the four of them then worked to remedy the situation (Burgoine et al., 2011). They found that, when students were provided with guidance and feedback, the quality of the students' abstracts improved considerably.

Why is writing the abstract difficult, particularly for less experienced academic authors? There are several explanations. First, it is a basic principle of psychology that, when we are stressed, we tend to revert to earlier forms of behavior and return to what is familiar—but not necessarily applicable—to the current situation. Freudian psychology used the term regression to describe this common response to stress (Psychology Today Staff, 2023). The same defense mechanism may pertain when writing abstracts. Watson (2022) explains, those inexperienced in writing an abstract sometimes treat it as a preview of coming attractions, like the notes on the book jacket of a best-selling novel or a movie trailer that entices you to pay per view. As a result, the authors hold back on sharing the whole story, thinking that they will "give away" too much. Besides, if readers want the details, these authors expect them to read the entire manuscript. Yet when scholars are reviewing the literature, they spend only a few seconds on the title and abstract before rendering a decision about whether to read on. One study reported that, when readers are scanning the literature trying to decide which papers to click on, they may invest only 100 milliseconds (Schaak, 2021). And, when a journal article arrives in the editorial offices, editors often decide to reject a manuscript based on the abstract alone (Craig, 2010).

The ERIC Institute of Education Sciences is a huge clearinghouse for disseminating scholarly work in the field of education. Table 6.2 summarizes their general advice to authors about abstracts (ERIC, undated).

Table 6.2 Guidance on writing abstracts

Definition
An abstract is a concise summary of a larger work, typically written in one paragraph of 150 to 500 words. Its purpose is to help readers quickly discern the purpose and content of the work. Material submitted to ERIC must include an abstract written in English. Accuracy, brevity, and clarity are the ABCs of writing a good abstract
Writing style
• Use a who, what, when, where, why, how, and "so what" approach to addressing the main elements in your abstract
• Use specific words, phrases, concepts, and keywords from your paper
• Use precise, clear, descriptive language, and write from an objective rather than evaluative point of view
• Write concisely, but in complete sentences
• Use plain language, do not use jargon, and do not use acronyms except for commonly used terms (then define the acronym the first time used)
• Write in the third person; do not use "I" or "we"
• Use verbs in the active voice

For further information, view their video at: "Tips and Best Practices for Writing ERIC Abstracts (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oU8iPDSCD_Q)"

6.2 Writing Abstracts and Overviews

Abstracts and overviews serve multiple purposes in an academic authors' writing projects, so it is well worth it to master writing them effectively. Each of the points below will help academic authors to avoid costly missteps when writing abstracts and overviews.

1. *Appreciate the importance of abstracts and overviews.* Think of abstracts and overviews as persuasive pieces of writing rather than a bland summary. Even when editors are screening the manuscripts that are submitted, they may decide not to send the manuscript out to peer reviewers, based on a poorly written title and abstract (Groves & Abbasi, 2004). Authors are sometimes surprised at this, but many editors receive numerous manuscripts every week, irrespective of weekends, holidays, and breaks. They cannot afford to invest time in work that is entirely unsuitable. For the most competitive journals, single-digit acceptance rates are common. This places editors in the position of identifying what is ready to publish rather than working with authors who have submitted flawed manuscripts. If a manuscript that you submitted was rejected without review, a poorly written title and abstract might be the culprit.
2. *Check the style manual and author guidelines before you begin.* The style manuals of American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), University of Chicago/Turabian, and others offer advice on writing abstracts and include examples. Refer to them prior to composing the abstract. Some publications require a structured abstract that meets their

specifications, so be certain to look at the abstracts that are published in the outlet before you submit your manuscript.

3. *Provide an abstract as requested*. Novices may mistakenly assume that someone else writes the abstract for them. Writing the abstract is the author's responsibility, not the publisher's or conference organizer's. If authors neglect to provide an abstract, the publisher may resort to using the first paragraph of the manuscript, which does not supply a concise summary of the work and does not set expectations for the work appropriately. When this happens, your publication may be skipped over by the intended audience.
4. *Write a summary.* The abstract describes the whole manuscript in miniature. Think about how you scan the literature and decide which articles to download and read. If there is nothing that piques your interest, or if important information is left out (such as the number of survey respondents), chances are you will just move on to find something better. Authors may wonder how they are supposed to write an abstract before the study is completed. If an investigation is at the proposal stage, such as a book chapter in an edited book, recap major trends in the research thus far and mention possible implications. Remember that, after the study is finished, the abstract you wrote originally will not do. You will have to go back and revise the abstract accordingly. The same thing frequently happens with other types of articles, such as those written for practitioners in the field. By the time you have written the entire piece, the focus may have shifted, or the main headings may have changed. Your abstract needs to be in complete alignment with the manuscript.
5. *Balance the sections of the abstract.* The Writing Center at George Mason University (2022) guidelines suggest allocating space in the abstract for a research article submitted to a professional journal as follows: 25% to the purpose and importance of the research (Introduction); 25% on what you did (Methods); 35% on what you found (Results), and 15% on the implications of the research (Discussion). Inexperienced authors typically do the exact opposite by allocating most of the text of the abstract to the introduction. Use the word count feature of your word processing program to allocate the word limit of your abstract along these lines; for example, you can allocate roughly 52 words of a 250-word abstract to the purpose/importance of the research, 52 words to the methods, 87 words to the results, and 34 words to the implications. If you begin by attempting to apportion your abstract this way rather than just generating a lot of words, it can make the process much more efficient.
6. *The abstract is a preview.* Instead of viewing abstracts as an annoying, last-minute task, think of them as a service provided to fellow scholars. The abstract functions as an "advance organizer"—it lets readers know what to expect so that they can make an informed decision about whether the material meets their needs. If it is a practical article written for professionals in the field, the structure should match the main headings of the manuscript. Many times, practical articles suggest an innovative approach. When introducing something that is relatively unfamiliar to the readers, it might begin with an authoritative definition compiled from leaders in the field, provide a

research-based rationale for making the recommended change, describe how to institute the new practices, and explain the consequences of modifying professional practice. When writing an abstract for a thesis or dissertation abstract, it would mirror the chapters. When reporting on original research, the abstract would include the main sections of the document.

7. *Craft the abstract carefully.* Sometimes, authors are in the midst of submitting a manuscript online and suddenly realize that an abstract is required. Rather than stopping the process and writing a high-quality abstract, they quickly compose it online. This is a mistake. Abstracts require the input and approval of everyone connected with the project. The abstract creates a lasting first impression of the work, so it is important to revise it multiple times.
8. *Avoid redundancy.* Authors sometimes attempt to save themselves time by lifting sentences verbatim from the article to compose the abstract. Most editors will balk at this. Readers who decide to look at the full article will think "Didn't the author(s) say this already?" Even if you are saying essentially the same thing, rewrite it for the purpose of the abstract rather than doing a cut-and-paste. Writing the abstract is a task that is distinct from the rest of the manuscript. Repeating the title in the abstract, cluttering it with citations that appear in the manuscript, or including footnotes generally is not recommended. Think of the abstract as a stand-alone synthesis.
9. *Reflect on the keywords.* Writing for *Nurse Author and Editor,* two editors with extensive experience conclude, "Effective keywords should convey the main topics in your manuscript and include words and phrases readers would use to search for this information in a bibliographic database. These keywords increase the discoverability of your article and will provide a better chance of others finding it in a search. Carefully selected keywords will also help to ensure accurate indexing of the publication" (Oermann & Murphy, 2018, p. 6). Different fields have a thesaurus of indexing terms that authors can consult if they need help with keywords, such as the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) in the health sciences. To get started with generating keywords, look at the title of your manuscript and the headings. Brainstorm a list of words that scholars would use while conducting an online search—words that would lead them to your work. Acronyms, abbreviations, obscure words, terminology invented by the author, and/or strings of words probably will not be useful. At the opposite end of the spectrum, very general terminology (e.g., research) is too broad to bring readers to your work. Think of keywords as ways to connect with fellow researchers (Hartley & Kostoff, 2003).
10. *Locate exemplary abstracts.* Study the abstracts of top downloaded articles or well-attended conference sessions. Rather than reading them based on *content* (as you normally would when choosing a conference session or searching for articles on a topic of interest) look at the *format*. What is the underlying structure for the abstract? Can you replicate this in your abstract?
11. *Listen to the abstract*. Read it aloud or use the read aloud function of a word processing program to make sure that the writing flows. If a sentence has too much information packed into it, break it into two sentences. Sometimes,

making a list will save on verbiage, for example, this sentence about data collection: "To strengthen the validity of the study, three qualitative research strategies were used: (1) three one-hour focus group interviews, (2) coding of each participant's essay by three researchers, and (3) four videotaped naturalistic observations of each participant at work in the facility".

12. *Double-check the details.* You do not want to spend considerable time writing an abstract and then find out that the outlet requires a structured abstract. That would necessitate a complete rewrite. Some publishers will accept longer abstracts of about 500 words, so struggling to get the abstract to 250 words is a wasted effort. If a manuscript was rejected by another outlet, do not simply resubmit it without consulting the new outlet's policies. This sometimes makes it obvious to editors that the work is being "recycled" rather than prepared specifically for the publication that they represent. When authors neglect to adhere to the publisher's requirements, it is like entering a contest and ignoring the rules. You could get disqualified on a technicality.
13. *Invite critique.* Particularly if you are inexperienced in writing abstracts, ask others to read them for you and identify anything that is confusing or wordy. As the ERIC guidelines indicate, the "ABCs" of abstracts are accuracy, clarity, and brevity. Another area in which many abstracts fall short is in describing the implications. Novices sometimes err at one of two extremes—they are either exceedingly humble and reluctant to identify the contributions of their work or, conversely, they engage in self-promotion and overstate the impact of one study on the field. A realistic appraisal of what the work has accomplished is sufficient.

As this discussion suggests, writing abstracts—while important—can go wrong in so many ways. Table 6.3 summarizes the most common mistakes that academic authors make when writing abstracts.

In a study conducted in Argentina, Mirallas (2021) compared students' first attempts at writing abstracts for scientific research articles with the ones that they composed after direct teaching on how to write research abstracts. The second effort was a significant improvement. Zuckerman (2021), for example, suggests structuring an abstract for a research article using the seven dimensions in Fig. 6.1.

6.3 Abstracts for Various Academic Writing Tasks

A Swiss army knife is ingenious because it combines many tools into one, compact, portable item. Most Swiss army knives include helpful tools such as a screwdriver, pliers, saw, can opener, compass, light, pen, and wire cutter. Abstracts in academic writing are small, multipurpose tools as well. In this section, we describe how abstracts are used in conference proposals, journal articles, grant proposals, dissertations, book chapters, and applications for various types of awards.

Table 6.3 Common errors in abstracts: a journal editor's perspective

Based on over thirty years of editing articles and edited books that require an abstract, here are the most common mistakes
1. *Attempting to review the literature.* It is important to get to the point quickly. Abstracts typically do not include citations of others' work unless something is foundational to the study. So, if a researcher is testing a theory, there might be one citation for the origin of that theory. Generally speaking, multiple citations are inappropriate
2. *Taking supposed short cuts.* Authors often try to cut-and-paste from the manuscript to cobble together an abstract. An abstract is a succinct synopsis written specifically for that purpose
3. *Producing long, dense sentences.* To meet the word limit, authors sometimes put as much as they can into a single sentence, making it difficult to understand and hard to read
4. *Failing to identify the outcome of the research.* Some researchers do not state the findings, evidently thinking that this information is reserved for those who read the entire work. However, just the reverse applies: readers need this information to decide whether to read on
5. *Making overly general statements.* Scholarly writing needs to be precise. Suppose that a researcher is studying the decision-making processes of professionals who exit their chosen field within the first year of employment. It would be important to state that the findings pertain to this group of participants rather than suggesting that they apply to everyone exiting the field
6. *Neglecting to proofread carefully.* Abstracts frequently are written in haste and not as thoroughly edited as the manuscript itself. Yet the abstract reflects authors' attention to detail and scholars are expected to find their own mistakes. Errors in the abstract call into question the author's ability to revise and resubmit and could result in a "reject without review" decision from the editor
7. *Overlooking the importance of revising the abstract*. As a manuscript is developed, things can change. Revisit the abstract to make sure it matches the final manuscript
8. *Using jargon excessively*. Presumably, some of the readers will stop if the terminology is confusing or if acronyms and abbreviations are used extensively
9. *Being inconsistent*. Everything—title, abstract, keywords, and manuscript—needs to be aligned. If it is not, readers will be confused and that is almost certain to result in poor reviews
10. *Wasting words and ignoring instructions*. Verbosity has no place or space in the abstract. It is much more difficult to write something clear and concise. Neglecting to follow the guidelines for authors will create a negative first impression

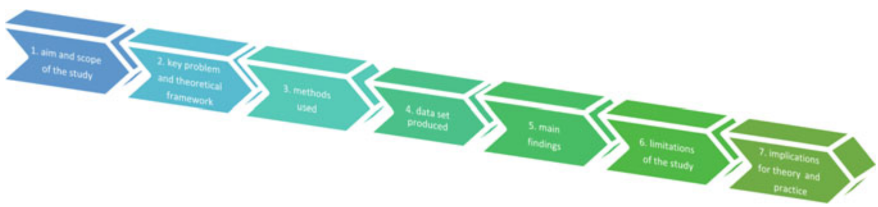

Fig. 6.1 Seven parts of a research article abstract

6.3.1 Conference Proposals

Conference abstracts are your presentation "in a nutshell". They matter both before and after the event occurs. Before the conference, proposals usually include an abstract that will be reviewed by the selection committee. Thus, the abstract could be a deciding factor in which submissions are accepted or rejected. As the conference program is being assembled, a well-written abstract will help the presentation to get properly indexed so that attendees can locate sessions of interest. During the conference, attendees of in-person and virtual conferences often base their decisions about participation by reading abstracts and marking their programs. In Table 6.4, graduate student Kate Kasparian takes a humorous look at the challenges associated with encapsulating work into a brief abstract.

Table 6.4 A humorous perspective on the difficulties of writing an abstract

Writing for McGill University's Grad Life blog, Kasparian (2013) describes her abstract writing process as follows:
(1) Write the PERFECT abstract! Feel satisfied and deeply excited about my research!
(2) Reluctantly check the word-count and discover that I am at least 200 words above the limit (which I initially pretended would not matter, "just as long as I get my ideas out first". So naïve)
(3) Cut, cut, cut. There is hope
(4) Re-read my no-longer-perfect-and-nowhere-near-CLEAR-abstract. Lose hope
(5) Add more words to add clarity
(6) Reluctantly check the word-count and discover that I am at least 198 words above the limit
(7) Cut different words (because I totally got attached to the ones I just added)
(8) Sigh several times in a one-minute span, worrying and/or annoying my officemates
(9) Consider beginning from scratch (Warning: this may unleash tears)
(10) Re-read again and again and again, pausing to weigh the essentialness of every single word (e.g., "do I **really** need 'the' here?") and to check whether quotation marks and commas count as separate words (They don't. Phew)
(11) Consider the possibility of hyphenating every third word or including all relevant information in the title instead of the body of the text
(12) Begin to feel pain in lower back and neck, followed by a jittery restlessness in the legs. Marvel at how many hours have elapsed since I started this process
(13) Decide to sacrifice clarify and go for brevity, cutting considerably, feeling brave and unstoppable (and utterly imprecise)
(14) Submit, breathe a sigh of relief, and continue to talk with omitted words and self-corrections for the next few days, as if this torturous editing process has completely messed up my language abilities

Note that somewhere between steps #6 and #12 is the time where my supervisor walks into my office and declares, with a teasing grin on his face, that he just submitted his abstract which he wrote without breaking a sweat and found that he needed even less than 200 words

Based on many years of reviewing abstracts for various conference venues and a textbook on making effective presentations (Jalongo & Machado, 2016), there are some key characteristics of effective conference abstracts (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 Effective conference abstracts

1. *Mesh with the conference theme*. Chances are that considerable thought and committee meetings were involved in choosing a focus for the conference. The selection committee will want assurances that your session fits in with their vision for the event. Incorporate keywords into your abstract—and perhaps the title—that complement the theme. What message do you want attendees to get that corresponds to the theme?
2. *Begin by determining your "take" on the subject*—identify an interesting focus/angle that can be adequately presented in the time and format allotted. Whether it is a poster session, a 15-min overview of your research as part of a panel, a round table discussion, a one-hour session, or an all-day training, each task requires a clear idea of your focus and purpose. Be sure you are familiar with the different formats, consult the guidelines for submission, and choose the one most appropriate for your work
3. *Do not attempt to "cover" everything*. Avoid overwhelming readers of the abstract with information. North Carolina State University, Department of History (2022) recommends, "Keep your audience in mind. How much background you give on a topic will depend on the conference…Your pitch should be suited to the specificity of the conference: the more specific the topic, the less broad background you need to give and vice versa" (unpaged)
4. *Be audience-centered*. How will your session contribute to the quality of the participants' conference experience? One national organization required presenters to write 3–4 benefit statements about their conference sessions because so many proposals were rejected for being too "presenter-centered". Going beyond merely updating knowledge encouraged presenters to become more audience-centered
5. *Identify major sections*. If it is a training/workshop, how will the time be allocated? Those headings in the proposal can become the structure for your abstract. If it is a presentation of research, you probably will want to discuss the rationale for the study (the problem or gap in the literature), share the research questions/objectives, highlight the participants/methods/instrumentation/analysis, describe the findings and how they fit in the previous research, limitations of the study, and the implications/contributions of the work
6. *Attract interest*. Many national conferences include poster sessions. The speaker literally designs a poster highlighting the work and conference attendees walk by, pause at the ones that interest them, pick up a one-page summary of the project or research, and perhaps converse with the presenters stationed next to their posters. Generate interest by sharing something that captivates your audience, such as a compelling statement from a participant during one of the interviews. For example, in one study of adults who were becoming literate, a participant said that learning to read "Really helps with the medicine bottles". This comment encourages others to consider the challenges that the participants were grappling with and piques the interest of those reviewing the posters on a tri-fold display
7. *Revise, revise, and revise again*. Begin writing your conference abstract early and revisit it multiple times. Take a bit of time away from it and reread to decide what is truly essential. Try listening to it read aloud, using that function in your word processing program. Ask someone else to read it and help with anything that is confusing or nonessential

For additional details on conference presentations, see Draper (2021)

6.3.2 Journal Articles

Abstracts of articles are the key to generating interest in your work and making sure that it is properly indexed. They are like a street address being entered into a car's global positioning system (GPS) because they direct others to where your work is located. Journals have rules governing how the abstracts are prepared—most commonly, a word limit. Some journals require a list of keywords to facilitate the indexing process. Well-written abstracts aid fellow researchers in locating your work when it is relevant to their own. One possible structure for an abstract for a research article is:

1. Context: briefly describe the background/problem
2. Purpose: discuss "the gap" in the literature
3. Methods: explain how the research was conducted
4. Findings: report on the key results of the study
5. Significance: say why it matters (ThesisLink, 2020)

Some publications require a structured abstract that is written to their specifications. For example, *The SA (South African) Journal of Industrial Technology,* requires an abstract that uses the following headings*:* (1) orientation; (2) research purpose; (3) motivation for the study; (4) research design, method, and approach; (5) main findings; and (6) practical/managerial implications. Table 6.6 is an example of a structured abstract for a study that investigated the number of dissertations that are published books (Johnson et al., 2017).

In the next section, we look at the role abstracts in the dissertation.

6.3.3 Dissertations

Although a dissertation committee may not require a student to write the abstract until the document is finished, it would be preferable to at least draft an abstract early during the planning process. Your abstract helps the dissertation committee to understand your research (San Francisco University of California, 2022). It can always be revised later as your thinking progresses and the study evolves. Over the years, I asked doctoral students to write "just one page" to get started and published a short article on that topic in the free e-mail newsletter, the All-But-Dissertation Survival Guide (2022). Many of their articles have endorsed small writing tasks to begin or get "unstuck" while writing the dissertation. Two major mistakes with dissertation abstracts are to (1) wait until you are exhausted from finishing the study and hurriedly compose an abstract or (2) neglect to revise the abstract after the study is finalized. Shoddy work with the abstract causes others to lose interest in your study and may result in fewer opportunities over the long term.

ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global (PQDT Global) is the leading repository for dissertations/theses and indexes the abstracts so that they appear when

Table 6.6 Sample research article abstract

Dissertation to Book? A Snapshot of Dissertations Published as Books in 2014 and 2015, Available in Open Access Institutional Repositories
INTRODUCTION Graduate students sometimes express consternation about whether the presence of their dissertation in an open access institutional repository (IR) will harm their chances of being able to publish the manuscript as a book. Several studies have addressed the question from different perspectives, but the avenue of examining what had actually been published had not been explored
METHODS This study examines books published in 2014 and 2015 that were listed as dissertations in one large book vendor database. A list of books was downloaded and searched in both ProQuest's Dissertations and Theses Global database and Google to identify a matching dissertation
RESULTS Only a small percentage of books published as dissertations were found in ProQuest and then subsequently in IRs. The number of libraries holding book titles with corresponding dissertations in IRs dropped between 2014 and 2015. The lists of publishers who published dissertations as books was very similar between 2014 and 2015 data and included large, commercial publishers
DISCUSSION Students should be aware that only a small percentage of the total number of dissertations produced in a year are subsequently published as books, that the time between dissertation and book publication is substantial, and that some subject areas are more likely to be published than others
CONCLUSION These findings provide nuance to the discussions of dissertations in open access repositories and a starting point to monitor trends in this area. They should also provide librarians who are providing supplementary guidance to graduate students with information about the publishing landscape
Keywords: open access, electronic theses and dissertations, institutional repositories, revised dissertations published as books

scholars are reviewing the literature. PQDT Global also includes award-winning theses and dissertations and examples of abstracts, so you can see many different ones that can help you when composing your own.

Their guidelines for a good dissertation research abstract are highlighted in Table 6.7.

For more on writing an abstract for a dissertation, including questions and answers, see (McCombes, 2021).

6.3.4 Grants and Other Awards

Abstracts are particularly important when applying for major grant awards. In a study of abstracts for 19,569 grant proposals submitted to the National Science Foundation, Markowitz (2019) analyzed the writing style and linked it to the amount of money received. He concluded that abstracts that were longer (yet still within the word limit), contained fewer common words, and were written with more verbal certainty received higher levels of financial support.

Table 6.7 Guidelines for dissertation abstracts from proquest dissertations and theses (PQDT) global (2023)

PQDT Global states that a dissertation abstract usually includes:
• The **context**—one sentence of background that synthesizes the situation • The **purpose** of the research –what "gap" in the literature does it address?
• The **methodology**—describe briefly how you conducted the study (setting, participants, data collection),
• The key research **findings**—what did the data analysis reveal?
• The **implications** of these findings—why is it significant, given the context/purpose?
John Nesbit (2008) from Simon Fraser University in Canada offers this advice about including your research questions in the abstract and how to frame the results section:
Clearly Specify Your Research Questions
• As in the thesis itself, your research questions are critical in ensuring that the abstract is coherent and logically structured. They form the skeleton to which other elements adhere
• They should be presented near the beginning of the abstract
• There is only room for one to three questions. If there are more than three major research questions in your thesis, you should consider restructuring them by reducing some to subsidiary status
Don't Forget the Results
• The most common error in abstracts is failure to present results
• The primary function of your thesis (and by extension your abstract) is not to tell readers what you did, it is to tell them what you discovered. Other information, such as the account of your research methods, is needed mainly to back the claims you make about your results
• Approximately the last half of the abstract should be dedicated to summarizing and interpreting your results. (Nesbit, 2008, unpaged)

In many major grant programs, there are two stages in deciding which projects are funded. First, a one-page overview or abstract for grant idea is reviewed and ranked, so the abstract/overview often creates a first impression. Then, based on those preliminary decisions, a smaller number of applicants are invited to submit a full proposal. As members of the selection committee review multiple applications, rate/rank them, and render their final decisions, they may return to the abstract to remind themselves about the proposed project. From this point of view, the abstract also creates a final impression. In learning, there is something that is referred to as the serial position effect (McLeod, 2008). Researchers have noted that, when presented with a list of words, learners are more likely to remember the first and last words rather than those in the middle. Grants writers are, in effect, educating the reviewers about their work so the abstract is particularly important if it is a first and last look at the project.

In a very helpful PowerPoint prepared by Kallestinova (2011) for the Yale University Graduate Writing Lab, she highlights four uses of the abstract when competing in a major grant awards program (see Table 6.8).

The grant project overview that was submitted originally is useful again when providing a progress report, preparing the final report for the funding source, and

Table 6.8 Uses for the abstracts and key questions to answer in grant proposals (Kallestinova, 2011)

How will the funding agency use the abstract?
1. The abstract *describes* the project and may be called an overview, project description, or brief summary
2. An effective grant abstract shows *the importance and relevance* of the research
3. Reviewers will rely on the abstract as *a guide to the full document*
4. In large grant funding programs, abstracts will *help to decide where to assign the application for review*
What are the four key questions the grant abstract has to answer?
(1) What do you intend to do?
(2) Why is this work important?
(3) What has already been done?
(4) How are you going to do the work?
There are many online resources that provide examples of successfully funded grant proposals, including details on writing the abstract:
• University Websites, such as University of Michigan https://orsp.umich.edu/research-proposals-abstract-or-summary
• Grants Program Websites, such as the National Institutes of Health
• Community Tool Box https://ctb.ku.edu/en/applying-for-grants
• Non-Profit Guides http://www.npguides.org/
• The blog Instrumentl https://www.instrumentl.com/blog/successful-grant-proposal-examples#toc-3

composing an executive summary to be shared with the general public and the media. Other kinds of projects, including sabbatical leave proposals, applications for scholarships or awards, and entries into competitions that recognize academic achievements also rely on abstracts or overviews.

6.3.5 Book Chapters and Books

At the book proposal stage, abstracts for the entire book and for each chapter often are required. The quality of those abstracts exerts a major influence on the decision to award a contract. After the book is published, authors need to write a brief description of the book that will be used for advertising purposes or perhaps appear on the back cover. The task is to describe and, at the same time, build interest in reading and/or purchasing the book.

The ability to write an abstract also applies to establishing the authors' credentials. Rather than submitting an entire curriculum vitae, many publishers require a one-page synopsis of the author's qualifications to undertake the book. These summaries should be specific rather than generic because both the representatives of the publishing company and the external reviewers of the proposal will use them to decide whether the author's (s') qualifications are sufficient to pursue the project. Later, whether a book is written by one author, co-authored, or a compilation in which each chapter has different authors, each contributor frequently is asked to write a brief biography that highlights their professional achievements and documents their expertise relevant to the subject matter of the book. Clearly, abstracts and overviews can be important pieces of writing across the career trajectory of teacher/scholars.

6.3.6 Plain Language Summaries

Yet another type of abstract is written in nontechnical language for the layperson. Referred to as the plain language summary (PLS), the purpose is to "translate" research findings for non-expert readers (Kaslow, 2015). One reason for doing this is that the study has implications for more general audiences—for example, a study in health and nutrition that examines the effects of diet on cholesterol levels. Another compelling reason to write plain language summaries is that the media sometimes summarize scientific results inaccurately (Maeseele, 2013). Those unfamiliar with the nuances of the research may latch on to just one facet of the work that obscures the underlying message. When the originators of the study write layperson abstracts of their own work, errors in interpretation can be addressed before results are widely distributed through the media. This places researchers in the role of public communicators and some have argued that students need to be taught how to write a PLS as part of their formal scientific training (Brownell et al., 2013; Peters, 2013). Another time when the PLS is useful is when writing the impact statement for a grant project. Here again, the purpose is to succinctly describe the contribution made by the work in terminology that is more readable and accessible to nonspecialists. The plain language summary may be particularly relevant to the social sciences, such as psychology, to guide decision-making (Stricker et al., 2020).

6.4 Conclusion: Key Points About Abstracts

To summarize, academic authors need to appreciate the following points about abstracts in Table 6.9.

As this chapter has described, well-crafted abstracts serve multiple purposes in academic writing. They may be small, but they are mighty in terms of influencing how manuscripts fare in the field. The abstract can affect whether conference proposals are accepted as presentations, journal manuscripts make it through the peer review process, applications for grants/awards are supported, dissertations attract positive attention, and chapters/books earn contracts. Due to the nature of scholars' online searches and retrieval—as well as indexing and various ways of calculating scholarly impact—the misconception that writing the abstract is perfunctory and a low-level task must be reconsidered.

Table 6.9 Key points about abstracts

• *Importance*. The abstract is the most read feature of a manuscript and may determine the fate of the submission. It often will be the basis for editors' screening of manuscripts and determine which ones get a desk rejection and which ones are sent on for peer review (Huckin, 2006; Ren & Li, 2011). After the peer reviewers receive a manuscript, it will once again influence decision-making about the manuscript because it is the first thing they will read. After a manuscript is published, the contents of the abstracts and the language in which they are written become a primary factor in retrieval enhancement (Fidel, 1986)
• *Purpose*. Abstracts are described as representations (Bazerman, 1984), distillations (Swales, 1990), crystallizations (Salager-Mayer, 1990), and "a self-contained microcosm of the dissertation" (Nasseri & Thompson, 2021). Their purpose is to "give the reader an exact and concise knowledge of the full article" (Bhatia, 1993, p. 78)
• *Word use*. It is estimated that readers need to know 6000 to 8000 words to process academic texts (Viera, 2022). Knowledge and size of vocabulary, particularly words that appear frequently in authentic scholarly materials, further facilitate the ability to write abstracts. A broader vocabulary also helps writers to avoid repeating words and do a better job of representing ideas
• *Density*. Because the abstract typically consists of about 4–6 sentences at most, words are "packed" into those sentences. This lexical density may pose an even greater challenge for nonnative speakers (Nasseri & Thompson, 2021). In the absence of any guidance, nonnative speakers' attempts at writing abstracts may not compare favorably with other abstracts that dissertation committee members and editors have encountered
• *Format*. To compose abstracts, authors first need to read many of them, paying attention to the underlying structure rather than just skimming them for content, as when searching online. This supports writers in making the correct lexical moves within the abstract, which contributes to the organization and flow of the writing (Bahtiar et al., 2020). Direct instruction in the genre of writing abstracts within specific disciplines is recommended (Wallwork, 2022), particularly for scholars writing in their nonnative language (Abdullah et al., 2021). A template that outlines each section of the abstract may be particularly helpful in generating a first draft (Supatranont, 2012)

Issue: The Influence of Indexing on Journal Article Visibility

A 2018 survey of 10,977 readers of scholarly publications arrived at the following conclusions (Gardner & Inger, 2018):

1. Abstracting and indexing data bases (A & Is) are the starting point in scholars' search for material.
2. Free academic search engines (such as Google Scholar, Microsoft Academic) are more important than general search engines (such as Google, Bing). Approximately 60% of the time, readers in high income countries in the academic sector use a free resource to access articles. Free resources are particularly important in lower income countries. Published scholar/authors with a verified email address can create their own page that is updated automatically. For strategies on making the most of Google Scholar, see https://guides.nyu.edu/c.php?g=276885&p=1848427.
3. Specialized free search engines—such as PubMed Central's repository of medical material—are key resources for scholars.

4. Academics consider the most useful journal website features to be: (1) links to related articles and (2) reference linking.
5. While social media is not a top means of searching for articles in any discipline, social media platforms—particularly Facebook, Twitter, Mendeley, and ResearchGate—have been growing in popularity in all subject areas since 2012.
6. A free academic search tool that is powered by artificial intelligence is Semantic Scholar. It searches the academic literature in much the same way as Google Scholar. You can limit the search in various ways (e.g., by publication date, by highly influential publications, using additional search terms). It also generates a citation in the major referencing styles for scientific papers that can be used when writers are making their reference list. Authors can create their own page from works indexed by the program. Learn more about it at: https://www.semanticscholar.org/product/tutorials.
7. Journals that have their abstracts indexed in multiple, widely respected databases are more highly regarded. Some prominent scholarly abstract indexing services include: Academic Search (EBSCO), Scopus, Web of Science, Ulrichsweb (https://knowledge.exlibrisgroup.com/Ulrich's/Knowledge_Articles/Ulrichsweb%3A_Publisher_Support_for_Ulrichsweb_and_Ulrich's_Periodicals_Directory), Directory of Open Access Journals (https://doaj.org/) (DOAJ). Some of these services have very stringent application processes. See https://blog.scholasticahq.com/post/index-types-for-academic-journal/ for additional information.

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: In this video from Bright Side, writing abstracts for different types of manuscripts is explained. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRYchBAdllk

Springer Nature Resource: Visit the Springer Author Tutorial, Writing a Journal Manuscript that includes a section on how to write the abstract.

Online Video: This video from Grammarly walks you through the structure of an abstract for a research paper. How to Write an Abstract in Five Minutes? A Practical Guide with Examples! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxixLYBtBH0

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7 Establishing Expertise: Writing Partnerships, Multiple Projects, and Online Presence

Crystal Machado

Contents

Abstract

A common question from doctoral students who are enrolled in writing for publication courses and struggling mightily to generate their first published work is, "Does it get easier with practice?" The good news is that the process does become more efficient. The bad news is that, because expectations for the quality of the writing increase, writing continues to be difficult. In this chapter, we coach authors in ways to establish their authority on one aspect of a particular topic by producing multiple works that are distinctly different yet grounded in the same basic body of literature. Often, this is accomplished by writing for a different audience. Given the online search tools used by most researchers, publishing more than one manuscript on a topic will cause the writer's name

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_7

to appear and reappear, thus highlighting the work done in this area. There are many online mechanisms for following and building writing partnerships with other author, including the "Follow articles by…" function of Google Scholar and research networks such as Mendeley, ResearchGate, or LinkedIn.

Keywords

Influential scholars • Databases • Impact factor • Social media • Digital footprint • Reputation management

Narratives

Novice

Upon her return to Bangladesh, a high school science teacher reached out to a professor she met in the USA for help in evaluating a grant-funded professional development project. Even though they had met only twice, the professor agreed to mentor her. Through this virtual collaboration, the teacher learned how to design an evaluation study related to the project, develop survey instruments, establish interview protocols, and collect/analyze different data with research software. While the learning curve was steep for this teacher she benefited in several ways. First, she gained research skills that were transferable to her doctoral study. Together, they later published a book chapter on using web tools to establish a co-mentoring relationship. Their partnership did not end there. Subsequent publications focused on inquiry-based learning projects and culturally responsive professional development. The professor nominated this teacher for a university award and a national award that generated a total of $17,500 in funds to support her collaborator's doctoral research. The professor nominated her advisee for participation in a fully funded networking opportunity—a think tank related to climate change—that also yielded a proposal.

This novice author's journey highlights the benefits of mutually beneficial professional relationships. Do you reach out to a more experienced author when you feel out of your depth with a project? If not, what steps could you take to find a more experienced coauthor and build an authentic scholarly partnership with them?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

Middle and high school students use social media with limited or no guidance from their teachers. An assistant professor decided that this could change if her preservice teachers had access to mobile devices for pedagogical exploration. Upon receiving a grant for $18,000 to support the purchase of 25 iPads and five backpacks she modified the curriculum to include activities that involved the use of technologies like Twitter, Facebook and VoiceThread for teaching and learning. She used the scholarly literature she curated to guide classroom practice and launch the first strand of

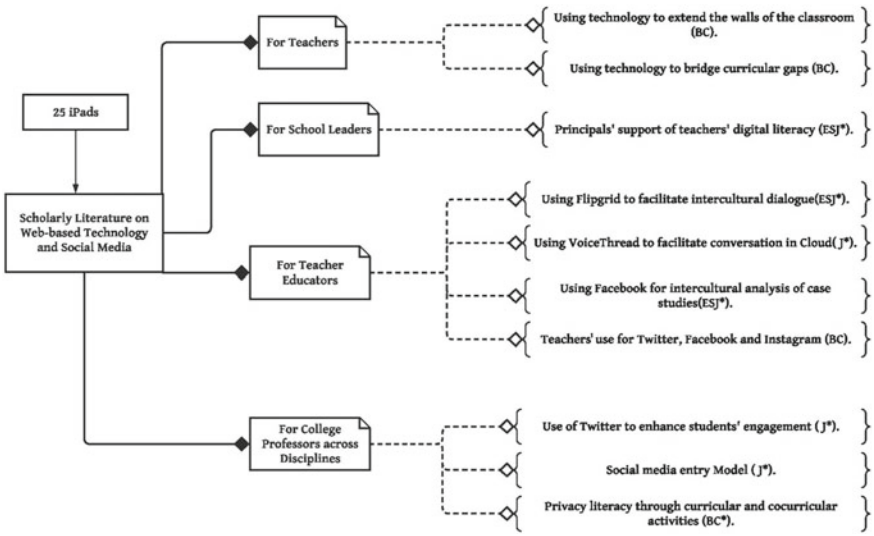


Fig. 7.1 Writing for different audiences

her research which included the two book chapters (BC) that described how technology can be used in the K-12 classroom (see Fig. 7.1). The second strand of her research targeted school leaders. Here she used "umbrella research" with 16 principals enrolled in a doctoral course in design and implementation of an empirical study that explored principals' digital, media, and global literacy. She presented preliminary findings at three international conferences, published an empirical study in a journal (ESJ) and later hosted a symposium at a conference. She expanded the scope of her work even further to develop a third strand of research that included additional writing partnerships with graduate students and faculty in other colleges at her university and other countries (see Fig. 7.1). The large mixed-method study resulted in several journal articles and book chapters for teacher educators, coauthored with faculty in Israel and graduate assistants from Egypt and Pakistan. The fourth strand include articles she co-authored for college faculty with her graduate assistants and faculty across disciplines (set Fig. 7.1).*

Does the body of your scholarship (grants, presentations, and publications) suggest that you are becoming an authority on a topic? In what ways can you use the literature you curate for one project to write papers in different genres for different audiences?

Prolific

A computer science professor with experience in cybersecurity partnered with three professors from other colleges (political science, composition/TESOL, and education) to design and develop a proposal for a major grant (200K+). The goal of their

Fig. 7.2 Partnering with other authors https://www.iup.edu/cybersecurity/grants/cae-c-expansion/index.html

project was to facilitate the development, retention, and expansion of a skillful cybersecurity workforce in a predominantly rural area. Figure 7.2 which was published at https://www.iup.edu/cybersecurity/grants/cae-c-expansion/index.html illustrates the diffferent writing projects that were part of a grant funded project (Farag et al. 2017). The principal investigator (PI) and Co-PIs authored a website, a summary of key findings, a survey, an interview protocol, surveys, a web portal, tutoring resources, instructional material, and multiple journal articles for their respective disciplines as well as interdisciplinary journals. In addition, the graduate assistants assigned to the faculty members were involved in ways that matched their strengths and interests. The success of this project aided the PI in securing three additional grants that were larger than the first.

What types of projects would you like to spearhead with scholars who have skill sets that complement your own? What can you do to get the conversation started?

Activity: Evaluating Your Scholarly Footprint

A growing number of authors are using Google Scholar, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to establish a scholarly presence on the web. This is a great way for authors to take charge of their scholarly reputation online. It is also an excellent way to identify and build writing partnerships with authors in different parts of the world.

Do you have a digital footprint as a scholar? What would people discover about your reputation as a scholar if they used your name to run a Google Search?

Use the items below to reflect on your digital footprint on the web. Give yourself a point for every item you check off.

1. I have a professional website that includes
   - ☐ my name and professional credentials.
   - ☐ my resume or curriculum vitae.
   - ☐ list of awards, publications, and presentations.
   - ☐ a list of courses I teach.
2. I have a Google Scholar account which includes
   - ☐ my affiliation.
   - ☐ a list of my publications.
   - ☐ my top five research interests.
   - ☐ citation metrics.
3. I use Google Scholar to
   - ☐ curate articles and save them in my library.
   - ☐ keep track of my citation metrics.
   - ☐ identify other authors at my institution who share my research interests.
   - ☐ identify other authors globally, who have similar or complementary research interests.
   - ☐ identify papers that have been cited extensively.
   - ☐ identify the authors who have contributed to a topic of interest over an extended period.
4. I have and use the following for professional purposes
   - ☐ my professional website
   - ☐ Facebook
   - ☐ Twitter
   - ☐ Instagram
   - ☐ LinkedIn
5. I find and follow professional organizations
   - ☐ via my professional website.
   - ☐ on Facebook.
   - ☐ on Twitter.
   - ☐ on Instagram.
   - ☐ on LinkedIn.
6. I share news about my conference presentations, publications, and grants on:
   - ☐ my professional website.
   - ☐ Facebook.
   - ☐ Twitter.
   - ☐ Instagram.
   - ☐ LinkedIn.
7. I share my expertise on the web by
   - ☐ posting videos of my conference presentations on YouTube and social media.
   - ☐ hosting webinars for students and scholars.

☐ responding to questions posted by graduate students in Facebook groups, Twitter or Instagram.
☐ responding to questions posted by professors in Facebook groups, Twitter, Instagram, or LinkedIn.
☐ using a video conferencing system to facilitate virtual writing retreats for other authors.
☐ hosting Instagram lives for authors.
☐ hosting Facebook lives for authors.
☐ facilitating Twitter Chats.

Which of the above-listed areas would you like to explore as you continue to enhance your expertise as an author?

7.1 Introduction: The Benefits and Caveats of Multitasking

Gaining expertise and establishing oneself as an authority on a given topic is a lifelong endeavor. Authors can become an authority on one aspect of a particular topic with multiple works that are distinctly different, yet grounded in the same basic body of literature. Should this goal be achieved by serial task processing or multitasking? Some authors may prefer serial task processing—completion of one task at a time. Others may choose to multitask either by task switching—rapidly alternating between two or more tasks or, by parallel processing, which involves simultaneous performance of multiple tasks at a time.

Diverse views exist in terms of multitasking. Some humans have the unique ability to switch from one task to another, without losing sight of goals (Philipp et al., 2008). Individuals who have high self-efficacy and believe in their capabilities to organize and execute behaviors necessary for success (Bandura, 1982) may choose to multitask. Scholars have observed that some people have a multitasking tendency or preference for conducting more than one activity simultaneously (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 1999). There is evidence to show that multitasking causes cognitive overload (Medeiros-Ward et al., 2015), interferes with task completion (van Dam, 2013) and leads to errors due to cognitive overload (Sanjram, 2013). Conversely, other studies show that some "super-taskers" are less receptive to the potentially adverse effects of a heavy cognitive load (Medeiros-Ward et al., 2015).

People's ability to multitask may vary across different variables. Using a survey approach with 1319 respondents, Carrier et al. (2009) noted variability in multitasking across generations. They found that there was "a statistically significant increase in the number of task combinations that are multitasked from Baby Boomers to the Net Generation" (p. 488). Philipp et al.'s (2008) laboratory studies revealed that switching between tasks comes at a cost. Carrier et al. (2009) reported that people often use their smartphones and similar devices to multitask. They went on to add that scholars have noted a relationship between multitasking and internet addiction. While these studies highlight some negative relationships they should be interpreted with caution because measures of multitasking could be biased; the responses could reflect respondents' perceptions of their multitasking experiences rather than their actual multitasking behaviors.

Early scholarship on multitasking, framed within the information processing theory, assumed that serial processing is more efficient than parallel processing. Fischer and Plessow (2015), who examined the theoretical considerations and empirical evidence regarding parallel versus serial task processing in multitasking, report that these two processes are not mutually exclusive. There is evidence to show that people engaged in parallel processing, by performing multiple tasks at a time, outperform people engaged in serial task processing. Either way, authors can use their unique way of information processing and different tools to widen the scope of their reading and readership.

7.2 Using Digital Tools to Widen the Scope of Your Reading

Authors generally run different types of keyword searches, using their library database, to identify content for a research project. While this approach may yield good results, authors are limited to the resources that universities can afford. Willinsky (2014) noted that "…the vast majority of research studies in education are accessible only to members of a subscribing research library or by direct purchase of the article from the publisher" (p. 579). Authors who work at Research 1 universities, with a large library budget, would gain access to a wide range of Q1 journals, including those with a high impact factor. Authors who work at master's level institutions, smaller liberal arts colleges, and/or community colleges may be limited to articles that are published in journals that are more affordable.

Authors can benifit from reading more widely and becoming conscious of citation politics. In her article, *The Politics of Citation* Kim (2020) describes how citations have become the heart of the academic enterprise. They go on to describe citation politics as:

> a politics that is most often submerged, obscured by the reproductive quality of citation, which compels individuals to reproduce a certain set of citations, a certain model of reference, in order to be allowed to pass through the gates of intellectual legitimacy and be recognized in turn as someone who is citable. (p. 5)

Antiracist and feminist scholars echo a similar sentiment. They describe how citation politics marginalizes women, people of color, and members of the LTBTQ community by erasing or leaving them out of scholarly discourse (Ahmed, 2013; Marston, 2017; Mott & Cockayne, 2017; Tuck et al., 2015). Scholars in the global-South, which includes the developing parts of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America (Machado & Nahar, 2021) are often erased, intentionally or unintentionally by scholars in the global-North. The global-North, which includes the United States, Canada, Western Europe in the north and Australia, and New

Zealand in the south, is characterized by political stability, the dominance of world trade, politics, wealth, technological advancement (Machado & Nahar, 2021), and academic publishing.

Authors can expand their reading and readership by adopting inclusive citation practices. This starts with considering the voices that they cite and those that they leave out, and the impact that this can have on "the cultivation of a rich and diverse discipline" (Mott & Cockayne, 2017, p. 2). By intentionally changing our reading habits to include those who are left out we can "accept the complexity of a field or aspire to reduce or expand it" (Reid, 2016, p. 423). Authors can make their work accessible to the widest possible audience by using resources available through their library (see Table 7.1). If they have access to the Web of Science and Scopus, they can use the advanced search option, to filter the search by "most cited" to identify influential authors in the field. They can also use a variety of library databases to identify meta-analyses and special issues on the topics to identify experts and journals in the field. They can identify and cite the work of outstanding scholars in other parts of the world, who may be excluded due to citation politics, by using open-source alternatives like Google Scholar and Connected Papers (see Table 7.1). These resources are valuable not just to authors in the global-North but also to authors in the global-South who may not have access to paid subscriptions through their libraries.

Authors can use Google Scholar to generate a list of articles written by topic or by scholars. The search yields the article in a variety of formats, if available. If they create a Google Profile, they can save these articles on the web in their Google Library and access them anywhere. They can locate the articles that are not freely available via Google from their institutional library, or through interlibrary loans. Connected Papers, which began as a weekend side project, can be used to create a visual map of papers that have highly overlapping citations and references. It draws on the Semantic Scholar Paper Corpus (licensed under OCD-BY). Authors can use it identify the seminal, recent, and widely cited papers on a visual map. They can access these papers through their library and/or interlibrary loan. After expanding their reading and readership authors can move closer to becoming an authority in the field by building mutually beneficial writing partnerships.

7.3 Building Mutually Beneficial Writing Partnerships

Literature on writing for publication confirms that people outside one's discipline can provide a fresh perspective, especially when it comes to checking the clarity of ideas. Scholarship from the same knowledge domains can become insular over time and hamper the emergence of novel solutions (Colquitt & George, 2011). Depending on the discipline, authors may increase the originality and impact of their work through cognitive and structural openness. Cognitive openness is the willingness to engage in multidisciplinary and structural openness is the willingness to participate in collaborative scholarship (Belkhouja & Yoon, 2018).

Table 7.1 Resources that can be used to identify influential authors

	Host	Cost	Description and Weblink
Library databases subscription			
Web of science	Clarivate analytics	Approx 65,000	Access high-profile journals and other scientific publications
InCites	Clarivate analytics		Use data from the Web of Science Core Collection to evaluate institutional productivity and benchmark your output against peers worldwide
Scopus	Elsevier		Access peer-reviewed literature, scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings. https://www.scopus.com/
SciVal	Elsevier		Use the data from Scopus to benchmark research performance at the group and university level. https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scival
Science business	Thomson Reuters		Connect with universities, companies, and research and policy organizations for networking, intelligence, and debates on research and innovation. https://sciencebusiness.net/
Ethnic NewsWatch	Proquest/Clarivate		Access the full text of more than 2.5 million articles from over 340 publications; newspapers, magazines, and journals of the ethnic and minority press. Articles comprehensively cover the often overlooked perspectives: African American/Caribbean/African, Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Pacific Islander, European/Eastern European, Hispanic, Jewish and Native People. https://about.proquest.com/en/products-services/ethnic_newswatch/
Open access/free			
Google scholar	Google	Free	Access scholarly journal articles, conference papers, technical reports, theses, pre-prints, post-prints, and other web-based publications
Directory of open access journals	Infrastructure services for open access (IS4OA)	Free	Access over 17,300 journals hosted in 131 countries, in 80 languages. These journals offer a means of open access and over 13,082 journals are without article processing charges. https://doaj.org/

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

	Host	Cost	Description and Weblink
Platinum open access journals	Emerald publishing	Free	Access and publish research in partnership with universities and associations at no charge. https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/publish-with-us/open-research-emerald/platinum-open-access-journals#grid
Connected papers	Created by Alex Tarnavsky, Eitan Eddie Somolyansky, and Itay Knaa Harpaz, Israel	Free	Draw on the articles in Semantic Scholar to create a visual graph of articles that are similar. Identify prior works and derivative works. https://www.connectedpapers.com/
arXiv	Cornell University	Free	Access more than 2,226,706 free, scholarly, non-peer-reviewed articles in the fields of physics, mathematics, computer science, quantitative biology, quantitative finance, statistics, electrical engineering, systems science, and economics. https://arxiv.org/
Dimensions	Digital science	Free	Check researchers' citations across multiple content types ranging from publications, grants, clinical trials, patents, datasets, and policy documents

Establishing writing partnerships with authors who have knowledge, passion, and skills related to a research project we plan to undertake can be difficult. Hansen describes this "needle-in-a-haystack problem" as a significant barrier to collaboration (p. 24). Sending unsolicited emails to experts can be intimidating. What other options do we have? Authors can establish writing partnerships locally by:

- Including graduate assistants on projects so that they can develop their research skills as they work on projects that will culminate in presentations and publications. Assisting with the review of literature will help graduate assistants write strong papers for their doctoral work. Recognizing them legitimate co-authors on projects will increase their job prospects.
- Asking dissertation chairs, who may be mid-career professionals or prolific authors, to co-author papers based on dissertation findings. The first paper a doctoral student publishes could be coauthored, with the chair as second author. Subsequently the novice author can publish the rest of their findings as single authored papers.
- Reanalyzing data or publicly available datasets with other scholars using a different framework.

Authors need to look beyond their library database and conferences to identify early and mid-career professionals at other institutions who are actively engaged in developing their research agenda. They can broaden their impact by establishing writing partnerships with authors interested in interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, collaborative scholarly work. They can meet these individuals at traditional and virtual conferences by:

- Attending paper, roundtable, and poster sessions of authors with similar research interests.
- Following them on social media, if they share this information during the session so that they can connect with presenters later to work on a mutually beneficial project.
- Joining and actively engaging with other scholars on the digital platforms established by the conference in the conference software, at the conference, on the web, or on social media.
- Attending networking sessions and social events at conferences to connect with other early and mid-career professionals who are actively engaged in developing their research agenda.
- Joining Work Groups that have been created to target local, national, and international problems and issues.
- Becoming a member of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that continue to work on projects long after a conference ends. If you share common interests, you can write papers or symposia.
- Emailing potential writing partners right after conferences to complement them on their scholarship and ask them if they would like to collaborate.
- Helping junior professors in the global-South, who may need mentors, to publish papers from their dissertations.

The three narratives at the beginning of this chapter illustrate how authors used a variety of approaches to expand the scope of their work through comentoring and writing partnerships with other professionals. Authors will be better able to establish and build mutually beneficial writing partnerships that can last for an extended period if they have insight about their personal work style and partners who will complement this style; this is discussed in the following section.

7.4 Analyzing Your Personal Work Style

Authors' approach to work dictates their behavior and attitudes towards tasks, problem solving, and interpersonal relationships both at home and in the workplace. Identifying and addressing biases or habits helps to increase productivity, manage time more effectively, lower stress levels, and improve self-focus. Knowledge of one's work style makes it easier to select coauthors with complementary work styles. Use Fig. 7.3 to reflect on your work style.

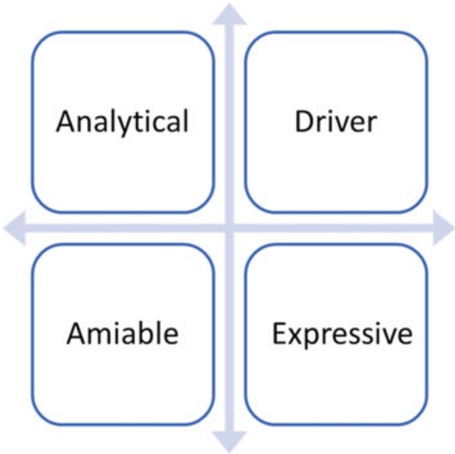


Fig. 7.3 Analyzing personal work style

While people may have elements of all the styles, one may be more dominant than others.

- What is your style?
- What should your coauthors know about your style to work effectively with you?
- Should you seek a coauthor with a similar and/or different style? Why?

7.5 Planning for Multiple Outcomes, from the Start

Planning multiple outcomes from the start is prudent. Authors can enhance their ability to engage in parallel processing by using Table 7.2 to plan multiple outcomes for different audiences early in the process. Once they identify 2–3 different audiences, they can curate suitable scholarly literature for each audience simultaneously. This step is important because it will help them gain familiarity with the scope, audience, and style of different journals. Rejection is a huge part of the peer review process. With this approach, authors can quickly decide if they want to make changes that reviewers recommend. If not, they submit their work to the second or third journal on the list.

Irrespective of where they are in their careers, authors should pay close attention to the acceptance rate and type of review of an article. The acceptance rate is the percentage of articles that were accepted for publication out of the total number that was submitted. Journals with lower acceptance rates are generally considered to be more prestigious and meritorious. Journals with a double-blind peer review process are regarded as more prestigious than those that offer an editorial review only. To build their confidence, novice authors could begin by submitting their work to a journal that offers an editorial review with a high acceptance

Table 7.2 Planning for multiple publication outcomes

Topic								
Audience	Journal name and link to manuscript guidelines	Scope of journal	Acceptance rate/access (subscription or OA: Gold, Platinum, Green)	Type of review (editorial, blind, doubl-blind)	Impact factor/ SJR or H Index/ Quartile	Style	Time to review	Editor's name and email address
Audience 1								
Journal A								
Journal B								
Journal C								
Audience 2								
Journal A								
Journal B								
Journal C								
Audience 3								
Journal A								
Journal B								
Journal C								

rate. As they gain more confidence in their ability to write, they can start submitting their work to peer-reviewed journals with a low acceptance rate. Prolific writers can target double-blind peer-reviewed journals with a five percent or less acceptance rate.

Authors also need to consider the cost involved in getting their work published. They typically have four options, in terms of direct cost to themselves. If they choose a conventional subscription which is often behind a paywall, with no cost to themselves, their work will only be read by people who have access to that journal if their library subscribes to it. If they pick a Green Open Access (OA) journal, it would be free to publish in that journal and their readers would gain access to a free reading of pre-prints. The author would have to invest more time in making these preprints available by joining a site like ResearchGate or mailing it to people who request copies. Also, readers would not have access to the changes authors made to the final draft. Authors who pay for Gold OA must pay a fee that provides readers with free access to the typeset article. For authors on a budget, Platinum OA journals are the best option because they provide readers with access to the typeset article. If these journals do not list their impact factor, Scimago Journal Rank (SJR), or Quartile it is difficult to ascertain if the journal is well respected in the field.

Prolific authors who may already be familiar with the names of prestigious journals can use publishers' websites to locate the information for columns 2–8. Identifying 2–3 journals for each audience will take novice authors more time, especially if they are new to the field. Novice authors who may not be familiar with reputable journals can use the resources listed in Table 7.3 for citation analysis—an approach researchers use to evaluate the prestige of a journal. These resources will help identify the top journals in the field as well as the predatory publishers that give open-access journals a bad reputation. Cabell, a subscription service, provides all the information needed to complete Table 7.2. Cabell's Classification Index (CCI) is a measure of how much influence a journal has in different fields of study. Scimago, a free alternative, provides a Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) indicator, which is a measure of a journal's impact, influence, or prestige. It expresses the average number of weighted citations received in the selected year by the documents published in the journal in the last three consecutive years. Scimago does not provide the Journal Impact Factor (JIF); instead, it provides Quartiles; this is very helpful in determining if and for how long a journal has been designated as a Q1 (top 1–25%), Q2 (top 26–50%), Q3 (top 51–75%), or Q4 (top 76–100%) journal, across different disciplines. Authors who enjoy using digital tools will find Majit's (2021) blog *Useful Journal Finder Tools for Publishing your Research* very helpful.

Novice and early career authors are often eager to get their work published; they may not invest the time to create a table with multiple publication options, like Table 7.2, only to discover many years later that their article was published in a predatory journal. They can save themselves a great deal of time and anguish by using the resources in Table 7.3 to identify and eliminate predatory publishers who exploit authors by charging article processing charges (APCs) with "only a precursory (or no) check for quality" (Mills, 2021, cited in Pearce, 2022, p. 209).

7.6 Use of Digital Collaborative Tools for Asynchronous Coauthorship

Working on multiple projects simultaneously requires a high level of organization. This becomes even more necessary if writing partners are in a different part of the state or a different country. Instead of creating a database with 30–40 articles, authors may curate as many as 80–150 articles that would be used to design 1–2

Table 7.3 Resources that can be used to evaluate the prestige of journals

Database/Site	Cost	Description and website
Cabell's journalytics	Subscription service	Provides scholarly analytics of 11,000+ journals. This includes type of review, time to review, publication style, manuscript guidelines, editors' contact information. https://www2.cabells.com/
Scimago	Free	Draws on citation data from over 34,100 titles from more than 5,000 international publishers and country performance metrics from 239 countries worldwide. The indicators can be used to rank Open Access Journals, SciELO Journals and WoS Journals by subject area, subject categories and region/country. https://www.scimagojr.com/
Cabell's predatory reports	Subscription service	Identifies exploitative operations based on 60 behavioral indicators. https://www2.cabells.com/about-predatory
Beall's predatory journals of publishers	Subscription service	Created by a librarian Jeffrey Beall (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeffrey_Beall), this list includes potential predatory publishers. https://beallslist.net/

studies and 5–6 book chapters or journal articles. Instead of using a more conventional approach that includes a folder with subfolders for different subtopics on their hard drive. Authors can use licensed software like Mendeley or free open-source alternatives like Zotero, Qiqqa, JabRef, BibSonymy, MyBib, KBibTeX, ZoteroBib, BibDesk, Citation Generator, Scientilla, etc. on the web or integrate the software into the text editor they use on their computers.

The benefits of using reference and bibliographic software are numerous. Software like Zotero automatically senses research when authors browse databases like JSTOR, preprint repositories like arXiv.org, articles on the web, and books in online libraries. Authors can add these resources to electronic databases to store scholarly literature into collections, categories, and subcategories (see Fig. 7.4). They can also tag these collections with keywords for quick retrieval. They can also create saved searches that will automatically identify relevant material as they browse the web. Another great benefit is the ability to share the electronic database, or sections of it, with individuals and groups. Authors can give individuals and group members permission to annotate these articles and share notes. Zotero supports over 10,000 citation styles. Authors can save a considerable amount of time, during the manuscript development stage, by using reference and bibliographic software, directly inside any of the following text editors: Word, LibreOffice, and Google Docs.

Authors now have access to many other collaborative digital tools that can enhance their ability to work collaboratively with authors on multiple projects that are related or different. For example, they can use digital tools like Asana and Microsoft Teams to track projects and collaborate with teams. During the data analysis stage, they can use software like NVivo's collaborative cloud to analyze

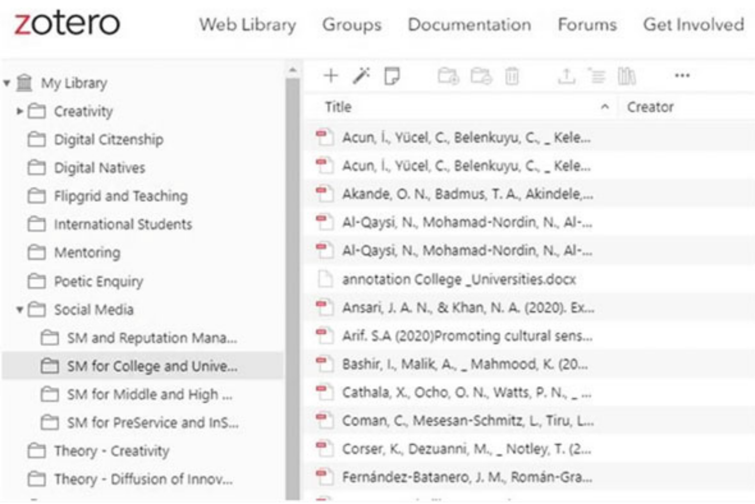


Fig. 7.4 Illustrative example of software for organization of scholarly literature

data. During the manuscript development phase, they can use freely available digital tools like Google Drive, Google Docs, and Google sites, and partially free tools like Canva to co-author and present papers.

7.7 Using the Web2.0 and Social Media to Establish Authority and Increase Readership

The U.S National Science Foundation began to evaluate principal investigators based on their research "products" as opposed to their "publications" in 2013 (Piwowar, 2013). NSF's evaluation can now include "datasets, software and other non-traditional products" (Piwowar, 2013, p. 159). This change in evaluation policy has given authors so much more latitude. Piwowar added that this change came at a time when 1 in 40 scholars were active on Twitter, more than 2 million researchers use Mendeley, an online–reference sharing tool, and more than 25,000 blog entries were indexed on the Research Blogging platform. The number of authors, publishers, and funding agencies that have begun to use web 2.0 technologies like blogs and wikis, and social media to craft their digital footprint, increase their visibility, and reach a wider audience has increased.

This trend has continued over the last decade. Zheng et al. (2018) report that the social media presence of scholarly journals lies between 7.1 and 14.2% across disciplines. Universities are encouraging academics to "expand their audiences, create networks, and learn to write in a more reader-friendly style" (Mewburn & Thompson, 2013, p. 1105). Darling et al. (2013) report that some journals are encouraging authors to create "so-called tweetable abstracts" to promote papers. Publishing with authors in different parts of the world will cause an author's name

Table 7.4 Repositories and social networking sites that support writing partnerships

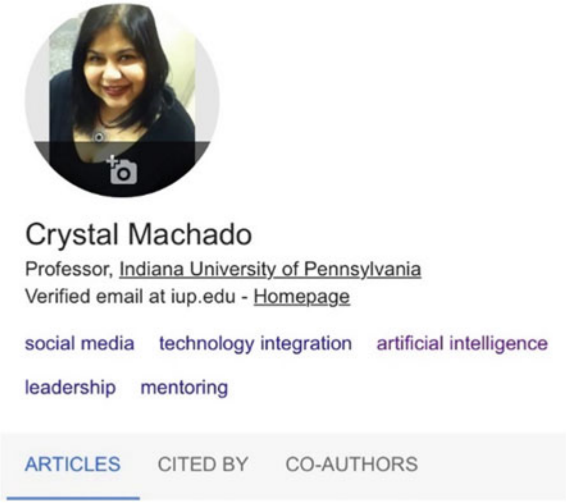
Repositories		
Google scholar	Free	Access full text and meta data of peer reviewed journal articles, books, conference papers, thesis, dissertations, preprints, abstracts and technical reports across a wide range of publishing formats and disciplines. https://scholar.google.com/
LinkedIn	Partially free	Access, connect and share resources with colleagues and potential writing partners who belong to this networking platform that includes 756 million professionals. https://www.linkedin.com/
Research gate	Partially free	Discover research, connect with a community of researchers, and keep track of citations. https://www.researchgate.net/
Academia.edu	Partially free	Access full text and citations of millions of articles. Download groups of related papers, detailed summaries, and search alerts to save time. https://www.academia.edu/
Social Media		
Facebook groups	Free	Access a wide range of discipline-specific Facebook groups for faculty and academics. Use Facebook groups to recruit study participants. https://www.facebook.com
Twitter	Free	Find, follow, and connect with authors without the reciprocity that is typically required and expected of "friends" on other platforms. Use the hashtags provided at conferences to connect with others at the conference. https://www.twitter.com
Instagram	Free	Find, follow, and connect with authors without the reciprocity that is typically required and expected of "friends" on other platforms. Post your flier to recruit study participants. https://www.instagram.com

to appear and reappear, thus highlighting the work done in this area. Authors can build writing partnerships by connecting with others who are leveraging technologies like Google Scholar, public repositories, blogs, wikis, and social media (see Table 7.4).

Google Scholar has gained popularity over the last few years. It has become an incredibly powerful tool that can support cognitive openness and structural openness. It takes less than five minutes for an author to create a Google Scholar profile (see Fig. 7.5). They can authorize Google to link their publications, which are freely available on the web, to their profile. Authors can use their Google profile to keep track of the citation metrics for each of their publications, their h-index and i10-index. They can also view the number of times they were cited by other scholars by year and view their coauthors' Google Scholar profiles. They can make their scholarship more accessible by including a link to their Google Scholar profile on their curriculum vitae and email signature.

After adding their affiliation to their Google Scholar profile, they can click their hyperlinked profile to identify other authors at their institution, along with lists of

Fig. 7.5 Illustrative example of a google scholar profile



each colleague's publications. This makes it so much easier to establish partnerships for local interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary projects. Authors may add five topics of interest to their Google Scholar profile. By clicking on each hyperlinked topic, they can access a list of authors, globally, who share that research interest. They can filter that list by citation metrics, and year of publication to identify authors who have contributed greatly to the topic over an extended period.

In addition to traditional metrics such as the JIF, which continues to be popular, authors have begun to use Altmetrics to assess public engagement with research outputs. Piwowar (2013) reports that altmetrics like Dryad and figshare (supported by Digital Science) track download statistics. Additionally, altmetric.com (supported by Digital Science) "reveals the impact of anything with a digital object identifier (DOI) or other standard identifiers. It can find mentions of a data set in blog posts, tweets, and mainstream media" (p. 159). She goes on to add that ImpactStory (http://impactstory.org) "tracks the impact of articles, data sets, software, blog posts, posters and lab websites by monitoring citations, blogs, tweets, download statistics and attributions in research articles, such as mentions within methods and acknowledgements" (p. 159). The changes in NSF evaluation policy (see Piwowar, 2013) provide authors with the freedom to establish themselves as an authority by disseminating ideas at different stages of the writing process using non-traditional options like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram live to supplement presentations at local, national, and regional conferences. The tweets (see Fig. 7.6) illustrate how an author shared a publication along with a YouTube clip. It was evident from the thread on Twitter that the article increased readership and benefited numerous people.

Authors can increase their visibility in the field, increase readership, and position themselves as experts and thought leaders in a variety of ways. They can make their work accessible to a wider audience by recording Facebook and Instagram

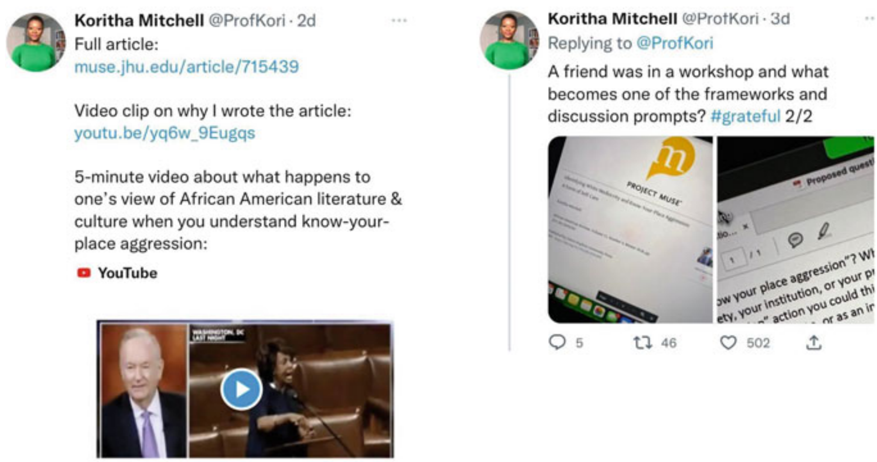


Fig. 7.6 Illustrative example of an authors' tweets related to a publication

live sessions and posting them on a YouTube Channel. The latter gives authors in other time zones and locations access to their ideas. Other professionals are more likely to book authors for a plenary session or a keynote if they have read their work or listened to their TedTalks. Authors can include links to these sessions in their curriculum vitae and share them on social media. Authors who may be uncomfortable using social media could create a professional blog or website that includes their name and contact information so that other authors can reach them. Mid-career and prolific authors can reach out to prestigious journals and offer to serve on their editorial board. They can also offer to serve as guest editors. Additionally, they can partner with the authors featured in Special Topics journals to write a book.

Authors who see the value of creating a scholarly digital footprint can use the guidelines in Table 7.5 to take charge of their online reputation. Once they have a social media account, they can use the social media icons on web pages to repost news items, with a couple of clicks to their Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram. If the social media icons are not available on a webpage, they can copy the link of that webpage, log into their social media account, and post the link on their wall or feed. This is an inexpensive and time efficient way to mentor novice authors and share ideas with mid-career, and prolific authors. The digital footprint that authors leave will make it easier for other authors to reach out to them for writing partnerships.

Table 7.5 Recommendations on how to create a scholarly digital footprint

Google scholar	• Create a Google Scholar profile at https://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/about.html • Edit your profile to include a good quality photograph, a verified email, institution name, and five research interests. Make your profile public so that it appears in Google Scholar when people search for your name • Either authorize Google Scholar to update the list of your articles automatically or update them manually • Click on each of the research interests you have selected to identify 2–3 authors who share your research interest • Click on each author you have picked to view their profile, identify articles that have been cited extensively by other authors, and follow them • Save the articles that you like to your Google library
LinkedIn	• Use your professional credentials to join LinkedIn and create a profile with a good quality photograph at http://www.linkedin.com/ • Include in your profile a good quality photograph, university name and location, and a concise summary of who you are, what you do, and what you have to offer • Contact and connect with colleagues and friends at your institution and other institutions who are LinkedIn users • If appropriate, connect with the publicly available connections of LinkedIn users you have added • If appropriate, engage in real-time conversations with users who have an active status (green dot besides their profile picture) • Like, create, post, and share engaging content • Use LinkedIn Groups to develop your professional network
Facebook	• Use your professional credentials to join or create a Facebook account with a good quality photograph at http://www.facebook.com/ • Use the Groups tab to join 5–10 Facebook groups that align with your research or teaching interests. This will give you access to a rich feed • Like, comment, post and share engaging content. This could include but is not limited to news items, conference presentations, new publications, grant opportunities, links to content you post on YouTube, etc. • Participate and host Facebook live video related to your research interests

(continued)

Table 7.5 (continued)

Twitter	• Use your professional credentials to join and create a Twitter account with a good quality photograph and succinct bio at http://www.twitter.com/ • Find and follow colleagues, authors and professional organizations who are active on Twitter • Use the Twitter ID that authors share at conferences to find and follow them • Use the hashtags provided at conferences to share links, pictures, and announcements about upcoming presentations • Use hashtags to participate in Twitter Chats organized by professional organizations
Instagram	• Use your professional credentials to join and create an Instagram account with a good quality photograph and a succinct bio at https://www.instagram.com/ • Find and follow colleagues, authors and professional organizations who are active on Instagram • Use the Instagram ID that authors share at conferences to find and follow them • Use your professional dashboard to access and discover professional tools and educational content curated by Instagram • Like, comment, post and share engaging content. This could include, but is not limited to, news items, conference presentations, new publications, grant opportunities, links to content you post on YouTube, etc. • Participate and host Instagram lives related to your research interests

7.8 Conclusion

Writing for publication can be an overwhelming endeavor, particularly at first. It continues to be difficult because there is so much to learn as the expectation for the quality of the writing increase. Over time, and with practice, authors become more proficient at multitasking. While tenure and promotion are important milestones that document authors' development as writers, it takes a lifetime to gain expertise and establish authority in the field. Even the most accomplished authors contend with the ever-present possibility of failure. They know that "present 'success' is evanescent: a solitary event. Without more, good, hard work, it guarantees no further successes in the future" (Hargreaves & Sugrue, 2016, p. 1). Therefore, authors at different stages of their careers need to keep abreast with new developments in the field, especially those brought on by technological advancement. They can increase their efficiency and productivity by gaining a working knowledge of the wide range of databases, and free and partially free repositories to identify and organize scholarly literature. In the digital age, authors are no longer limited by time, space, and geography. They can use resources like Google Scholar, LinkedIn, Research Gate, Academics, and social media to identify and build writing partnerships with like-minded authors interested in collaborating on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary projects. They can use digital tools like NVivo's collaborative cloud, video conferencing software, and Google suite to co-author papers for different audiences both synchronously and asynchronously. These collaborations can lead to multiple works that are distinctly different, yet grounded in the same basic body of literature. They can also author and lead high-impact projects that influence the lives of many. In short, publishing more than one manuscript on a topic, with different coauthors, will cause the authors' names to appear and reappear in online searches and increase their credibility and authority in the field.

Issue: Impact Factor or Generous Scholarship?

For decades authors have used Journal Impact Factors (JIF) as measures of prestige. This metric informs authors' choice, not just in terms of where to submit a research paper but also influences their evaluation of colleagues for jobs, writing partnerships, tenure, and promotion. At institutions where JIF is part of the explicit or hidden curriculum, authors invest considerable time and effort to get their work published in journals with a high JIF. The subscription fees of these journals are often astronomical. Price and Puddehatt (2017) call our attention to the "crisis of profiteering" in academic publishing:

> …for-profit corporations in charge of most academic publishing continued to develop monopolies and stretch library budgets by steadily increasing subscription fees. This state of affairs in academic publishing has been defined as the "serials crisis", referencing the hyper-inflationary practices of for-profit peer-reviewed journals which, from the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s, rose more than 2.5 times faster than inflation. (p. 102)

There is a growing awareness that JIF can negatively impact the lives of academics at many smaller universities and/or universities in the global-South. Authors with limited financial resources, especially those in the global-South, might feel forced to choose outlets with a low article processing charge and impact factor to publish for tenure and promotion purposes. Based on your experience as a novice, early-career author, or prolific author, what are some of the factors that influence your choice of a journal both for reading, as well as publishing? Do you lean towards a journal with a high impact factor and/or one that has been designated as a Q1 journal? Do you pick journals that can only be accessed with a subscription or open access journals?

Over the last decade editors and authors have been challenging academic publishing norms by drawing attention to the inequities they perpetuate (Russell, 2016; Willinsky, 2014). They argue that research should be available to everyone who wants to see it, not just to authors who work at universities that have huge library budgets. These editors and authors have been urging their counterparts to support the principle of OA and widen the audience for academic journals. This can be accomplished by removing access barriers for authors and readers, encouraging authors to cite articles that are published in OA journals and independent journals, and citing authors who have been erased, intentionally and unintentionally. In her Farewell editorial, journal editor Connie Russell (2017) explained that the Canadian Journal of Environmental Education (CJEE) attempts to keep subscription rates low for individuals and institutions that want hard copies and make back issues freely available on their websites after a one-year embargo. This enabled CJEE to have a small revenue stream to help recover some of its costs (2017). She reported that the new editors of CJEE agreed to remove the one-year embargo so that readers could have access to published articles immediately. In a recent study, Pearce (2022) reported that "there are now 350 platinum OA journals with an impact factor over a wide variety of academic disciplines, giving academics options for OA with no APCs" (p. 208).

In her book *Writing your Academic Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success* Wendy Belcher (2019) challenges authors to meet the bar of the Gray's Test. This test, stipulates that authors should:

> …not only cite the scholarship of at least two women and two nonwhite authors but also mention it meaningfully in the body of the text. … If your article fails this bare-minimum test, it's biased and should be improved. If you can't find such scholars to cite, it's time for you to do something about the pipeline of scholars entering your field. (p. 184)

Systemic change begins with individual action. Authors need to reflect on their body of work, the effects of citation politics and the benefits of generous scholarship. They can then decide what legacy they wish to leave behind, and act accordingly.

Applications of Technology

- Tech Tool: Journal Article Name Estimator (JANE) compares the abstract you insert into the textbox online to millions of documents in *PubMed* to find the best matching journals, authors, or articles. https://jane.biosemantics.org/
- Springer Nature Resource: Open Access offers researchers, institutions, and their funders open access options for journals, books and sharing research data to advance the pace and quality of communication, collaboration, and discovery https://www.springernature.com/gp/open-research/about
- Online Video: In "7 Strategies to Get More Academic Publications" by Dr. Phoenix Singh, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIRWsaUwXv0

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8 Promoting Ethical Practices: Stakeholders and Publishers

Mary Renck Jalongo and Olivia N. Saracho

Contents

Abstract

Scholarly publishing is complex and fulfils its mission of advancing scientific knowledge only if the primary stakeholders adhere to ethical principles. Scholars need to recognize forms of academic misconduct, adhere to the standards of their profession, and respond with integrity to ethical quandaries. High-quality scholarship is promoted when editors, editorial board members, and peer reviewers perform their roles competently and responsibly. Although peer review is not without its flaws, critique of faculty members' work products by a panel of experts continues to be the most defensible route to assessing a manuscript's accuracy, validity, originality, and quality of presentation. The contemporary publication landscape is marred by unscrupulous groups posing

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_8

as scholarly publishers when they are not. These enterprises are interested in exploiting scholars and making a profit rather than contributing to scientific communication. As a result, academic authors need to be especially careful about investigating publication outlets prior to submitting their work. Learning how to make a successful match between a manuscript and a publication outlet is an important skill set for scholarly writers because failure to do so is a leading cause of rejection. When authors invest time in finding the right "home" for their scholarly work, it is far more likely to earn acceptance, reach the intended audience, and be respectfully cited by fellow scholars.

Keywords

Academic publishing • Publishing outlets • Scholarly publication • Peer review • Journal impact factor • Acceptance rate • Predatory publishers • Vanity press

Three Narratives

Novice

An assistant professor is concerned that his list of publications will be inadequate to earn promotion with his employer, a leading research university. Advancement to associate professor would increase the faculty member's annual income. Faltering this year will mean at least another year at the lowest rate of pay. The most highly respected journals in his field use an anonymous, rigorous peer review processes. Time is short and the review process is notoriously slow—sometimes taking six months or longer—before the first round of reviews is completed. As he thinks about his wife and their new infant at home, this early career faculty member decides to hasten the process and submit the identical research manuscript to multiple journals on the same day. He plans to withdraw the manuscript from the other outlets as soon as he gets an acceptance letter from one of them. However, each professional journal requires authors to attest that the work is not under consideration by any other publisher. Thus, it is fraudulent to sign those documents with multiple publishers. What the author does not realize is that the same person serves as a peer reviewer for two of the publications. Because the topic is specialized and the peer reviewer's expertise in this area is exceptional, two different editors invite him to review it, unaware of the author's deception. The reviewer immediately recognizes the manuscript and writes a letter to both editors. The manuscript is rejected without review and the author is notified that both editors are aware of the misconduct. The incident damages the early career faculty member's professional reputation in the institution and the field.

When assessing the egregiousness of an error, intentions matter. This could not be categorized as an honest mistake because the journals' policies were made clear, even if the author did not agree with them. Does this requirement to submit a manuscript to one journal at a time surprise you?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

Four doctoral candidates submit a proposal to present a panel discussion at an instructional technology conference. At first, they are nervous when they realize that one of the most well-known researchers in their field is a member of the audience. He is also the editor/author of one of their textbooks. After the session is over, the researcher compliments them on their synthesis of the literature. The students identified five strands in the research, supported by seminal studies as well as the most up-to-date research. They had prepared a two-page table summarizing their work and distributed it to the attendees. The prominent researcher edits a book series for a respected publisher and asks if they might consider contributing a chapter to a forthcoming anthology. He assures them that he will support them in developing the chapter and even function as a co-author if they decide that is what they would prefer. They are very flattered by the invitation and, as they discuss the opportunity, they agree that it would be beneficial to have a publication on their CVs prior to searching for employment in higher education.

What questions do the students need to ask before agreeing to this arrangement? What aspects of the edited book project would determine if the contribution of a chapter is a highly regarded achievement?

Prolific

An experienced faculty member and researcher successfully publishes her study in a well-respected journal. Nevertheless, she suspects that her list of publications might not compare favorably to those of other faculty pursuing the rank of professor, university wide. She decides to try and get as many publications as possible from the same data set. As the Promotion Committee reviews her portfolio, questions are raised about the remarkable similarity amongst copies of several the publications. This unethical practice is commonly referred to as "salami science" because the data from a single study are sliced into the thinnest possible pieces to yield more articles. The Committee contacts the faculty member to request evidence that she was not basically duplicating the study in different outlets. In one instance, an article indicated that it was "part of a larger study" when, in fact, it was the same study. Worst of all, in one very blatant example of text recycling, only the most superficial changes had been made to the background section. The researcher was not able to verify that these work products were distinct pieces of research and, because she had engaged in unethical publishing practices, her application for promotion was denied.

While it is possible to investigate different aspects of a phenomenon and produce a unique manuscript for each inquiry, repeating the same study in a slightly different way is unacceptable. What strategies do successful scholars use to avoid "promotion panic"?

Activity: Unmasking Predatory Publishers

The reasons for finding a reputable publisher are like the reasons for working with a reputable jeweler. Both are entrusted with something precious. Both have specialized expertise that will guide important decisions and investments. One diverse group of 43 stakeholders in academic publishing from 10 different countries hammered out the following definition of predatory journals and publishers: "entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices" (Grudniewicz et al., 2019, p. 211). An article that appeared in *Nature* about predatory publishers included an image of a wolf hiding under a sheepskin with good reason. Predatory publishers present themselves as scholarly outlets, yet do not meet widely agreed upon standards for excellence in academic work.

> Predatory journals are a global threat. They accept articles for publication—along with authors' fees—without performing promised quality checks for issues such as plagiarism or ethical approval. Naive readers are not the only victims. Many researchers have been duped into submitting to predatory journals, in which their work can be overlooked…Everyone agrees that predatory publishers sow confusion, promote shoddy scholarship and waste resources. (Grudniewicz et al., 2019, p. 210)

Both authors and reviewers can fall prey to the scams of questionable publications. Publication in one of these outlets will be an embarrassment rather than an achievement. Agreeing to review for them is another mistake, because it is I not only a waste of time but also a way of enabling them to persist with their unethical practices. These publishers are deceptive and fraudulent (Beall, 2016; 2020) and the material they disseminate is of questionable quality. Unscrupulous publishers frequently can be identified in the same ways that you detect phishing scams via e-mail. Use the following strategies to investigate a publishing outlet.

The Products Read some of the journal's published articles and assess their quality. If the publisher's finished products contain obvious errors, this is evidence of hasty preparation and poor or no professional editing. Contact past authors to inquire about their experiences. Some devious publishers have tried to capitalize on the instant name recognition of major journals and book publishers by choosing a name that sounds very similar, so be cautious and check that.

Correspondence Letters of invitation that include spelling errors, awkwardly worded sentences, and are not written in a businesslike manner are indicators of a scam. The person who signed the letter will sometimes have a name that sounds fabricated, much like the telemarketers who use short, familiar, Anglo-sounding names to conceal their identity. Another "red flag" is an obvious mismatch between your credentials and the supposed focus of the publication, such as an engineering faculty member who is invited to submit to a psychology journal when none of their work is in that area.

Excessive Flattery Predatory publishers have figured out that making the invitations more personalized enables them to attract more authors who are willing to pay for publication. They sometimes search through recently published articles to generate a list of names. Authors may be duped into thinking the correspondence is from a reputable publisher because the author of the email appears to be familiar with and interested in their work. When material about the previous work is an obvious cut-and-paste from another source, this should raise suspicion that it is a scam.

Unethical Business Practices Legitimate scholarly publishers offer services (i.e., quality control, licensing, indexing services/databases, content preservation, dissemination, advertising). Predatory publishers pretend to use a rigorous peer review system, invent a fictitious editorial board and/or ISSN numbers, implement dubious marketing practices, or even hijack names of respected publishers (Tennant et al., 2019). Conduct a search on "complaints against [insert the publisher's name]" to find out what authors have to say about working with the company. Some online sources for evaluating professional journals include Beall's List, Better Business Bureau, Cabell's International, Directory of Open Access Journals, Google Scholar Metrics, Journal Quality List, Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate Analysis), Scimago Journal & Country Rank (SJR), and Ulrich's Periodicals Directory.

Hidden Fees These days, academic authors are barraged by invitations to make conference presentations, publish articles or books, be recognized through some type of awards program, edit journals and books, and/or have their work converted into online formats. Although some journal and book editors invite authors to *contribute*, authors are expected to *pay*. Article processing charges (APC) appear in the fine print and are sometimes over $1500 US dollars to publish in a questionable outlet, resulting in "money down the drain" (Vervoort et al., 2020). For example, there are groups that charge over $1000 to design a professional-quality podcast based on a published manuscript when it is doubtful that it would be worth the financial investment.

Open Access Reputable open access (OA) publishers charge a fee, but the purpose of the fee is to make the work accessible to anyone with a computer. The authors are, in effect, subsidising other scholars' access to their work and the OA fee takes the place of collecting money through institutional or individual subscriptions. Before agreeing to pay any OA fees, consult the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). This organization requires members to comply with quality standards and to provide services to authors in exchange for the fees, such as professional editing of the manuscripts, indexing with an assortment of respected services, high quality online presence, and regularly updated statistics on the article's performance. Some OA journals are hybrids in which the article is part of a hard copy journal as well as the online format.

Review and Editing Process These so-called publishers routinely make promises of speedy acceptance and publication. They suggest that passing over peer review represents an advantage. Faculty members who feel pressured to get something published may fall prey this supposed short cut. Yet when no review or editing takes place, the so-called publisher is no better than taking your manuscript to the local print shop to make copies. Quality control beyond the author's efforts is absent. Be aware that a university tenure/promotion committee will insist upon details such as the type of peer review process, the acceptance rate, and the citation statistics (impact factor) of the outlet. Predatory publishers lure authors in by claiming that their publication is peer reviewed and professionally edited when this is not true.

Website The publisher should have a website that is professional in appearance and detailed. Information about the group's other publications should be included. Reputable publishers typically belong to the Committee on Publications Ethics (COPE) and adhere to their guidelines. If the journal is a reputable OA publication, it would hold membership in Open Access Scholarly Publishers' Association (OASPA). The site should include an Editorial Board. Board members should be recognizable as contributors in the field. Their institutional affiliations and/or credentials should be listed as well. Some predatory publishers have begun fabricating Editorial Boards to disguise their unethical practices.

Visibility Active scholars become acquainted with many different journals and publishing companies as they review the literature. While there are thousands of outlets and no one would be familiar with all of them, if a journal or book company never has come up during a search or in a list of references, it is questionable. These so-called publishers have no presence at professional conferences and no catalogue or other advertising of their books.

Impact Factor (IM) A journal's impact factor, or IM, is calculated by Journal Citation Reports/Clarivate Analytics (https://jcr.clarivate.com). A five-year impact factor is also available. What is a good impact factor? It depends on the discipline. For example, according to Journal Citation Reports, the highest impact factor for a history journal was 2.195 and for Oncology, 8.31 (AK Journals, 2022). An impact factor of 10 is outstanding but only about 3.6% of academic journals attain this. High-quality publications that are read by the general public have higher impact factors. For example, *Nature* had an impact factor of 69.5 in 2021. While an impressive IF is desirable, some high-quality publications in specific fields still may have a relatively low impact factor.

Self-assessment: Investigating Publishers—The Bookshelf Activity
Browse through the books on a faculty member's well-stocked shelf. You probably will encounter several different types of publications. Which type of publication and outlet interests you most at this point in your career—and why?

Association Publications These are part of the publishing program of a leading organization in the field. Most commonly, they publish professional journals and/or newsletters. Many faculty members subscribe to, store, sift through, and sort these materials to support their work on various projects. Major professional organizations often have a more expansive publications program. They may disseminate brochures, booklets, position papers, monographs (short books with a particular focus), collections of best articles, or books authored and/or edited by members of the group. However, the professional organizations to which scholars belong have nonprofit status and authors may not receive any financial remuneration. Rather, writing is treated as a professional service activity because it provides low-cost resources to members. Yet, there are some advantages to publishing with a professional organization. These materials are highly publicized to members and help to establish an author's name recognition. Furthermore, the editorial staff may devote more of their time, attention, and support to authors because they are few in number, compared to a for profit publisher.

University Press Books There are approximately 150 book publishers in the United States that are housed in/sponsored by prominent universities. The Association of University Presses (2021) publishes an updated list and relevant information. University presses will sometimes consider works that are more specialized/scholarly or are of particular interest for people in that region; for example, U.S. Civil War era president Abraham Lincoln lived in the state of Illinois for many years, so Southern Illinois University Press has published numerous books about his life and family.

College Textbooks and Ancillaries Faculty members who are responsible for teaching specific courses usually have an assortment of materials produced by commercial publishers, such as Pearson. Major publishers often will provide a free desk copy of a textbook so that faculty will consider adopting it for a course. At some institutions, the textbook selected is a departmental decision, rather than an individual one, so a program-wide textbook adoption is valuable to the company. Conversations with acquisitions editors—the ones who identify prospective authors of textbooks—indicate that, even after faculty members are awarded a contract, about one-third will not complete the project, approximately another third will give up after peer review, and after the first edition, few survive. Even though there are many possible textbooks for a course in existence (e.g., Introduction to Psychology), this does not diminish publisher's interest in pursuing new titles because capturing large textbook markets is profitable. To make textbooks more appealing to instructors, there may be ancillaries—additional resources such as student study guides and instructor's manuals. Many times, graduate assistants are enlisted to support the development of an instructor's manual that includes, for example, a brief chapter summary, PowerPoint slides, suggested in-class activities, and a bank of test items. Someone needs to write these materials and the primary authors of the textbook may be seeking authors to contribute short pieces to chapters.

Edited Scholarly Books Many major academic publishers sponsor various book series. These series frequently are an anthology in which various chapters are written by different individuals. This approach to producing a volume for the book series is appealing because it presents multiple perspectives (often international) on a topic, allows each contributor to concentrate on a particular facet of the subject matter, and—if successful—gathers the best thinking on the material. These projects also offer the possibility of producing a book on a timely trend, issue, or controversy in the field more quickly than a single authored work. If an edited book does not use a rigorous peer review process, it is less scholarly .

Monographs A monograph is longer than an article but shorter than a book—more in the 25,000–75,000-word range (Bond, 2017). Its purpose is to delve into an area of specialized knowledge in greater depth and provide fresh insights (Johnson, 2022). Many times, the focus is on a particularly timely topic in the field. Monographs are written by scholars for fellow scholars. Monographs frequently are authored by leaders in the field. Some organizations sponsor highly regarded series of monographs, such as the Society for Child Development. Major publishers may have monograph series as well, such as Springer Nature's Springer Briefs in various subject areas. Increasingly, monographs are being shared via open access.

Handbooks and Encyclopedias These works frequently involve leading experts throughout the world and are massive undertakings. Prominent scholars with a large network of contacts and excellent organizational skills generally lead projects of this type. Reference books provide an important resource for fellow researchers and students. It is possible to participate at various levels—such as contributing one or more articles on your areas of special interest, serving as the leader for a section of the work, or editing/co-editing the entire manuscript.

Popular Press Publications Based on Research The defining characteristic of these books is that they are written, not for scholars, but for more general audiences. The work of some scholars may have important implications for the public, so the author "translates" the research in a field to make it more accessible to the public. The challenge here is to represent the research findings accurately yet make the material engaging and readable—for example, in newspapers and magazines. These publications often rely on interviews with leaders in the field and usually do not include a list of references to other scholarly works.

8.1 Introduction: Broad Categories of Publications

Three major categories of publications are (1) popular press, (2) trade, and (3) scholarly (DIREKT LibGuides, 2023). Popular press publications seek to inform and entertain the public. They are written in a less formal way, avoid the use of professional jargon, and seldom include citations from other sources. More commonly, a leading expert is interviewed and quoted in publications written for general audiences. Some drawbacks to pieces written by reporters are that they may not have a depth/breadth of knowledge about the subject, may take a statement out of context, or misquote the interviewee. To attract the attention of readers, some reporters latch onto a phrase or side comment rather than the substance of the topic that gets widely quoted and perhaps leads to misunderstanding of important concepts. Some of these publications are written for the local community only. Scholars need to be a bit wary about popular press interviews. Reporters may contact them right when the deadline is approaching, rely heavily on the information from the interviewee, and never mention them in the published piece. Before agreeing to give an interview, check up on the reporters and what they have published previously. Ask to see the questions in advance so that you can decide if this is what you want to talk about. It is not unusual for authors to feel that their skill with written communication is superior to their spoken communication because writing gives them the opportunity to revise. If so, inquire about whether it would be acceptable to provide a written response to the questions as a resource to the reporter.

Trade publications are aligned with a profession, such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in postsecondary education or *The Wall Street Journal* in business. They are afforded greater respect because they invest more in assuring that the information is reliable. These publishers may use a modified version of peer review by involving colleagues at the company in critiquing the work prior to publication. There are also trade newsletters, such as *Inside Higher Ed.* One primary advantage of trade publications is that they are published daily or weekly, so the information is very current.

Scholarly publications are noted for their efforts to be accurate, avoid bias, and verify information prior to publishing it. Because they are written primarily for scholars, they use specialized vocabulary, rely on the presentation of a logical argument, use an academic writing style, and review the relevant literature. The scholarly publications of university faculty members are an important way of establishing their credentials and expertise. The main purpose of scholarly journals and books is to disseminate scientific information and contribute to knowledge in an academic field. Scholarly publications usually rely on peer review as a form of quality control to select high quality publications that adhere to scientific standards and present reliable information (Albers et al., 2011). Figure 8.1 highlights three key quality dimensions of scholarly publications, based on Kling & McKim, 1999.

8.2 Peer Review and Quality Control

When a decision is particularly important, it is common to rely on a panel of experts rather than one person's decision. In the Olympics, for example, the performance of premier athletes is rated by several judges. Likewise, in survey research, a panel of experts frequently is enlisted to critique the items before the instrument is piloted with a group of respondents. A similar strategy is used prior to publishing an article in a professional journal. Peers are involved in reviewing the work, something that gives these articles greater credibility (Have & Gordijn, 2015). The editor of a peer-reviewed journal cannot possibly know everything about a

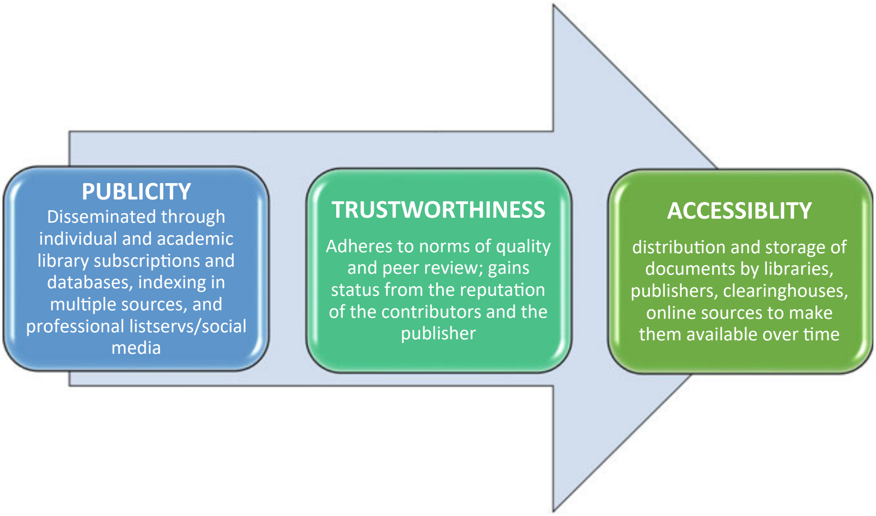

Fig. 8.1 A continuum of quality in scholarly publications (based on King & McKim, 1999)

field. That is why other scholars with specialized expertise are enlisted to evaluate manuscripts for possible publication. They assist editors in making one of the following decisions, arranged from best to worst in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Decisions about manuscripts—best to worst

• Outright acceptance—this is an exceptionally rare occurrence. In 25 years of serving as editor-in-chief of a scholarly journal, only about five manuscripts were accepted almost exactly as originally submitted
• Minor revisions—this is probably the best outcome authors can hope for. The changes can be accomplished relatively easily, and a strong possibility of publication exists if the revisions are made
• Major revisions—this decision is a very common one that will require quite a bit more work, but certainly not as much as starting all over again. If the authors are especially careful about addressing the reviewers' concerns, chances of acceptance are increased (Henson, 2007)
• Rejection with an opportunity to resubmit—this decision offers a second chance. In this instance, the manuscript requires a major rewrite and will be reviewed again
• Rejection without an invitation to resubmit—the manuscript appeared to have possibilities for publication, so it was sent out for review. However, the editor does not want to see it again and the authors will have to pursue a different outlet. According to a statistic shared by Elsevier, between 30 and 50 percent of articles submitted to their journals are rejected before they even reach the peer-review stage (Shaikh, 2021)
• Rejection without review—this is called a "desk rejection" because it did not go out for review. The manuscript was screened by the editor who found it to be unsuitable because it was outside the publication's scope, not a good match for the readership, or obviously/seriously flawed. Rather than wasting reviewers' time, the editor rejects it with a form letter

Inviting fellow scholars to evaluate one another's work has a long, distinguished history. Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626) is credited with developing a worldwide system that would assist in initiating and judging a new science. Years later, in 1665, the Royal Society of London for the Purpose of Improving Natural Knowledge implemented Bacon's ideas when they proposed a scholarly publication called *Philosophical Transactions*, to be edited by Henry Oldenburg. The manuscripts represented many different fields and could not possibly be judged by one person, so knowledgeable members of the Society were invited to review the submissions (Spier, 2002). A further goal of peer review was to promote new insights and reduce bias (Garcia et al., 2019; Souder, 2011).

Despite this early use of peer review, editors of scientific journals did not institute the peer review process initially. In the medical field, for example, the Royal Society of Edinburgh began peer review in 1731; the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) initiated peer reviewers after 1940 (Spier, 2002), and *The Lancet* put a system of peer review into place in 1976 (Benos et al., 2007). Peer review has become the "gold standard" for assessing scholarly submissions to journals (Biagioli, 2002). Together, editors and peer reviewers function as "gatekeepers" who decide what gets published or not.

Each journal establishes its specific reviewing process. Table 8.2 is an overview of the various types of peer review systems, with the first—double blind or anonymous peer review—considered to be the most prestigious.

Drubin (2017) applies the analogy of dismantling a barn versus building one to critique the peer review process when he writes:

> Authors pour their hearts, souls, and creative energies into performing experiments and reporting the results in manuscripts, yet reviewers often seem more intent on kicking down the barn than they are on trying to help the carpenter with its design and construction, or they demand the addition of an entire new wing to the original structure. Because publications are the most important currency for securing employment and research funds, and for a researcher's scientific legacy, peer review issues are critical to all practicing research scientists. (p. 525)

While it is easy to find fault with a manuscript, editors and reviewers need to use agreed upon criteria, be considerate of the authors' effort, and respond in respectful ways aimed at improving the work. The premise of peer review is that evidence is more reliable, insights are more original, and work is more rigorous if specialists assess the manuscripts prior to publication. Peer reviewers essentially have two roles to fulfill: (1) assessing the manuscript to assist editors in making a decision, and (2) offering commentaries, productive criticisms, and recommendations for modification that are grounded in the standards of the discipline (Have & Gordijn, 2015). Nevertheless, peer review is not without its flaws. There are many blogs, videos, and podcasts arguing that the peer review system is "broken". In Table 8.3 we sort the pros and cons of anonymous peer review, based on Julia Wilson's (2016) Voice of Young Science (VoYS) discussions.

Table 8.2 Types of formal peer review

Double blind (anonymous) peer review. The identity of the author is not known to the reviewers and the identity of the reviewers is not known to the author(s). This is the most time-honored type of peer review. The goal is to assess the work on its own merits rather than be influenced by things such as the prestige of the institutional affiliation or name recognition of the author(s). Nevertheless, reviewers can sometimes guess the identity of authors, particularly if they cite their previous work. If the reviewers know the author personally (e.g., their former doctoral student) they should decline to participate in the review of the work. The downside to this system is that peer review usually is an uncompensated service, and it is difficult to find experts willing to invest the time
Single blind review. The reviewers know who the authors are, but the authors do not know who the reviewers are. This system might be in place for invited submissions, such as authors who were selected to submit chapters for an edited book. One reason to conceal the identity of the reviewers is to permit them to critique candidly without fear of reprisal from authors
Open review. Both the authors and the reviewers are aware of one another's identity. In some instances, the reviewers' names and reports are shared at the prepublication stage or even published with the paper. The presumed advantage is that this prevents reviewers from delivering harsh criticism with impunity and that reviewers are acknowledged for their work. The downside is that reviewers may be more likely to decline out of fear that criticism will damage relationships or come back to haunt them in another situation (e.g., application for grant funding)
Cascading or "waterfall" peer review. This is the practice of some huge publishing companies that sponsor multiple professional journals. The goal is to support authors in finding a suitable outlet for publication if the work has promise. After a paper has been rejected by one editor, it is (with the authors' permission) passed to another journal—usually, accompanied by the previous reviewers' comments. The second editor determines if it is a good fit. Reports from the earlier round of reviews may or may not be considered, depending on the authors' and reviewers' wishes. Usually, the second editor then pursues the anonymous peer review process of their journal and makes a decision (Kotsis & Chung, 2014)

Based on the Sense About Science (2009) survey of 4000 scholars, reviewers do want some form of recognition--ideally, financial compensation--but most scholarly publications cannot afford this. Recognizing peer review as an important form of service so that it can be documented in tenure/promotion applications could help. Increasingly, publishers are working with Publons (Clarviate) to tabulate the number of reviews completed. Other forms of recognition include publishing an annual list of reviewers in the journal, awarding certificates for outstanding service as reviewers, giving vouchers to reviewers that would defray the cost of making their own publications open access, or writing letters of support for reviewers' projects (e.g., sabbatical leave proposals).

8.3 Roles for and Ethical Practices of Publishing Personnel

In this section, we outline the roles of three key stakeholders in academic publishing: (1) the editor-in-chief, (2) the editorial board/peer reviewers, and (3) the academic authors.

Table 8.3 Peer review: what's good about it? What's bad about it?

Positives
Peer review is a valued process. It results in the assessment of over 1.5 million scholarly articles annually. It is also the system used to award major grant funding or evaluate faculty members' applications for tenure, promotion, sabbatical leaves, and awards. At its finest, peer review supports the integration of new knowledge across hundreds of different disciplines and recognizes excellence in scholarship
Input from reviewers can improve the work. Reviewers sometimes prevent authors from making a relatively minor, yet embarrassing, error. For example, the authors might attribute a study to the wrong researcher, misspell the name of a leader in the field, or incorrectly choose a word that sounds similar but has a very different meaning (e.g., elicit/illicit). When implemented appropriately, peer review provides insightful critique of the work, assesses its strengths and weaknesses, and—if the manuscript has merit—provides direction in ways to improve it
Peer review is a form of endorsement for the work. After a manuscript has been scrutinized by experts and accepted, it signifies to fellow scholars, policy makers, the media, and the public that the claims set forth have greater credibility. Publication in a pre-eminent journal can function as a sort of scientific seal of approval
Peer review supports professional development. Those who participate in peer review can learn to look at their own work more objectively, hone their academic writing style, and improve their data presentation skills as they analyze fellow scholars' work
Negatives
Difficulty in identifying suitable reviewers. When a line of inquiry is highly specialized, the pool of potential expert reviewers may be quite small. This might devolve into a sort of "closed club" if reviewers respond positively to research that is consistent with their work rather than breaking new ground. As a result, new voices may be silenced and the advancement of knowledge, restricted
Time is the enemy in peer review. A leading reason for declining to review a manuscript is that the scholar does not have the time. A thorough review can take several hours to formulate and compose. Before agreeing to review other scholars' work, check up on the integrity of the publishing outlet. Inform the editor of your decision promptly to avoid delay
The review process can be lengthy. Read (at least) the abstract and the conclusion of a manuscript before agreeing to conduct the review. If you read the title only, you may discover that it is not what you expected. If you have no intention of completing the review, say so rather than requesting an extension. When reviewers fail to produce a critique as agreed upon, the editor must "restart the clock" to give new reviewers enough time to critique the work
Reviewers sometimes mishandle manuscripts. Manuscripts sent to peer reviewers are confidential documents. It is unethical to give them to someone else to review (e.g., a graduate assistant), quote from them, or "scoop" other scholars' research. Most editors manage the flow of manuscripts submitted with software designed for this purpose (e.g., Editorial Manager®) so reviewers need to familiarize themselves with these online systems to avoid technical glitches

(continued)

Table 8.3 (continued)

Reviewers are obligated to bow out when there is conflict of interest. For example, the editor would not know if an author happened to be a peer reviewer's former colleague. In this case, the peer reviewer would need to decline to review because they know the author personally rather than accept the invitation and show favoritism

8.3.1 The Editor-In-Chief and Editorial Board Members' Roles

An editor-in-chief is entrusted with decision-making, and that comes with responsibility.

Springer Nature (2023) states that the primary role for an editor-in-chief is to be "a champion for their discipline and a custodian of the scientific record in order to ensure the success of the journal for their community" (unpaged). The editor's power to block a manuscript from moving forward to peer review has been debated; however, nearly one-half of the manuscripts submitted to a journal may be obviously unsuitable and some of the most prestigious publications publish no more than 10 percent of what is submitted (Goldfinch & Yamamoto, 2012). Suitable peer reviewers are increasingly difficult to find, so asking them to assess submissions that are obviously inappropriate for the outlet would put undue strain on the entire system. In an international study of articles submitted from 18 different countries, rejection rates ranged from 22.6 to 73.4% across different journals (Ehara & Takahashi, 2007).

Desk rejections have increased considerably because submissions have increased, and competition is keen. In the past, only the "hopeless" manuscripts would suffer this fate but, as Harzing (2022) notes, journals that once received a few hundred submissions may now be getting over a thousand—with only about 50–100 chosen for publication per year. She goes on to explain why desk rejection is a necessity:

> Without desk-rejects, editors would need to find reviewers for well over 1,000 papers, 90-95% of which would not make it through the review process. With every paper needing 2 or 3 reviewers, that means finding a few thousand reviewers every year. Moreover, most academics do not accept all review requests they receive, so it is not unusual for an editor to contact 4 or 5 academics in order to find a single reviewer. So, without desk-rejects an editor might well need to contact 10,000–15,000 academics a year…This is clearly not a feasible proposition. (unpaged)

Some common reasons that editors give for rejecting a manuscript (Elsevier, no date; George, 2020; Harzing, 2022)—and solutions for them—are in Table 8.4.

As these issues suggest, there are some general criteria that editors use to make these decisions. One study found that, even when presented with articles that were outside their field, editors were relatively consistent in their decisions about which manuscripts were not worthy of further consideration. The research focused on the journal *Biological Conservation* (Primack et al., 2019) which rejects approximately half of the articles submitted annually without subjecting them to peer

Table 8.4 Why might an editor-in-chief reject a manuscript without review?

Problem	Examples	Ways to address the problem
Generalizations that are unsupported by evidence	Authors begin their abstract with, "It is widely accepted that…" and go on to make a statement that clearly is debatable	Assume that differing opinions exist. If there are areas of agreement, they should be backed by the relevant literature
Mismatch between the manuscript and the journal's aims and scope	Research involving adolescent students is submitted to a publication that focuses on the education of young children, no more than 8 years of age	Analyze publishers' aims and scope statements. Choose the outlet carefully and consider why the work matters for their readership
Lack of originality and failure to advance thinking beyond what is already known in the field	A widely published author persists at revisiting work accomplished previously rather than keeping current. When the manuscript is submitted, nearly all the sources in the reference list were published 10–15 years ago	Ensure that the manuscript has practical, clinical, and/or theoretical implications for the field. Be aware that editors sometimes receive multiple articles on a "hot" topic and will choose the most innovative ones
Inappropriate academic writing style	A graduate student who is working in family counseling submits an article with the tone of a popular magazine article to a scholarly publication	Study what has been published in the outlet to determine the preferred style and structure the manuscript accordingly
Errors in word choice, spelling, syntax, and punctuation. Inconsistencies between the text of the manuscript and the references, tables, and figures	An assistant professor hastily submits an article for which the numbering of the tables is incorrect. One key data table is missing and there is a punctuation error in the title of the manuscript	Check and double-check everything. Ask a knowledgeable person to read it prior to submission. Mistakes call into question the scholar's credibility, accuracy, and attention to detail
Failure to comply with the authors' guidelines for manuscript length and preparation	A journal requires 12-point print and double spacing throughout. When an author's paper exceeds the recommended length, she converts it to single spacing and 10-point print	Publishers have clear guidelines that are readily available online. If authors disregard these instructions, they can expect (at best) a "revise *before* review" decision

(continued)

Table 8.4 (continued)

Problem	Examples	Ways to address the problem
For research articles, obvious flaws in methodology or design	An early career faculty member is responsible for teaching three sections of the same course. After she invests many hours in grading papers, she has the idea of using that work for a research article	Be certain that research articles are more than professors' "homework". A rigorous research article would require informed consent from participants, have a conceptual framework, and be based on a thorough literature review
Unsubstantiated claims	Authors proposing a book state that "no other book like this exists". Yet when the editor does a quick search of keywords from the book's title, it yields three books published in the past year	Given the knowledge explosion, no one can be aware of everything that is published on a topic; however, it is important to be thorough and try to uncover key sources. Even after that, it is preferable to write "To the best of our knowledge…"
Titles that set expectations that are unfulfilled by the work	The title of an article implies that it is a large-scale survey. On further inspection, it turns out to be a questionnaire of students in the same major at one institution	A lofty-sounding title can be problematic. Strive to be accurate and specific rather than impress others

review. Ten editors evaluated 40 manuscripts that had been processed during the previous year. Twenty of the manuscripts had been desk rejected while the other 20 were sent out to peer reviewers. The researchers found that editors agreed on the decisions for about 73% of the manuscripts, suggesting that most decisions were reasonable, repeatable, and reliable. The investigators urged scholars in other fields to pursue research on desk rejection. Table 8.5 describes the roles of editors and the editorial board members, based on the website of Springer Nature (2023), the largest publisher of professional materials in the world.

8.4 Authors' Ethical Obligations and Reputation

Academic authors seeking to publish their research in a journal are, first and foremost, expected to submit a well-designed study that meets the quality standards of a scholarly journal. The seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association* (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020 (https://www-sciencedirect-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/science/article/pii/S0022440511000823#bb0025)) delineates authors' responsibilities as:

(1) the preparation of the manuscript,

Table 8.5 Common roles of an editor-in-chief and editorial board

• Adhere to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) standards
• Ensure that the journal meets the needs of the relevant research community
• Provide a forum for scientific discussion, debate, and evidence-based perspectives
• Disseminate high-quality research with important implications for professionals in the field
• Select content that fits the aims and scope of the journal and that is scientifically valid
• Prepare peer reviewers for their role with advice and helpful tools (e.g., a list of questions, scoring criteria)
• Screen manuscripts that are submitted prior to sending them out for peer review, rejecting those that are not suitable
• Manage and oversee the peer review system efficiently and with integrity
• Render the final decision on manuscripts with conflicting peer reviews or controversial topics
• Respect and be an advocate for stakeholders in the process (i.e., company/organization, authors, readership, editorial board/peer reviewers]
• Communicate with everyone in the publication process in a tactful and professional manner
• Work with guest editors on special issues of the publication as appropriate
• Identify additional members of the editorial team to handle manuscripts in specified areas of expertise or geographic regions as needed
• Select members of the Editorial Board and keep them engaged with the publication through updates/meetings
• Participate in events that educate scholars about the publishing process (e.g., a "meet the editors" panel discussion at a conference)
• Review and revise editorial policies and procedures with the Board
• Invite submissions to the journal and encourage Editorial Board members to contribute as single authors, co-authors, or mentors for graduate students
• Investigate issues of academic misconduct in accordance with the sponsoring organization's guidelines
• Respond to requests from authors who have contributed to the journal for information about the publication's stature in the field and the review process in place
• Participate in research that studies editing and scholarly publication
• Recognize outstanding service to journal from Board members and amongst peer reviewers (e.g., writing letters of support for tenure/promotion/grant/awards applications)
• Diplomatically dismiss board members or peer reviewers who fail to fulfill their obligations or are unduly harsh in responses to authors
• Keep pace with advances in word processing, manuscript management systems, and tools of the publishing industry
• Seek continuous professional development by reading research findings related to academic publishing

Adapted from Springer Nature (2023)

(2) focusing on the organizational and ethical tasks,
(3) meeting the journal's policy requirements, and
(4) working with the publisher's staff.

When submitting a manuscript to the journal for review, it is important to make sure that the selected journal is the right one for the manuscript. This can be verified by examining the journal's guidelines for submission (APA, 2020).

After journals receive a manuscript, editors initially examine it to find out if it is appropriate for the journal. If editors determine that it is not a good fit, they will reject the manuscript immediately without forwarding it to reviewers (i.e., desk rejection). Editors can also reject the manuscript if it contains a "fatal flaw", such as a lack of merit of the research subject, wrong study design, unsound data, conclusions that are refuted by the data, or a line of research that is not timely or lacks originality (Kotsis & Chung, 2014). A common flaw in manuscripts relates to theory. A research manuscript, for example, needs to justify the theory selected (Lindgreen & Di Benedetto, 2020) and explain the conceptual framework for a study (Burrell et al., 2022). Authors are also responsible for clearly stating the contributions of their research.

As this chapter has discussed throughout, it is important to safeguard a professional reputation because it can be irreparably damaged. Scholars are expected to find their own mistakes but that may not happen if they are hurried, pressured, or in tenure/promotion panic mode. As with other types of transgressions, honest mistakes are less culpable than fraudulent behavior; however, both are troublesome. The adage of Benjamin Franklin that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is applicable here because a few minutes of double-checking can prevent a huge time sink and an embarrassing outcome later. Errors can have major consequences for a professional career. Table 8.6 provides guidance to authors in maximizing the impact of their published works.

Selecting a journal to publish your research can be mind-boggling but it is an important decision. It may be advisable to identify multiple suitable outlets even before the manuscript is written so that the work is a good fit. That way, if the manuscript has to be submitted to a different journal, the author already has a publication with similar characteristics in mind and the revision process is facilitated. Before any journal selection, it is important to read similar articles that have been published in the selected journal.

Research manuscripts that are well-written, identify important questions, collect data capable of addressing those questions, explain procedures clearly, select appropriate forms of analysis, describe the limitations/findings/implications, and highlight the contribution made have a high probability of being accepted. Albers and his associates (2011) recommend that authors use key resources and tools such as manuscript evaluation checklists prior to submitting the work. For example, authors can refine their manuscripts by referring to the *Publication Manual of the APA* (2020), particularly the chapters that concentrate on (1) writing for the

Table 8.6 What is a high-quality, high-impact journal?

Researchers are encouraged to publish in quality, high-impact scholarly journals, but impact factor alone is not the only consideration. Some other indicators to consider include the following
Scholarly journals versus popular and trade journals
Scholarly journals generally have an editorial board, use some type of peer review process, and will publish the primary results of research and summaries or reviews of previous research in their field of academic interest. They may also include academic book reviews. Many, but not all, professional journals are also peer reviewed. Articles in popular journals and trade publications generally are not peer reviewed, favor a much more informal writing style, and often have no, or only very brief, bibliographies
Peer reviewed or refereed
The most respected journals are peer-reviewed or refereed. Manuscripts submitted to this type of journal must be evaluated by an editor, an editorial panel, or a panel of experts (peers) in the field before being accepted for publication. In blinded peer review, the author's name and institution are concealed from the reviewer to reduce reviewer bias. A journal's editorial policy and/or instructions for authors will often indicate if and how articles are peer reviewed. This information is usually located on the publisher's web site and in at least one printed issue of the journal each year
Journal indexing
Widely indexed articles are more likely to be found by other researchers during their literature review process, and a respected and important journal will be indexed in multiple major journal indexes. *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory* lists the databases in which a journal is indexed. On a journal's website, check to the list of the databases in which the journal is indexed in full text and as abstracts only
Circulation and downloads
Circulation count is a measure of the journal's audience and hence the potential exposure for your article. A particular journal may not be peer reviewed, for example, but it may be distributed to a large academic community (as part of membership in a professional organization, for example) and may be a valuable publication in this regard. Some journal websites include circulation information; however, download statistics may be more informative
Acceptance rate
A journal's acceptance rate refers to the number of manuscripts accepted for publication relative to the total number of manuscripts submitted within the last year. Journals with lower acceptance rates are more selective and, therefore, considered to be more prestigious
Editor and editorial board
The editor and members of the editorial board should be well-known, respected in the field, and from different geographical locations
Other indicators of quality journals
With a rejection rate up to 90% of all submitted articles in the highest ranked journals, even good work may be rejected. Search widely for potential publishing opportunities. Check where other researchers in your field are publishing by scanning reference lists or bibliographies in relevant books and journal articles. Ask your more experienced colleagues for their recommendations of suitable outlets

Adapted from Texas State University Library Guides (2022) behavioral and social sciences, (2) manuscript structure and content, and (3) writing clearly and concisely. There are numerous resources that authors can use to better meet the expectations of academic journals (Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2005).

When novice authors first think about writing a book, the sheer amount of writing required can be daunting. But there are many ways to become involved in supporting a book project. Two college-level textbook authors, for example, involved their doctoral students in writing a brief synopsis of the implications of research in a particular area for each chapter (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2016). This benefitted the students by giving them an admittedly minor first publication. Another option that does not require writing the entire book is to edit a compilation of chapters written by various authors. The editor can decide to write the introduction (only), contribute one or more chapters, or collaborate on most of them. After investing time in a book project, authors surely will want people to know about it, read it, and (ideally) cite it in their work. A predatory publisher cannot do any of this for you as an author. Polese (2019) suggests weighing four variables when searching for a book publisher: (1) price policy, (2) prestige, (3) speed, and (4) marketing. Figure 8.2 raises some of the pertinent questions as authors decide on a publisher.

One helpful, yet frequently overlooked, source of information about book publishers consists of colleagues with extensive publishing and/or editing experience. Many of them are very willing to "talk publishing" with fellow authors embarking on a project, share successful examples of book proposals or chapters, and discuss common misconceptions.

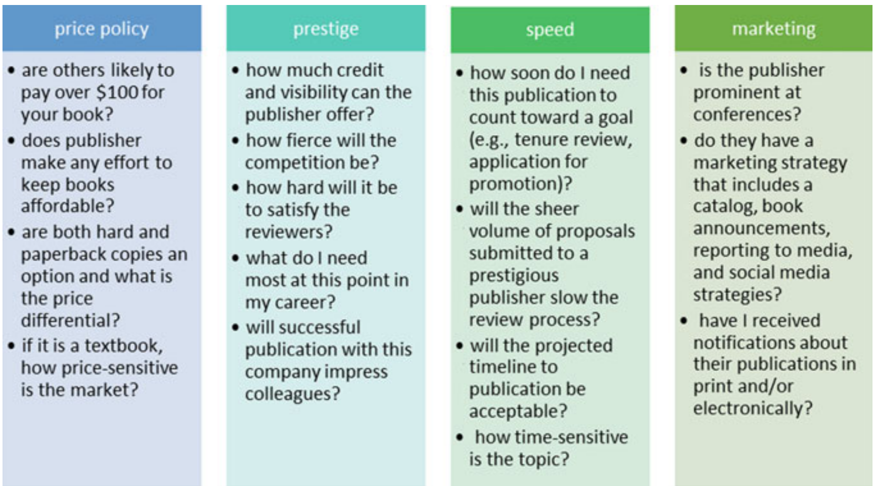

Fig. 8.2 Selection criteria for book publishers

8.5 Conclusion: Matching Manuscripts to Outlets

Our local community has a Facebook page called Waste Nothing. Anyone who no longer has use for an item posts a photo of it there. It can be anything from a major appliance to a bumper crop of zucchini. Most of the time, the items are placed on a porch for pick up or people arrange to meet at a public place. Some people post every week. One family, for example, collects all types of bicycles and parts, refurbishes them, and gives them away to children. Things really click on “Wishful Wednesdays”. That is when people ask if anyone has something in particular, such as a desk. Page followers will rally in response to an urgent request, such as helping a family after a devastating house fire.

“Waste nothing” is a good metaphor for writing outlets as well. The same manuscript that is rejected for one purpose can be a good fit for another. Too often, beginning authors abandon any manuscript that does not get immediate acceptance and glowing reviews. Yet successful authors more often take the approach that their work could be put to another use or sent it to another outlet. Although it is important to implement the strategies in this chapter to make the submission process as efficient as possible, it is also important to persist. When you speak with prolific authors, most of them have at least a few stories about a manuscript that was rejected repeatedly before finding the right “home”.

Effective academic publishing has many moving parts. Stakeholders include, for example, professional organizations, publishing companies and staff; editors, editorial board members/peer reviewers; contributing authors and researchers; professionals in different roles throughout the field; readers of the publications, including undergraduate/graduate students; and the community at large. Advancement of knowledge relies on the responsible and ethical behavior of all concerned.

Issue: The Vanity Press

In preparation for an accreditation visit, all faculty members in the College were required to submit a list of their scholarly work. Three faculty members without prior publications indicated that they had been successful in co-authoring a book. Their colleagues who were assembling the report did not recognize the company and, as they met, one of them searched the publisher online. This company assured authors that their manuscripts would be warmly welcomed, not have to undergo any peer review, and be promptly converted into a hard cover book. Authors could sail through the process from manuscript to book in exchange for a substantial fee.

This is what is referred to as a “vanity press”. The vanity press is so named because it soothes the bruised ego of the unpublished by delivering a physical copy of a book to their door–if they are willing to pay for it. These companies make their money from the author, rather than by selling the books. The company retains the copyright. Desperate faculty members sometimes fall prey to this scam. What the author may fail to realize is that, in the absence of any quality control process and professional editing services, the "publication" is apt to be flawed. The author will be entirely responsible for any copyediting. No one is a perfect user of the language and, unless your manuscript has been subjected to multiple layers of skillful, professional editing, it surely will contain some errors. The vanity press is a complete departure from rigorous review and quality control norms of scholarly publishing. Based on the services rendered, authors could have accomplished much the same outcome in a more affordable fashion through self-publishing. As Beall (2021) explains, these unscrupulous enterprises charge outrageously high prices for a hard-bound copy of the book while the authors get no income from the sales. Many times, these companies target young academics who have just completed their thesis with an offer of publishing their research. These inexperienced scholars may be flattered by the invitation to see all the work they have completed in book format. What is particularly sinister about vanity press agreements is that authors frequently are prohibited from publishing their research as an academic paper afterwards because they have signed a legal contract that gives the company copyright to their work (Beall, 2021). Consult Beall's (2021) list of vanity presses here: https://beallslist.net/vanity-press/

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Determine if your institution is connected to Ulrich's Web Global Serials Directory Ulrichsweb Login Page (serialssolutions.com) (http://ulrichsweb.serialssolutions.com/login).

Springer Nature Resource: Try the Transfer Desk Transfer Desk | Authors | Springer Nature (https://www.springernature.com/gp/authors/transferdesk) to identify an alternative outlet for a rejected manuscript.

Online Video: John Bond explains the impact factor in publishing and its influence on scholarly work. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fP6iDq_io8

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Writing Groups: Three Models of Practice to Support Academic Authors

9

Dana Lynn Driscoll, Theresa McDevitt, and Kelli Jo Kerry-Moran

Contents

Abstract

Writing projects are an essential part of academic life yet completing them frequently poses a challenge for both novice and experienced authors. Working in some type of writing support group may provide the structure, training, community, accountability, and emotional support necessary to become a productive writer. This chapter highlights three approaches to academic writing support groups: (1) structured groups, (2) writing retreats, and (3) accountability groups. Structured groups can provide early career academics with activities designed

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_9

to assist them in improving their writing skills while making progress on a specific publication. Writing retreats gather writers together for a period of time in a location free from distractions to provide an environment that supports the writer's ability to progress. Accountability groups bring writers together repeatedly over a period of time to write silently together. When the appropriate group is chosen, participation can boost productivity as well as offer community and emotional support to writers in what can be an increasingly hectic and demanding academic climate. This chapter will offer guidance in choosing the right type of group to maximize benefits.

Keywords

Writing group • Writers' group • Collaboration • Accountability • Retreat • Support • Feedback • Peer feedback • Social writing

Three Narratives

Novice

Jill looks at the clock and sighs as she enters the last student's grade and shuts down her computer. Irritation rushes through her while she quickly packs her bag to go pick up her toddler from childcare. She had intended to spend the last two hours working on the manuscript for the book chapter with a deadline three weeks away. Instead, she had spent that time grading students' assignments. "It's impossible to write with this job," she rationalizes. After all, her students need her, and she wants to provide them with feedback on their essays during class the following day. Jill's last annual review letter had warned that she needed to increase her publications if she wanted to earn tenure. Maybe she could work on the manuscript tonight? No, she reminds herself, there will be dinner to make, homework to help with, and she promised her chairperson to review student portfolios before the assessment committee meeting tomorrow morning. The manuscript will have to wait. Maybe she can get to it over the weekend.

Why is it difficult to prioritize time for scholarly writing? What personal and professional responsibilities compete for your time? How can academics manage their time and schedules to meet all their professional and personal responsibilities?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

Carlos finds an empty spot in the writing retreat room and pulls out books, notes, and a laptop from his backpack. He quickly sets up his workspace before heading over to the refreshment table to grab a cup of coffee and donut. As a new faculty member, Carlos was excited about his new position but nervous about meeting the expectations for publication and promotion. He felt fortunate that his university was sponsoring this writing retreat for faculty. Carlos is surprised to see two senior colleagues arrive for the retreat because both are already tenured and have impressive lists of publications. "What brings the two of you to this retreat?" Carlos asks. Astrid, an associate professor, smiles and replies, "I come to these retreats every chance I get. I like talking about my writing with colleagues, and I've co-authored three cross-disciplinary journal articles over the years through these professional development *opportunities." Taylor, a full professor, adds, "I'm giving a workshop this afternoon, but I also have manuscripts I need to review for a book I'm editing. I'll take advantage of the writing sessions this morning to accomplish that."*

How is writing a social activity? Why do people sometimes assume that writing support groups are only for writers who aren't fully competent or need remediation? What similarities and differences do you see in the writing habits and practices of writers at different levels? How can collaborative writing practices benefit writers at different levels of productivity or experience?

Prolific

Ragia closes her email and clicks on the videoconferencing link. Susan and Oksana are already chatting when she joins the gathering, and the three of them spend a few minutes catching up on what has been happening in their lives. The women have been friends since graduate school but now live on three different continents working at different universities. Over the years, they have stayed connected and all three of them are now successful researchers, authors, and academics. Early in their careers, they began sharing drafts of manuscripts via email and at conferences. Recently, they started using videoconferencing to meet regularly. They support each other by providing critical feedback on whatever a group member requests and sometimes write together in longer writing sessions. Today's meeting focuses on chapter revisions for the third edition of their co-authored textbook. Each had agreed to take the lead on one chapter and share their drafts in advance of the online meeting so that everyone could provide suggestions. Ragia opens a file and shares her screen, and the group begins by discussing her chapter draft.

Even established writers can benefit from writing group support. How did this writing group support these authors through different stages in their careers? What responsibilities does each group member have to make the writing group successful? Do you think such a group might work for you or others in your local setting?

Activity: Writing Group Goals Reflection

What do you picture when you think of a writer? Do you imagine a solitary figure typing away at a keyboard for days on end? Or do you imagine someone sharing ideas and drafts with others, giving and seeking feedback, and participating in a community? We often think of writing as a solo endeavor, but the field of writing studies has long recognized that writing is an inherently social activity (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Miller, 1984; Swales, 2004). Much of the time, successful scholarly publication requires social support that includes a writing group. Academic writing groups, made up of two or more people to support writing, take many forms and have been around for centuries (Déri & Tremblay-Wragg, 2022). In practice, there is a dizzying array of variations. At their best, positive group dynamics are achieved, members build reciprocal trust, and authors feel safe sharing their writing experiences and manuscripts prior to completion. In these cases, a variety of benefits can be achieved (Haas, 2014). Writing center scholars (Cui et al., 2022; Sheppard & Tagharobi, 2015; Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2020) suggest that prospective writing group participants reflect upon questions such as the following to choose or form a suitable writing group.

- What are your goals for joining a writing support group? Are you looking to improve writing skills, find community in the often challenging and isolating writing process, develop time management skills, set and reach deadlines, or just spend time writing?
- Reflect upon your experiences with group work. Were these experiences positive or negative?
- Consider any positive experiences. What were the things that led you to feel satisfied with your experience?
- Consider any negative experiences. What were the things that caused you to be dissatisfied with your experience?
- What would be the best possible outcome of your participation in a writing support group, and how might the group process support that outcome?

Self-assessment: Writing Group Preferences Inventory
Writing support groups vary widely, and not every group will benefit every writer. Haas (2014) found that writing group members were more satisfied, and their groups more sustainable, when the needs, wants, goals and expectations of participants were compatible. Cui et al. (2022) note that writing groups can support writers in four different dimensions: skill-based, draft-based, time-based, and emotion-based. Prior to joining a group and/or periodically during the course of participation, individuals need to consider the criteria below. Use this as a checklist to identify a suitable writing group:

Writing Goals:

What would you like your writing group to help you do?

☐ Develop specific writing skills

☐ Learn more about productive writing processes and time management

☐ Provide psychosocial support and encouragement and reduce feelings of isolation

☐ Increase your motivation to continue writing

☐ Set specific goals for writing products

☐ Spend social time with other writers

☐ Share ideas and find research/writing partners for collaborative projects.

Group Composition:

What kind of people do you want to work with in a writing group?

☐ Individuals in the same discipline

☐ Individuals in a variety of disciplines

☐ Those working on the same type of project or using the same methods of inquiry

☐ People with similar levels of experience with writing and publishing

☐ People with a variety of levels of experience.

Leadership Style:

What kind of group leadership would you prefer in your group?

☐ Group led by an expert facilitator

☐ Group led by peers or shared leadership.

Meeting Structure:

What structure would you like your group to have?

☐ Meetings with set structure and time blocks

☐ Loose, responsive structure

☐ No structure at all.

Activities:

What would you like to do at the meetings?

☐ Brainstorm ideas for research topics or publication outlets

☐ Time for sustained writing

☐ Instruction in writing

☐ Sharing and feedback

☐ Discussion and emotional support

☐ Social time.

Feedback:

What kind of feedback would you expect to give and receive?

☐ Verbal response or discussion

☐ Written comments sent ahead of time

☐ None.

Meeting Mechanism:

What ways of meeting do you prefer?

☐ Face-to-Face and in-person

☐ Online (synchronous)

☐ Online (asynchronous)

☐ Hybrid (combination of online and in-person).

Meeting Context:

Which settings for face-to-face meetings do you prefer?

☐ Space convenient to home or office

☐ Meetings at members' homes

☐ Meeting at a coffee shop or library

☐ Meeting in a calming, comfortable, relaxing environment

☐ Computer lab with access to software and support.

Meeting Frequency:

How frequently would you like to meet?

☐ Weekly

☐ Monthly

☐ Once a semester

☐ Summers or during breaks

☐ Other.

Meeting Schedule:

When would you like to meet?

☐ Weekdays

☐ Weekends

☐ Mornings

☐ Afternoons

☐ Evenings.

9.1 Introduction: A Rationale for Writing Support Groups

Writing is usually considered an independent task, but the author's seclusion can be an obstacle to the writing process, especially in generating scholarly products. Supportive feedback, encouragement, and the companionships that effective groups generate can help writers achieve success. Given that many faculty members regard writing for publication as a challenge, joining a writing group can represent a welcome opportunity to find support and make progress toward publishing goals. Graduate students and early career faculty often report that academic writing can be an isolating and frustrating process, with particular difficulties surrounding time management and accountability (Kellogg, 2006). Another challenge for academic authors is handling the emotions associated with the peer review process (Cui et al., 2022; Geng & Yu, 2022). Because writing is a social activity (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Nystrand, 1989), many of those who are writing for publication—including women, minorities, and multilingual writers—find a writing group extremely helpful (Hambrick & Giamo, 2022a, 2022b). Veterans of academic writing groups have enthusiastically reported a host of positive outcomes resulting from their participation in such groups, including increases in productivity, motivation, and accountability (Chai et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2022; Dwyer et al., 2012; Manzano-Nunez et al., 2020; McGrail et al., 2006; Steinert et al., 2008; Sonnad et al., 2011; Scott et al., 2019). As these studies demonstrate, groups promote the development of communities of practice that offer writers support, decrease the feelings of isolation, increase writing productivity, improve wellbeing, and improve teaching practice (Beasy et al., 2020; Fassinger et al., 1992; Haas et al., 2020; Hammond, 2021; Stevenson, 2021). However, writing groups must serve the needs of their members and encourage healthy interactions to achieve positive outcomes. This chapter describes three main types of writing groups and offers guidance in selecting or forming productive writing groups.

9.2 Writing Group Participants: Similarities and Differences

Writing groups may consist of individuals in the same discipline or a variety of disciplines, those with similar or different projects, those working with similar methods, and/or those with similar or different backgrounds. Working with disciplinary colleagues can provide benefits in terms of peer mentorship and increased productivity. (Chai et al., 2019), but could also lead to competition and intellectual property concerns if appropriate ground rules are not set up and respected (Sheppard & Tagharobi, 2015). Conversely, interdisciplinary groups can offer opportunities for novel and creative collaborations. Many graduate students find success participating in writing groups with others also working on their master's thesis or dissertation (Cui et al., 2022; Kozar & Lum, 2013). Writers working on scholarly journal articles have found similar benefits (Chai, et al., 2019).

Another attribute of similarity and difference among participants in writers' groups is challenges to writing, such as those experienced by early career faculty or writers from minority groups. For example, writing support groups of early career faculty and female faculty provide unique benefits that might not found in more diverse groups (Dwyer et al., 2012; Sonnad et al., 2011). Leadership is also an important consideration. Some writers prefer groups led by writing experts, but Sheridan et al. (2020) and Cassese and Homan (2018) note the beneficial impact of peer mentorship in writing groups. Writers have many options for the types of people they want to work with in writers' groups and the leadership approaches they prefer.

9.3 Types of Writing Groups

Academic writing support groups offer many potential benefits. Carefully considering what you need and want from a group prior to searching for and committing to one can be a good first step to finding a suitable group. In this section, we discuss three models for writing support groups: the structured writing support group, the writing retreat, and the writing accountability group. These three approaches as well as their strengths and limitations are highlighted in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Typology of writing groups, benefits and drawbacks

Group type	Definition	Benefits	Challenges
Structured writing support group	A regular writing group that includes a set of structured activities to support building members' writing for publication skills while also making progress on a specific publication. These groups may also include goal setting and other forms of support for group members	Supports novice academic writers who need a more structured writing environment and who need additional knowledge concerning writing for publication	Requires that some existing structure or plan is in place for the group; this may be a burden to an individual who wants to start such a group
The writing retreat	A short-term writing group that comes together for one or more days to write in a location free from daily work or family distractions	Supports writers who have difficulty removing themselves from distractions of the workplace and home. Allows a limited yet concentrated time period to begin or make progress on a writing project	Often requires a commitment of a full day or more but does not allow for an extended daily, weekly, or monthly writing schedule; the lack of an extended commitment may hinder an individual who needs support to complete writing projects developed during the retreat
Accountability group	A regular writing group where the primary purpose is to set aside time to write silently together	Supports writers who have difficulty finding time to write	Requires a regular commitment by group members to show up to scheduled writing meetings

As Table 9.1 describes, not all writers' groups have the same benefits and strengths. Longer running groups, such as structured writing support groups or accountability groups, allow individuals to make regular progress towards publication over time, while writing retreats (which may only happen once or twice a year) allow writers to set aside time to write or launch new projects. Choosing the most appropriate writing group depends on your individual needs as a writer as well as where you are in your particular publication journey.

9.4 The Structured Writing Support Group

Min is an international doctoral student who has been working on her first publication. At the suggestion of her faculty advisor, Min is developing a course paper into a solo-authored publication. Although Min is initially enthusiastic, she gets stuck almost immediately due to having problems with time management, feelings of isolation, and difficulty in moving forward. She also struggles with the imposter phenomenon and continually questions whether she has the ability, knowledge, or insight to publish her own ideas. Min joins one of the semester-long writing groups for graduate students hosted by the university's writing center. In the group, she has support with setting goals, managing her time, and setting a writing schedule. This structure allows her to make steady progress. The writing group leader, an advanced graduate student tutor who has published, offers short lessons on a variety of topics, including overcoming emotional challenges and the imposter syndrome. Interactions with peers assure her that she is not alone, they are facing similar struggles, and they have something valuable to contribute. By semester's end, Min has successfully completed multiple revisions, gotten feedback from her faculty mentor, and submitted her first article for publication.

A structured writing support group may be self-organized or organized by units on campus seeking to support graduate students like Min and faculty writers. This is a group that meets regularly that may include a variety of writing support activities including goal setting, structured writing activities, and short lessons on a variety of issues. For example, the Jones White Writing Center at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, directed by co-author Dana, has run structured support groups, called Graduate Writing Groups, for the last four years as described in Cui et al., (2022). The goal of these groups is to support dissertation and article writing for the graduate student population. Beginning writers like Min benefit from the structure, companionship, and mentoring provided in this type of group. The groups consist of 5–6 graduate students and a graduate student tutor/facilitator who meet virtually for 90 minutes every two weeks across the course of a semester. The groups include a set of structured activities that include mini lessons, goal setting, check-ins, peer review, and regular writing time. Each group meeting includes a chance for each group member to check in and share what is going well and/or what they are struggling with. The group facilitator then offers 10-minutes mini-lessons on time management, goal setting, working with feedback, revision processes, and writing strategies. The rest of the meeting is either for individual writing time or peer review. Group members can provide input on how they want to use the time in groups–some want more time for writing while others want more time for peer review.

While a body of literature explores how to set up writing groups and offers models, (Gradin et al., 2006; Lee & Boud, 2003; Phillips, 2012; Simpson, 2012), only a few studies have empirically investigated the impact of such groups on writing outcomes. Two recent studies have focused on cross-disciplinary graduate writing groups (Cui et al., 2022) and graduate multilingual STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) writers (Hambrick & Giamo, 2022a, 2022b). Pre and post assessment data suggest that participants showed statistically significant improvement on their focus, writing goals, plan for each writing session, writing productivity, and writing progress (Cui et al., 2022). This emerging body of work suggests that structured writing groups can be geared towards particular disciplines and/or needs.

Not all universities have structured writing groups in place; however, individuals can form structured writing groups using existing materials. For example, in a second instance of a structured writing group on our campus, faculty writers seeking to make progress toward publication met for 12 weeks, once a week, and worked through Belcher's (2019) *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks,* which outlines an ambitious plan for revising a piece of academic writing, such as a successful conference paper, into a manuscript for publication. This group also took time for group members to share how things were going and get feedback and support from fellow participants.

In either case, the group meets with a structured set of activities to help all members of a group make regular progress on their writing. The structured activities may be set by a program or unit on campus, a facilitator, a textbook/workbook, or one or more group members. Activities often have educational content that helps members of the group learn more about writing for publication and themselves as writers, thus, building the knowledge, skill, and expertise of the group. Activities may also include helping members set goals, share experiences, and gain support from colleagues within the group. One of the benefits of such gatherings is that they encourage accountability because writers have a sense of responsibility to other members of the group. These groups also can help members to recognize the importance of pursuing scholarly publication and building their field's knowledge.

Structured writing groups typically benefit novice professional academic writers, including graduate students and early career faculty who are learning how to write effectively for publication. Academic authors who need a more structured writing environment or have specific ongoing writing needs, such as multilingual scholars, often find structured writing groups to be beneficial. Because many graduate programs do not provide coursework or training in writing for publication, those seeking to publish their first few articles may be at a loss as to how to manage the multiple, complex layers of this task (Kellogg, 2006). Structured writing support groups help fill this knowledge gap and assist writers in making progress on publications.

9.5 The Writing Retreat

Isabella is an associate professor at a small liberal arts college in the eastern United States. As a busy mother of two young children, she finds it difficult to balance the needs of her family, fulfill her teaching and service responsibilities in her department, and reach her publication goals. There is never enough time in her day and when she does sit down to write, the demands of student emails or grading always seem to take precedence. So, when she sees an email message advertising a college-sponsored writing retreat for faculty, she jumps at the opportunity to attend. Participants are advised to come to the retreat with a laptop, specific writing project, and all the resources they will need for the day. The retreat takes place in a beautiful, wooded area surrounded by hiking trails. Isabella shares her writing goals at the beginning of the retreat and learns that some participants are working on similar projects. Local experts, well published scholars, and writing specialists are guiding the writing retreat, making her feel confident in the support she is getting. The day consists of 90-minute writing sessions followed by 20-minute breaks and lunch at noon. At first, Isabella struggles to write and stares at her blank computer screen, but her reluctance to give up when everyone else is typing forces her to persist and she begins making progress. By the end of the first session, Isabella is on a roll but stops to take a short walk on the neighboring hiking trail. The morning goes by quickly. At lunchtime, Isabella eats out on the deck with a few faculty from different departments. She is surprised to hear senior faculty express similar frustrations and misgivings about their own scholarly productivity. After lunch, there is a 30-minute motivational presentation and practical question and answer session with an accomplished academic writer who is also a journal and book editor. The presenter emphasizes establishing good writing habits including consistency and perseverance. By the end of the day, Isabella hasn't accomplished everything that she set out to do, but her productivity is greater than it would have been otherwise. More importantly, she feels less isolated and resolves to find opportunities for shorter, distraction-free times when she can write—a habit they humorously refer to as "snack writing" (as opposed to binge writing)—throughout the semester.

As Isabella's experience illustrates, the writing retreat is another useful category of writing support group. The practice of retreating from the demands of the world to focus on writing may be nearly as old as the luxury of leisure and the development of writing as a creative act. Many famous writers have used the approach of a retreat to complete their work. Henry David Thoreau had a one-room cabin on Walden Pond, (Sims, 2014), children's book author Beatrix Potter purchased a cottage retreat, Hill Top, and other noted authors, including Maya Angelou, Ernest Hemingway, and J. K. Rowling, report using rented hotel rooms as retreat space to think and write (Johnson, 2021). Writing retreats for academics like Isabella are developed to address the need for scholarly publication and grant writing in higher education (Grant & Knowles, 2000; Moodley, 2017).

A writing retreat is an organized event, run by a facilitator and structured to provide academics with the opportunity to step back from the non-writing responsibilities of professional and daily life to focus on writing (Stevenson, 2021). Retreats bring writers together to work concurrently, often in the same room, on their writing. The retreat structure frequently involves sharing one's goals with the group at the beginning of the retreat or session and reporting on the progress made by the end. Other common components of writing retreats are timed writing blocks, reflection, team building, and discussions. Some retreats include guest speakers like the motivational presentation with the accomplished author in Isabella's retreat or structured writing sessions. However, most of the time remains dedicated to individual writing. Writing retreats are structured in at least three different ways): (1) solitary, in which participants work alone in separate rooms, (2) typing pool, in which participants work independently but still in the same room, and (3) hybrid, where participants work in their own home or space but connect through interactive technology such as video conferencing. Retreats can last anywhere from one to several days and may include time for reading each other's work and providing feedback. Table 9.2 defines these three types of writing retreats, possible benefits, and challenges to success.

Writing retreats have the features identified by Murray and Cunningham (2011): "collegiality, peer discussion, and dedicated time and space" (p. 833). Nontraditional academics such as women (Grant & Knowles, 2000) and minorities (Singh,

Table 9.2 Types of writing retreats and their characteristics

Writing retreat type	Definition	Benefits	Challenges
Solitary (Murray & Cunningham, 2011)	Participants work alone in separate rooms	Convenient and familiar format for writers used to working alone	Difficult to form relationships or benefit from conversations and feedback from other writers
Typing pool (Murray & Newton, 2008)	All participants work on their own in the same room at the same time throughout the retreat	Encourages relationship building and discussions about writing	Unfamiliar format for many academics. Some writers may be distracted by other writers
Hybrid	Participants work in their own space and location but coordinate with one another through technology, usually some form of video conferencing	Eliminates the need to find or reserve physical space. Enables people to participate across great distances. No cost for organizers if free or institutionally provided videoconferencing platforms are used	Individual writing locations may not be distraction-free. Participants may be tempted to work on other projects rather than persist at tough writing tasks because they are in a home or office setting with the possibility of turning off their video camera

2012) who are marginalized in academia can especially benefit from developing relationships at writing retreats that may lead to fruitful collaborations and improved self-identity as an academic. Similarly, a qualitative study of doctoral students in the UK found that participating in a writing retreat encouraged positive emotions, comradery, and a greater sense of oneself as an academic writer (Papen & Thériault, 2018). Writing retreats may function as a one-and-done professional development opportunity but can also be planned as a series of retreats held on a regular basis to support academics' continued progression through the writing process. Chapter co-author Kelli Jo, who has co-facilitated writing retreats, had a positive initial experience with a writing retreat that encouraged her to become involved with other writing retreats; she participated in them once a semester for several years.

However, writing retreats are not without weaknesses. Retreats require commitments from both institutions and individuals (Maheux-Pelletier et al., 2019) that can make them difficult to implement. Institutions may incur the costs of renting facilities, providing housing and meals, or paying for personnel to organize, facilitate or otherwise run the retreat. Participants can also bear heavy costs in terms of time when a full day or more is dedicated to the retreat and in terms of finances if they attend a writing retreat not sponsored or supported by their institution. Furthermore, retreats can devolve and become counterproductive if group dynamics encourage more writers' angst than writers' productivity. Finally, the most frequent criticism of writing retreats is that they do not last long enough to bring academic writing projects such as journal articles or book chapters to completion. These common types of scholarly writing require months and sometimes years of combing through the literature and producing countless drafts before a final product is ready to send off for review.

Despite these challenges, there are actions organizers can take to avoid or mitigate common criticisms of writing retreats. First, institutions can minimize costs by maximizing existing facilities and resources. For example, many universities own conference facilities that may be used for little to no added cost. Classrooms with comfortable seating, faculty development facilities, or even a section of the library might provide just the space that is needed for a retreat. Involving local experts is another cost-savings measure. Every college and university is likely to have accomplished authors among their faculty and staff who may be willing to run workshops, make presentations, or facilitate feedback and reflection groups. Third, using committed facilitators who will keep the writing group on schedule and on-task maintains a positive focus on writing success. Finally, holding writing retreats at regular intervals offers consistency that may help faculty to complete writing projects by participating in several retreats over time. Moodley (2017) advocates for writing retreats as one component, along with writing workshops and writing support groups, of a multi-step process for helping novice scholars to produce publications. As the example with Isabella's retreat showed, she did not complete her writing goals during the retreat but learned some strategies that she planned to implement into her own writing routine. Retreats can jumpstart scholarly work and help participants to develop better writing strategies and skills, but additional time must be invested and support available after the retreat so publication goals can be met.

Writing retreats have potential benefits for both novice scholars and more seasoned academics. The dedicated time, space, and resources that are often part of a retreat can allow authors to focus intensively on writing more than their typical routines and responsibilities would permit.

9.6 The Accountability Group

Brandon is an established scholar who has been working with the same faculty writing group for the last five years. Although they each work primarily on solo-authored publications independently, the group has been vital to Brandon's success. The group was originally established by a faculty group at his university who were all working towards tenure and promotion within the same two-year period. All of them were having difficulty finding time to write due to increasing demands on their time at their institution. They started the writing group to hold each other accountable as well as schedule a dedicated time to write. All of them not only achieved success with their publishing, but also maintained the group as a way to continue to support each other because the model worked well for them. The accountability group meets for three hours every Friday afternoon via videoconferencing software. The meeting begins with a brief, 3–5-min check-in where each of the four members shares goals for the session, asks questions, or shares successes. After the first 20 min of check-ins, the rest of the time is devoted to individual writing. They turn their video and audio off and open up their working publication drafts. Five minutes before the end of their session, they reconvene and share their goals for the next session and depart.

Many productive academic writers like Brandon choose to have the support of accountability groups. An accountability group is exactly as the name suggests–a group that meets to help create commitment to dedicating time for writing. For many academic writers, finding, making, and protecting writing time is one of the most formidable challenges (Silvia, 2007; Wells & Söderlund, 2018; Tulley, 2018). The challenges only increase as writers complete graduate programs and take their first faculty positions. It is a time when faculty responsibilities pile up and often cut into time that could otherwise be used for writing. The accountability group described with Brandon was formed by new faculty working toward tenure and promotion but struggling to manage writing and research with all the other responsibilities of the university. Part of why these groups are called "accountability" groups is because they require not only self-commitment to writing but also a commitment to others in the group. For example, co-author Dana has participated in several different accountability groups throughout her publishing career. In graduate school, this was with a group of fellow students in her doctoral program who would meet at a local coffee shop once a week for a few hours to sit and write together. The group also took a short amount of time to check in with each other and set goals for their writing session. As a faculty member, she participated in an online accountability group with three other faculty members at other institutions. Every Friday morning, the group would meet via videoconferencing software, complete a 5-min check-in, turn off the audio/video, and write. Co-author Kelli Jo is currently participating in an accountability group using a similar process. Tulley (2018) noted that faculty writers, even those who were experts in their fields, often report using such groups to support publishing success.

The principle is simple–until or unless you dedicate time to writing, it is too easy for other responsibilities to interfere and fill that time with other pressing concerns. Conversely, if you build in a group setting with that accountability, it becomes harder to simply reschedule or do something else–this is a date set into your calendar with other people. And those people can apply pressure to ensure that you show up and write. While accountability groups primarily focus on accountability, they may also share features with the two other groups included in this chapter, such as offering peer review of each other's work, goal setting, emotional support, or longer writing retreats.

This group is beneficial for academic writers who have difficulty sticking to a writing schedule, who have difficulty finding time to write, and who need some external accountability. Novice and expert academic writers may both benefit from this kind of group.

9.7 Facilitating Writing Group Work with Available Technology Tools

Regardless of the type of writing group you choose to join or start, whether it is totally face-to-face, entirely virtual, or a hybrid offering, technology is bound to be involved in some aspect of group formation and operation. Just as technological applications support most work academics, such tools can assist with starting and running writing support groups. These tools are rapidly evolving. New developments continue to offer new ways to support writing groups and facilitate aspects of writing support group work, enabling such groups to be more flexible and efficient than ever before. In this section, we offer general principles for choosing the best tools, provide examples of how tools can be used, and a few examples of some specific tools now in use.

When you are creating and facilitating writing groups, using technology that members already have, are familiar with, and cost little or nothing makes sense. Technology should support group work and not create barriers to participation. Requiring the purchase of expensive technology, applications not available to all participants at all locations, or new tools that participants would need to spend time learning, are likely to create barriers to easy participation and waste time that would be better spent in the writing process. In their article on choosing technological tools to facilitate writing groups, Kozar and Lum (2013) categorize the considerations as (1) logistical, (2) sustainability, and (3) pedagogical.

9.8 Choosing Technology Tools for Writing Groups

Logistical considerations include issues like difference in access to technology and differences in time zones that should be considered when making decisions. In another study, Kozar and Lum (2015) reported that synchronous sessions were found to be more effective and preferred by their writing group participants. However, the flexibility of participation in an asynchronous group might be needed, and therefore preferred by writers who, for whatever reason, cannot attend synchronous groups. Also, Kozar and Lum (2013) advocate using low or no cost tools because they are more accessible and sustainable. In addition, they suggest pedagogy be considered, including making sure that the technology will support the activities the groups wished to pursue, whether it is discussion, text sharing, and/or review. Bourgault et al. (2022) noted that when the pandemic forced their face-to-face group online, they used similar reasoning and chose a platform already used by the university.

Social media platforms support the work of many writing groups and are generally free and something that many academics are already using. Designed to enhance users' ability to gather and share information and connect with others, they offer clear potential for supporting community building and sharing that are so important to writing group success. O'Dwyer et al. (2017) pointed out that social media has the potential to allow academics to reach across the world and make possible collaborations once limited by place and time. Their study with "Shut up and Write" groups on Twitter found that that platform could help bring people together to build a writing practice community, find support and connection, and overcome the isolation of academic life. Scott et al. (2019) collected data from participants in a Facebook based writing support group and found that Facebook groups support writing group work in much the same way as in-person groups, but also allowed for the participation of those who are no longer in the same geographic locality. Table 9.3 summarizes some tool types, how they can be useful, and provides a few examples of each type.

9.9 Finding and/or Forming a Writing Group

Whether you want to find an existing writing group or start your own, this chapter offers a range of resources. If you would like to join a writing group, begin exploring supports for scholarly writing on your campus; for example, writing retreats are likely advertised to the entire faculty or offered through a teaching and learning center, while other writing groups may be department based. If you are a graduate student, you may also be able to find a group available from your institution's writing center or graduate school. Professional organizations also may offer opportunities for virtual writing groups; consider posting on a professional listserv to find existing groups that may be open to new membership. If your efforts to join an existing virtual writing group fail, consider working with appropriate organizations at your institution or starting one of your own.

Table 9.3 Facilitating writing groups with common tech tools

Function	Description	Examples
Social media apps	Already used extensively in higher education, they can easily be adopted to support writing groups in ways such as facilitating the formation of a group and/or keeping track of writing time	Facebook and Twitter
Scheduling tools	Assist academics in setting up meetings and sharing ideas They can also be used in forming and keeping a tangible record of activities and interactions associated with writing groups	Trello, Slack and Doodle
File sharing and collaboration tools	Support the sharing of textual drafts and peer review asynchronously or in real-time	Google Docs, Microsoft OneDrive, email software, Dropbox
Video conferencing tools	Allow writing group members to overcome geographic boundaries and work together Synchronous discussions can take place, or group writing times can be monitored Allow for the saving of group activities for those who cannot attend at a particular time Create opportunities for hybrid attendance for face-to-face meetings	Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype and live stream gaming tools such as Twitch
Specialized tools	Specialized tools such as bibliographic management software allow users to share bibliographic references and documents and support the writing of scholarly works which require extensive bibliographies	Zotero and Mendeley Groups

You may also choose to form your own group. Start with the self-assessment included at the beginning of this chapter to determine what would be best for you and review the activity at the start of this chapter to reflect on issues such as frequency, meeting times, and goals of the group. Share the assessments with potential writing group members so that everyone can outline their expectations and hopes for the group. Beyond the group structure and format, here are some additional guidelines for how you can find members for your writing group:

- **Examine your professional networks**. You can form a writing group with peers from graduate school, members of your department or university, or people in your broader field. Consider who might be most interested in joining the group.
- **Ensure that everyone is committed**. Writing groups work for accountability and support if everyone is committed to attending and to their regular writing practice. Ensure people's commitment levels as you form the group.
- **Consider personalities that will work well together**. Many writing groups are made up of people who are already friends and are looking to continue and deepen those connections while also being productive. Consider this a way to spend time with people who you already respect and who can cultivate a supportive and healthy writing environment.
- **Consider a closed process vs. open process for group membership**. An open call for a writing group can allow for a wide variety of participation, but also creates an element of the unknown. Inviting people individually can allow you to be more selective in forming the writing group.

With these tips and the above assessments, you are well on your way to establishing a productive writing group. Also remember that even though a writing group might be beneficial for you at one point in the trajectory of your professional career, it does not mean that it will continue to meet your needs for growth as a writer. The needs and wants of writing group participants change over time so it is a good idea to periodically renegotiate meeting structures and characteristics within the group, to make sure that your group will serve your needs. If not, you should feel comfortable leaving your group and finding, or forming, one that is a better fit.

9.10 Conclusion: Selecting Writing Groups for Success

Academic writing support groups offer participants many benefits and take many different forms. Writers are most likely to find benefits in such groups when they carefully consider what will work best for them prior to joining. Structured academic writing groups can provide early career academics activities and content that will help them transition to more seasoned writers. Writing retreats offer participants an opportunity to work on writing projects with others in a distraction-free location. Accountability groups can motivate writers to stick to the task of writing with colleagues who will hold them accountable. Whichever type of group is chosen, online tools make it easier than ever to start and participate in a writing support group and allow participants to overcome geographic boundaries to work together. Yet even when the perfect type of group is chosen, the group's success will largely depend on the personalities, dispositions, trustworthiness, and dedication of group members. Whether you join an existing group or build one from the ground up, identify colleagues who are committed to the process and will follow through with the goals they set.

Issue: Are Writing Groups a Waste of Time?

Academic writing support groups have the potential to help writers be more productive and find more satisfaction in the writing process. For many reasons though, individual participants may find that participation in a particular writing group is not positive or productive and therefore a waste of time. The following is a list of common writing group issues that may arise and strategies for avoiding and/or dealing with them.

Mismatch between group offerings and participants' needs. When the expectations of group members are not compatible, groups may not be helpful. A good match between participant preferences and group offerings supports the success and sustainability of a writing group, so taking the time to discover if participants are compatible is worth the initial investment of time and effort (Haas, 2014; McMurray, 2017).

How do group participants discover if they are a good match? Spending the first meeting of a writing group sharing participants' goals and preferences in terms of group activities, meeting times, qualities of people to work with, and other variables helps group members discover if they are compatible. Also, establishing ground rules–even formal ground rules agreements for the functioning of the group–helps to build a sense of psychological safety that sets the stage for positive and productive group work (Furr, 2000; Sheppard & Tagharobi, 2015). Starting off with such discussions and reaching shared understandings about the rules of engagement can prevent group discord later on.

Ineffective facilitation. Writing groups can be successfully led by expert leaders or peers, but some kind of functional leadership and facilitation is necessary for groups to be productive. McMurray (2017) argues that facilitation skills can be enhanced through research, working with other facilitators, and gathering feedback from group members. Resources offering guidance on how to facilitate writing groups are plentiful, for structured dissertation writing groups (Cui et al., 2022; Lee & Golde, n.d.; McMurray, 2017), accountability groups (Deitrich, 2023; Skarupski & Foucher, 2018), writing retreats (Moore, 2003; University of Edinboro, 2009), or general advice (Russo, 2022). These resources provide checklists, discussion questions, activities, and advice that can help someone willing to make a good start in running a writing group.

Unproductive feedback activities. Not every writing group shares drafts and provides feedback to members, but sharing drafts and getting feedback is important to improve manuscripts (McMurray, 2017). In the best cases, feedback is constructive and informed and offered in a friendly and positive manner that helps writers improve their writing. Unfortunately, problems can arise in quality and delivery of feedback, and as well in how feedback is accepted by the author of the piece being discussed.

Providing useful feedback on other people's writing and accepting feedback are not skills that come easily to everyone, and issues can arise. One way for groups to head off these problems is to discuss and reach consensus on the nature, delivery, and value of feedback. Participants who already have some experience with providing feedback may be able to suggest methods that have worked for them. Feedback models are also readily available. Advice on giving, getting, and using feedback–including forms and checklists to get the group started–can be found in works by Belcher (2019), Lee & Golde, (n.d.) and Sheppard and Tagharobi, (2015). Establishing guidelines for feedback delivery and acceptance may go a long way to improving dialogue within the groups.

Group conflict. Even in groups made up of compatible individuals with a common purpose, conflict may erupt and undermine feelings of trust and mutual support necessary for a productive group. Proactively identifying what constitutes disruptive behavior can counteract conflicts (Sheppard & Tagharobi, 2015). Landis (2008) offers an exercise designed to help group members reach consensus on expectations for group behavior and civility during discussions. Landis includes a section on determining sanctions that can be used when conflict gets out of hand. Finally, if members of a group cannot reach consensus and conflicts are too common, it may be time for a member to leave. Reeves (2002) offers a checklist for helping members decide if is time to move on to another group.

Unrealistic goal setting or failure to track progress. Making progress in writing and recognizing progress made is less likely when goal setting and tracking progress is not intentionally or realistically addressed. Skarupski and Foucher (2018) and Bourgault et al. (2022) describe a process that involved goal setting and progress reflection activities for the beginning and end of each session. They argued that this process provides group members with the opportunity to encourage their colleagues, ask helpful questions, and offer tips for success. Realistic goal setting, sharing goals, and reflecting on progress helps writing group members stay on track. It also allows group members to help one another and celebrate together. When this is done, members are more likely to make progress, and decide that their writing group experience has not been a waste of time.

Applications of Technology

- Tech Tool: Visit compose.ly.com and captera.com for recommendations of the best collaborative writing tools.
- Springer Nature Resource: See if your institution subscribes to Nature Masterclasses and complete the tutorial on collaboration https://masterclasses.nature.com/inroducing-collaboration/17062222
- Online Video: **Google Drive: Sharing and Collaborating** https://youtu.be/xapBM5iOnn4.

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Revising the Manuscript: Resilience and Responsiveness

10

Mary Renck Jalongo and Olivia N. Saracho

Contents

Abstract

Revision in scholarly writing should not be confused with proofreading. Revision is a long, time-consuming process that begins with a first draft and reconceptualizes a paper many times. With each revision, the manuscript is modified in substantive, rather than superficial, ways. Successful scholarly authors report that this recursive cycle occurs 8–15 times before their work is ready to submit. Inexperienced authors often find this surprising. They may assume that the manuscripts they encounter in the literature were produced with ease by scholars who are "good" writers. Yet like professional musicians who impress with their dazzling level of performance, superlative writing is based not only on innate talent but also on seeking out opportunities to learn, forms of social support, and deliberate, extensive practice. Novice and expert

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_10

academic writers also tend to differ in their attitudes about making major revisions to a manuscript. The less experienced may worry that drastic changes to a manuscript will devolve into chaos while skillful writers have few reservations about discarding whole sections, completely reorganizing a paper, or going back to reviewing the literature for inspiration. Accomplished authors have acquired confidence that, if they make a mess out of a manuscript, they will find a way to wrestle it under control. Meeting peer reviewers' and editors' expectations after a manuscript is evaluated is another type of revision. Authors' hoped-for response of "don't change a word—it's perfect as is" occurs so seldom that it is practically nonexistent. Oftentimes, when authors get the decision of "revise and resubmit" on a manuscript, they give up and withdraw it. Yet editors do not encourage authors to resubmit unless they see potential in a manuscript. If authors make revisions based on reviewers' and editors' feedback, their chances of acceptance increase dramatically. Learning to take criticism and use it is, in many ways, a basic survival skill for academic authors seeking to publish. This chapter guides academic authors in becoming more resilient and responding appropriately to recommendations for improving their manuscripts.

Keywords

Revision • Resilience • Proofreading • Feedback • Editing • Revise and resubmit • Peer review

Three Narratives

Novice

The editor of a book series for a major publisher invites an early career author to submit a chapter to a book she is compiling. The invitation was based on an article published by the writer in one of the major publications in the discipline. When the chapter arrives, however, it is a disappointment. In the letter from the editor, she notes that "the work shows signs of haste in preparation." When the author receives long lists of recommendations for revision from the peer reviewers, she is stunned. From her perspective, she was encouraged to contribute a chapter and it seemed like a "sure thing," but this now seems like a rejection. Before responding to the editor, the author decides to talk with a colleague who has extensive experience as a book editor. The colleague/editor advises her to systematically address the issues raised by the peer reviewers and says, "This is not the time to get indignant and stage a protest nor to 'take your toys and go home'—you have a second chance, so you should make the most of it." Her more experienced colleague also suggests rereading the letter of invitation. It makes it clear that chapters will be peer reviewed and that there is no guarantee of acceptance. The author accepts this advice, invests much more time in the manuscript, and the chapter is published.

Were you aware that most scholarly articles, chapters, and books that you read in reputable outlets were revised by the authors based on peer review prior to publication—and perhaps, more than once? Have you ever completely abandoned a manuscript after being asked to revise?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

A faculty member meets with the provost to propose a fall seminar on writing for publication. The professor attended a preconference institute that was particularly informative and helpful. Rather than just giving publication tips based on the presenter's success as an author, the workshop focused on participants' goals. All of them were required to identify a suitable outlet for a manuscript in progress and write a letter of inquiry to the editor that succinctly described the proposed submission. They then met individually with the presenter—a very accomplished author/editor—to get feedback. This approach limited participation to 20 participants. The provost agrees to sponsor the event and suggests that several faculty members whose applications for promotion were denied due to insufficient publication should be required to participate. The faculty member replies that, to achieve impressive results, participants need to be eager to attend and serious about publishing. In fact, he has already generated a list. They agree to a compromise. The faculty members the provost suggested were invited, but only two of them accepted. Most of the attendees were early career faculty members. By the next fall, participants had produced an impressive array of scholarly work, averaging almost 1.5 publications per attendee.

What might have contributed to the success of this faculty professional development initiative? What is the value of dialogue between the more experienced and less experienced in writing for publication?

Prolific

After an author's book is published, she is contacted by the national newsletter, Inside Higher Ed, *for an interview. She has done interviews with newspapers and other publications in the past that had less than satisfactory outcomes. In some instances, the reporter did not represent the information accurately. In one memorable experience with a national newspaper, the reporter used the interview material extensively in a feature article without crediting her as the source. But this author's main reservation about giving interviews is that talk—unlike writing—does not allow for revision. The interviewer has sent the questions in advance, so the professor asks if it would be acceptable to draft a written response to each question. He agrees. She invests quite a bit of time in developing those responses and asks her husband and a colleague to critique the answers before submitting them. When the interview is published, it is almost identical to what she had written. For once, she is satisfied with the outcome because she could reflect on the questions first, avoid going off on tangents, and produce clear, concise answers.*

Do you consider yourself to be a better at speaking or writing? As one scholar put it, "I prefer writing because I can revise myself into sounding more intelligent." Writing is sometimes referred to as a "plastic art" because it can be molded to suit authors' purposes. When others critique your manuscript do you view those comments as painful barbs or have you learned to use criticism and the revision process to improve thinking and writing?

Activity: Improving Skill in Editing

Editing is a combination of revision and proofreading skills. The suggestions in Table 10.1 are adapted from The Writing Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2022). Indicate whether it is part of your current practice or a new strategy for you to implement by checking the boxes accordingly.

Self-Assessment: Misconceptions About Revision

When authors are asked to revise a manuscript, the classic "fight or flight" response sometimes occurs. Authors in fight mode protest that the reviewers are uninformed/ misinformed, unfair, or that too much extra work would be required of them. Authors in flight mode are wounded by the criticism, withdraw their manuscript, and may decide to abandon all hope of publication. Usually, a more moderate and measured response is a better course of action.

Table 10.2 compares/contrasts productive and unproductive strategies when interacting with editors and reviewers.

Academic authors frequently are told that they need to develop a thick skin that prevents them from being wounded by criticism, but it is much more than that. They do not succumb to arrogance ("How dare they criticize my work!") nor do they go along with absolutely everything ("Whatever you say—I need this publication."). As this compare/contrast table has highlighted, they are responsive to reviewers' input, rebound from discouraging feedback, strive to improve the manuscript, and persist at publishing it.

10.1 Introduction: A Definition of Revision

Revision refers to the substantial changes that authors make to their manuscripts as they generate successive drafts of the paper. The purpose of revision is to improve the quality of the work. Making revisions can be a puzzling process, as whole sections are sometimes discarded, or the organizational structure of the piece is revamped. When authors' view of their own work is limited, it is like driving through dense fog. In both situations, the pathway ahead is unclear and there is an ever-present fear of losing control that will lead to disaster. Yet the first step toward successful revision is to understand the difference between revision and proofreading. Inexperienced authors may erroneously believe that they are the same thing. Although both revision and proofreading result in making changes to a manuscript, they occur at different levels. Proofreading refers to surface level changes. Revision refers to substantive changes. You are not revising unless it results in a significantly different document each time. Some of the aspects you'll revisit include content, clarity, style, overall structure, organization within paragraphs, and citations (The

Table 10.1 Recommendations on editing your own work

S.no	Recommendation	Current Practice	New strategy
1.	**Arrange the environment to maximize concentration.** Quiet surroundings without frequent distractions are best when revising and proofreading. It is hard to multi-task when doing a careful edit because it divides your attention		
2.	**Recognize the limitations of grammar and spell check.** Autocorrect of spelling can result in some major errors. As long as you produce a real word, spell check will not flag it as incorrect		
3.	**Edit for different things at different sessions.** If you attempt to perform all editing tasks simultaneously, it can be overwhelming. Try doing one thing at a time. For example, you can do a logical argument edit by listing the main point of each paragraph		
4.	**Distribute the editing over several smaller sessions.** Attention wanes when doing a tedious task such as proofreading a manuscript. Don't try to do everything at one sitting. Revisit the manuscript multiple times		
5.	**Consider the format.** Determine your best conditions for editing—it might be a combination of reading on screen and marking up a hard copy. You may want to give the manuscript a different look by printing it out single spaced or formatting it into the publisher's template		
6.	**Go through the manuscript slowly.** When reading becomes skimming, the mind tends to "fill in" a missing word for us, so avoid glossing over errors by forcing yourself to slow down		
7.	**Be careful with possessives and plurals.** Mixing them up is a very common error. Professor's is singular possessive (to signal what one professor owns (e.g., the professor's published article). Professors is plural (e.g., Our Department includes many senior professors) and professors' is plural possessive (e.g., Professors' course syllabi are aligned with the accreditation standards). Because the words professor's, professors, and professors' all sound the same, mistakes are common		
8.	**Discover the rules.** Where to place commas often is perplexing. A good example is a clause within a sentence. You put a comma before and after a clause if the remaining parts form complete sentence. For example: "Many faculty members, both early and late career, report that lack of time is a major challenge in writing for publication". Because it reads as a complete sentence without the clause, those two commas are needed		

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

S.no	Recommendation	Current Practice	New strategy
9.	**Prefer the active voice.** The active voice makes it clear who or what is responsible for the action of the verb, for example: "When authors proofread carefully, it improves their chances for success at publication." Stating the same concept in passive voice might read: "Skillful editing is improved by repeated readings of the manuscript." In this sentence, it is a mystery who is doing the editing. Academic writing uses both active and passive voice constructions, but current editorial preferences lean toward active voice		
10.	**When in doubt, look it up**. At times, your internal editor signals that something isn't quite right. For example, the words imminent, immanent, and eminent often are confused. It only takes a moment to type them into the search box and find: When something is imminent, that means it's "impending." Immanent isn't a typo; it means "inherent." Eminent means "distinguished." https://www.dictionary.com/e/imminent-vs-immanent-vs-eminent/		
11.	**Check the style manual.** Authors are sometimes surprised that the style manual answers many of their questions. The APA manual (American Psychological Association, 2020), for example, indicates that a numbered list is to be in the format of (1), (2) and that the numbers from 1 to 10 are to be written as words rather than as numerals. It answers questions about bias-free language. It also answers researchers' questions about how to format statistical tables. Refer to the style manual of your discipline		
12.	**Systematically address language flaws.** Has someone pointed out that you misused affect and effect? Affect is a verb that means to influence change in something (e.g., How might expectations for the peer review process affect academic authors' decisions to submit a manuscript for publication?). Effect is a noun that refers to an *end result*. So, while reading a sentence, remind yourself that the "e" in effect is a result (e.g., What is the *effect* of participation in writer's group based on self-reports from the participants?). If a language flaw persists, avoid it. For example, replace the word effect with outcome or consequence and affect with influence		
13.	**Refer to the publisher's guidelines.** Before submitting a manuscript to a specific outlet, did you check the guidelines for authors? They typically specify, at the very least, the referencing style required, the limitations on the length of the abstract and manuscript, the use of footnotes, and the cover sheet information required. Fail to comply with any of these criteria and the work is likely to be bounced back to the author as a "revised before review" decision that wastes everyone's time. The little details matter		

Table 10.2 Unproductive and productive responses to requests for revision

From	To
I thought this paper was finished and I'm angry about these negative comments. I am going to contest the decision	It is disappointing that there is more work to be done but, in the interest of an even stronger article, I'll do it. Revising is less work than starting all over again with a different outlet or a new paper. I'll make time for it
I really need a publication now for tenure/ promotion. I'll send a very flattering letter to the editor and plead for a speedy review	It can take months to get a manuscript reviewed and accepted. My materials are due in October, so I'm starting a full year in advance to give myself the best chance at success
I don't understand why there are so many questions and comments. It was perfectly clear to me. The reviewers obviously did not read the paper carefully	I can see where someone who is unfamiliar with my work might get confused here. I have worked to make those sections clearer
This reviewer really was not helpful and off-base, but I'll make the change anyway—or just ignore it–because I don't want to get rejected	I explained to the editor why I did not make two of the changes that were recommended by one of the reviewers. I provided a sound rationale for my decision
I don't want to delay the publication process any longer, so I'll reply to the editor immediately indicating that the changes were made	I printed out all of the reviewers' comments and organized them. Over the course of several days, I revisited them, jotting down notes about ways to respond. My detailed letter to the editor describes the more substantive changes and lists the minor edits at the end
The three reviewers of my manuscript evidently viewed my paper very differently. This makes it obvious that the peer review process is seriously flawed. If they cannot agree, what do they expect an author to do? I can't please everyone	Reviewers bring different areas of expertise and experience to bear on a manuscript. Expecting a unanimous decision is unrealistic. Responding to multiple perspectives will help me to reach a wider audience

Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2022). In fact, Germano (2021) contends that, when it comes to scholarly writing, revision is the only type of writing that really matters. He notes that revision involves rethinking your writing from the ground up, as when the electronic voice of a car's navigation system says, "Recalculating route." (p. 7). Proofreading, on the other hand, has more to do with tweaking the manuscript along the way and then putting on the finishing touches at the end of the writing process. After a manuscript is accepted for publication, proofreading is the final check of the typeset copy. Now that the difference between revision and proofreading is clear, academic authors need to know what is expected of them by editors and peer reviewers.

Over more than twenty years of teaching a writing for publication course, I have asked doctoral students to (confidentially) indicate, on a small square of recycled paper, the number of times they *significantly* revised their written assignments for courses before turning them in. The number of substantial rewrites they reported was rarely more than two or three. Furthermore, under pressure of class assignment deadlines, they admitted to sometimes submitting a first draft and then checking for errors rather than truly revising their papers. As a result, students had little experience with revision as Germano (2021) describes it:

> Revising is going back to a piece of writing and trying to hear what's in the words you've got so far. What's missing, what's in the way, what's in the wrong place or in the wrong voice. What needs to be said, what needs to be unsaid (erased completely or, sometimes, just implied), what needs to be said differently. (p. 16)

It is not unusual to approach critique of a manuscript by others with some trepidation or even dread. As one of my fellow doctoral students once confided, "Sometimes I feel like brown shoes at a black tie event—so out of place, so inadequate with everyone staring at my feet. It's not only your writing that's evaluated but also your intelligence." Putting your written work out there and subjecting it to criticism takes courage.

10.2 Trust, Resilience, and Peer Review

Some years ago, I developed a brochure announcing that I was willing to review manuscripts for my departmental colleagues and provide an editor's perspective. Although I worried that I might find a thick stack of manuscripts in my mailbox, that did not happen. At the time, there were approximately 20 full-time, tenure track faculty members and just four of them—all females and recently hired assistant professors—opened their work to critique. It is important to note that none of these individuals cut corners on teaching or service—quite the contrary. I knew because I reviewed their portfolios as a member of the tenure/evaluation committee. The four manuscripts they shared were in good shape and editing them was not particularly time-consuming. Better yet, all were subsequently published. The authors appreciated additional input on their work; it gave them the nudge they needed to submit their manuscripts to a journal for anonymous peer review. As time went on, we collaborated on articles, book chapters, and books. They also accepted various leadership roles within the Department and College.

I suspect that what contributed to their decision to participate in in-house peer review was not only a measure of confidence in their competence but also a sense of trust. Trust is a mental state of willingness to be vulnerable to others; according to the American Psychological Association (2023a, 2023b), it is "the degree to which each party feels that they can depend on the other to do what they say they will do" (unpaged). Trust is foundational to mature relationships, including those amongst departmental colleagues and the networks of professionals to which each of us belongs (Driver, 2015). When writers lack this sense of trust, they tend to worry excessively about others judging them or ridiculing them behind their backs. Conversely, fostering a sense of trust supports identity work and resilience in the face of adversity.

The American Psychological Association (APA) (2020) defines resilience as "the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands" (unpaged). Gelman (1991), a prominent psychiatrist, used the analogy of glass, plastic, or steel to describe an individual's level of vulnerability. If these three substances are struck with a hard object, the glass shatters, the plastic is damaged, and the steel withstands the impact. Why are some people better able to adapt to negative situations and bounce back from adverse circumstances? There are three predominant influences on resilience that we apply to writing in Table 10.3.

Reviewers usually are faculty members and, taken as a group, they can be relied upon to have different professional opinions. The expectation that multiple reviewers will reiterate what others have said is therefore unrealistic. True, three different reviewers may comment that the background section is not well organized, but each will point to different aspects of the work. If the recommendations are valid, then critique is a route to strengthening a manuscript rather than a harsh negative judgment.

Table 10.3 Cultivating resilience in academic writing

Major influences on resilience (American Psychological Association, 2022)	Implications for scholarly writing
1. How the individual views and engages with the world	Authors need to be better informed about the norms, values, and processes of scholarly publishing. Seek out people who are knowledgeable about these matters and learn from them—in person, in virtual sessions, or in published resources. Prioritize learning more about writing and publishing
2. The availability and quality of social resources to support the individual	Adults tend to approach learning as a project, become fully engaged/immersed in it, and make use of a wide array of resources to achieve mastery (TEAL, 2011). Academic authors need to figure out what social supports they need at each point across their career trajectory. For example, a manuscript review from a trusted colleague, a sabbatical leave to write or edit a book, work with an international research team, or a post-doctoral study
3. The specific coping strategies implemented during the difficult situation	It can be helpful to speak candidly with accomplished authors about the ways they have dealt with disappointment. Ask questions about specific issues and how they have handled them—such as differences of opinion amongst peer reviews of a manuscript. Determine if adopting some of these practices might be more productive than what you have done previously

10.3 Responding to Feedback on Manuscripts

One theory about why electronic games can become so addictive is that the player gets immediate feedback on performance. Submitting a manuscript for publication runs counter to this. Usually, months pass before authors get the results of peer review. Particularly if they are graduate students who were accustomed to getting high praise on assignments, they may be discouraged by detailed critique of a manuscript. Another source of appeal for electronic games is that gamers decide when to play and whether to attempt a higher level of difficulty. Submitting a manuscript for publication, on the other hand, may be prompted by external pressures and peer review may place the author in direct competition with the "big fish" of the field.

Based on a scoping review of the 61 publications on effective feedback, Ossemberg et al. (2019) identified key characteristics of effective feedback that we apply to academic writing in Table 10.4. On all counts, formal peer review can be dissatisfying—particularly for inexperienced academic authors.

As this list suggests, leaping into formal peer review processes seldom gives novice academic authors the type of feedback that they need most. Inouye and McAlpine (2017, 2019) reviewed the literature on doctoral students' writing, feedback, and academic identity and arrived at several conclusions. First, identity as a scholar is shaped primarily through social structures and interactions. This builds a case for ongoing peer and faculty review of written work. Secondly, important interrelationships appear to exist among feedback, critical thinking, writing, and identity. Evidently, the best feedback for doctoral student authors occurred within a context where writing was regarded as a process involving multiple iterative cycles—in other words, revision. All this calls into question the common practice of assigning papers to students that are evaluated at semester's end by one faculty member. It also challenges the assumption that doctoral students can be expected, as early career faculty members, to "just get on with it" and "figure it out for themselves" where writing for publication is concerned. The specious argument by some faculty of "that's what I had to do, and it didn't hurt me" runs counter to the evidence compiled by Kamler and Thomson (2014).

Table 10.5 is an actual review of a manuscript that required, in the opinion of the reviewers, major revisions. The particulars have been omitted to preserve confidentiality. Imagine that you received this type of feedback. How would you respond?

Clearly, there is a lot of work yet to be done here. However, it is also evident that there is some promise; otherwise, the reviewer would not have invested so much time in suggesting ways to improve the manuscript. In this case, the author was determined. When the editor and reviewers saw the new and improved version, they were favorably impressed and decided to accept it, with minor revisions. The author had taken the suggestions to heart and put in a tremendous amount of additional work.

Authors need to develop effective ways of coping with feelings of being overwhelmed, panicky, and hopeless when so much more is expected of them. One of

Table 10.4 Effective feedback versus peer review

Effective feedback	Formal peer review
Participants are engaged in a two-way process with reciprocity between and among them	Authors may feel relatively powerless because the decision about publication rests with the editor who is guided by the peer reviewers
Decisions are based on criteria and supported by multiple forms and sources of evidence	The vague citerion for rejection might be that the manuscript "does not suit our current publication needs." Peer reviewers may not consistently apply the evaluation criteria
Recipients invite and welcome corrective feedback	The author may be seeking approval and have no interest in critique or revision
Feedback occurs frequently throughout the process	The manuscript review process for an article typically occurs twice—first with the initial submission and again after incorporating reviewers' recommendations. For a book, feedback might be offered twice—once at the proposal/sample chapter stage and then after the entire manuscript is assembled
Input about performance is provided promptly	To give peer reviewers sufficient time, articles subjected to rigorous peer review typically take 12–18 weeks. For a book-length manuscript, it often is even longer
Constructive criticism takes the individual and their developmental needs/learning preferences into account	The primary task is to respond to the paper and assess its suitability for publication in the outlet rather offer individual support to authors
Feedback considers the future professional development goals of the individual	Manuscript assessment operates on the here and now. The purpose is to produce a high-quality publication that meets the needs of the readership rather than focus on furthering authors' professional development
Input engages the individual in different ways and is multidimensional	Anonymous peer review strives to be objective and avoid bias rather than engage the writer in an interpersonal exchange. The scholar who submits the manuscript usually feels distanced from the editor and reviewers

the best ways to achieve this is to take time—but not too much time—and reread the reviews when emotions are not so raw. Be calm and methodical rather than reactive. Then address each suggestion, point by point, and explain what was done in response. It is acceptable to disagree with certain points, but authors need to justify those decisions. Impulsively racing through the changes and resubmitting with an email that states "All the revisions were made" will not succeed. This does nothing to verify that you used input from the reviewers to strengthen the work. Another major mistake is to ignore the deadline for submitting the revisions. If you cannot complete the edits by that time, inquire about the possibility of an extension rather than just allowing the deadline to pass. Journal editors often are working on an issue of the publication 6–12 months ahead of the date that a manuscript will

Table 10.5 Sample manuscript review

The value of this manuscript is that it provides a theoretical foundation for the theme of the special issue of the journal. Nevertheless, it would require substantial revision to be clearer and more helpful to the readership of the publication. The main reservation about the submission is that it reads more like a dissertation chapter than a professional journal article. Some of the references are rather dated and current sources that address the topic more directly have been overlooked. Almost none of the references were published within the past five years. The focus appears to be more on documenting what the author(s) have read rather than on a clearly and succinctly communicating these important concepts to the audience, who may be largely unfamiliar with what is being discussed. For example, the figure that does not appear until page 14 (which was well done, by the way) could be included much earlier to explain the main ideas of the manuscript. When presenting a logical argument, the first step is to define terminology. It almost seems as though a better structure for readers who are likely to be uninitiated to the ideas presented here might be something such as: definition (What is ___?), rationale (Why is ___ important?), and implementation (How has ___ been put into practice?)
The theoretical foundations could be converted into a figure as well instead of delving into each one in turn. Quite a bit of that material could be cut—or condensed, at least. It is just not that readable and engaging
Of course, this manuscript was designed as a foundational, theoretical piece. Yet overall, there is too much "telling" and not enough "showing"—through examples—what these powerful ideas would look like in practice. Former editor, Jack Frymeir once commented that all good writing moves back and forth between the general and the specific. It seems as though these writers have some valuable specific experiences underlying their recommendations, but they remain hidden beneath the surface.
If the purpose is to persuade practitioners in the field that making these changes in their practice is worthy of their consideration, then the ideas need to be communicated in a more compelling, clearer, and concise way. Professionals need assurances that this is not "just one more thing" that they are expected to add to their already overburdened roles.
With respect to format, the manuscript does not conform to American Psychological Association style, 7th edition, as required. There is one space between sentences rather than two—please correct this throughout. In-text citations require a comma between the author's name and date, for example (Smith, 2022). The first letter of each main word in a journal article title is not capitalized. Every journal article requires a doi if available. The references vacillate between APA 6th edition and APA 7th edition. The latter is what we are using. I have attached a file that highlights the differences between the two.
The decision is revise and resubmit; major revisions are required.

appear in print. Deadlines may be particularly important for a special or thematic issue of the publication for which there is an inflexible cut-off date.

It is commonplace for academic authors to complain about criticism that they considered to be damaging, annoying, or even misguided. Sometimes, it is. Yet based on 25 years as editor-in-chief of a scholarly journal, I have noticed that the most accomplished scholar/authors are easy to work with. They concede that, because they are so close to and invested in their work, they may not have made it entirely understandable to others, so they respond with aplomb and courtesy. Although widely published authors view revisions as time-consuming, they also regard them as an opportunity to further refine their work and communicate more effectively with a diverse readership. Rather than voicing angry protests or simply giving up, they persist and reflect on others' responses to their manuscripts. The outcome depends largely on how authors respond.

10.4 Guidelines for Manuscript Revision

What follows are guiding principles for dealing with recommendations for revision gleaned from the literature (Annesley, 2011; Conn, 2007; Cummings & Rivara, 2002; Peh & Ng, 2009; Pierie et al., 1996; Provenzale, 2010; Williams, 2004).

Acknowledge Feelings and Allocate Time
When some authors receive anything less than enthusiastic acceptance from an editor, they find it so devastating that they experience a type of grieving process (Kotsis & Chung, 2014). Writers may become defensive, offended, or even angry. Objecting to the reviewers' commentaries is not unusual. Authors are confronting some level of disapproval about their work and may feel that the reviewers' observations are unwarranted. Nevertheless, being reactive is counterproductive. Avoid extremes—on the one hand, being wounded by criticisms and abandoning all hope of publication or, on the other hand, composing a hasty, haughty, and hostile rebuttal to each point that was raised. Try to take a step back and look at the input more objectively. A trusted colleague or advisor may help to provide perspective. Wait until the initial sting of criticism abates a bit and calmly collect your thoughts. Formulate your responses over several days. Rejection and calls for major revisions can be disturbing, but these editorial decisions are not necessarily an indication that a manuscript is unpublishable. It just might not be the right fit for this publication and the specific readership. Based on survey research with editors, a mismatch between manuscript and outlet is the leading cause of manuscript rejection (Kumar & Rao, 2018; Springer Nature, 2023). The way that authors respond to criticism is a reflection of their professionalism (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

A common error made by demoralized authors is to give up on a manuscript for months—even years. The problem here is that timeliness is an important quality of scientific writing, and the data can grow stale. A more productive approach is to address the comments dispassionately, thoroughly, systematically, and within a reasonable time frame.

Seek to Understand the Feedback and Process
Consider what the editor's decision letter really says. A rejection without review or desk rejection means it is the end of the line with this outlet. You will need to select another publication. These decisions usually are final, so pleading your case won't change that. Remember that the editors are under no obligation to support you in meeting your institution's expectations for scholarly productivity; rather, they are expected to choose the best work for the outlet and audience, based on the reviewers' recommendations. Requests for revision—minor or major—are common and leave the door to publication open. You have a second chance. Revisit the reviews multiple times to formulate your response.

Most editors and reviewers are fellow university faculty members who are struggling to meet multiple demands at their respective institutions. Reviewers invest time in a manuscript as a form of professional service. Sometimes reviewers help to clarify muddy prose or prevent authors from making an embarrassing mistake. Occasionally, modifications based on the reviewers' notes draw out the manuscript's finest elements. Reviewers are volunteers who are (mostly) motivated by an interest in influencing the field in positive ways and improving scientific communication. "Getting authors to revise papers successfully may be the greatest contribution a journal can make to improving scientific communication" (Morgan, 1986, p. 1328).

Maintain a Focus on Manuscript Improvement
Ideally, peer reviewers provide another set of eyes on the manuscript that can offer fresh perspectives on ways for authors to improve their manuscripts. Accept, with humility, that your manuscript is not perfect. Authors can begin by asking themselves: "now that we have received some reaction to our manuscript, how can we really make it as good as possible?" (LaPlaca et al., 2018, p. 177). Realize that scholars tend to be very close to their topics and don't always notice when their explanations are unclear to others. If something is confusing to one reader, chances are it will be confusing to others. The following is an example of an exchange between an editor and author dealing with clarity.

Editor

In your manuscript you wrote, "Study subjects ranged in age from 0 to 10 years; 27% were 0 to 2 years, and 41% were 2 to 6 years." Reviewer A wrote, "The description of the age distribution of study subjects was unclear. Were 2-year-olds in the first group or the second group? And the 2 groups add up to only 68%." Obviously, you meant that 68% of the subjects were in the 2 youngest age categories and that 32% were in the oldest group. However, the reviewer was correct in noting the vagueness of your age boundaries.

Author's Response
The reviewer was concerned about the lack of clarity in our description of the age distribution of study subjects in the first paragraph of the "Results" section. The reviewer is correct, and we appreciate the chance to make ourselves clearer. We have revised the paper as follows: "Twenty-seven percent of study subjects were younger than 2 years, 41% were 2 to 5 years, and 32% were 6 to 10 years." (Cummings & Rivara, 2002, p. 106).

The author numbered the responses, repeated the reviewer's comment, and then presented a response to make it easier or the editors and reviewers to track the specifics of the reply. When authors are thorough, they show the editor the work they have done during the revision.

Deal with Areas of Disagreement

Dealing disagreement among members of a doctoral committee and deciding how to respond is a rehearsal for responding to peer reviewers with different ideas about an article, book, or other manuscript. When authors find that they disagree with a reviewer on one or more issues, a useful initial step is to make certain that they fully understand the reviewer's comments. It is possible that they do not disagree at all; instead, it is the case that the point being made is unclear. Sharing the manuscript and the reviews with a trusted colleague might reveal that areas of apparent disagreement are minor—or even non-existent.

Sorting through the feedback and prioritizing comments is another helpful strategy. Revising in this way requires management and structure (Dudley, 1985). Some advice from editors and peer reviewers might be mandatory. Suppose that authors are directed to shorten a manuscript. If they refuse to do this, it might constitute lack of compliance with the publisher's submission guidelines and result in rejection. Some "fatal flaws" in research manuscripts, for example are: inadequate research questions, weak study rationale, failure to provide details on ethical approval, poor study design, inappropriate choice of study measures, insufficient description of methodology, and poor quality of writing (Menon et al., 2022). Some peer reviewers' suggestions may fall into the category of "it might be nice to have" rather than an absolute requirement. Sifting through the advice and trying to determine what is most essential from the publisher's perspective is part of the revision process.

Do not make the mistake of aligning your comments with the most positive review only. Just because another reviewer did not remark on a point, that is not justification for ignoring it. The editor needs to take everything into consideration. Meticulous reviews of research articles prevent authors from making embarrassing mistakes, such as flawed analysis, inappropriate interpretations, or poor presentation of ideas. Another mistake is to decide about what revisions to make based primarily on how much more time they will require of the author. When an author agrees to respond only to those criticisms that can be quickly dispatched, it will be obvious to the editor that the author was unwilling to invest more in improving the work.

Even if authors get a revise and resubmit decision, they may elect not to do this. When authors cannot "live with" the drastic changes that are recommended, it might be advisable to submit it to another journal (Williams, 2004). However, be aware that some serious flaws will prevent successful publication elsewhere as well. Refuse to do major rewrites when they run counter to your thesis or philosophy, not because they represent additional work.

Conversely, if authors feel that they were truly wronged by the review process, they need to do three things before questioning a decision: (1) allow time to process the criticism, (2) ask an impartial colleague to read the paper and the reviews, and (3) draft a statement supported by evidence, rather than a confrontational reply. If a requested change is in error or inconsistent with your meaning, explain why you did not make the change and support it with evidence. Remember to restate the editor's or reviewer's comment when responding. This makes the input and your response to it clear.

Be Prepared to Condense

The submission of manuscripts that exceed the recommended length overall or in particular sections is a common issue. The authors may be focused on all the work they have done, want to be very thorough, and provide more information than necessary to understand their thesis or research. Journal editors see things differently. Usually, they are working with a page budget and do not want to "spend" too much on one article. They also know that a bloated manuscript will be passed over by readers and limit publication opportunities to others by taking more than its fair share of space. In one memorable situation with a journal article, it was nearly four times as long as anything published in the journal. When the author was asked to revise, she responded that "making those changes would do violence to the integrity of my work." Yet it was not prepared in the format of a professional journal article and would not be publishable as such.

Do not expect the editor to condense the article for you. Instead, objectively rank the pieces in question into three groups: (1) those that could be eliminated without affecting the content, (2) those that are the authors' preferences but are nonessential to understanding the work, and (3) those that are critical to the manuscript. Delete the material in categories one and two and retain category three. Some pieces of manuscripts that frequently are cut include excessive tables or figures, introductions/background sections, and conclusions that are overly repetitive about material already presented. As an anonymous reviewer once suggested, "The author needs to do one, last ruthless edit."

Be Respectful and Tactful Rather Than Adversarial

During a writing for publication workshop, one participant humorously captured the arrogance of some authors with "Peer review? Hah! There are no peers to my level of brilliance." Some authors view peer reviewers the same way that actors and musicians look at the critics: highly opinionated individuals with dubious qualifications who presume to judge the work of true artists. Authors may resist revision that they regard as "enforced collaboration with a phantom team of critics" (Morgan, 1986, p. 1328). Or, they may belittle the reviewers' comments as merely another hoop they have to jump through to get published. Instead, pursue rewriting "with an open mind to the comments and critiques" (LaPlaca et al., 2018, p. 177). Follow the rules of etiquette on the internet: if you would not say it face-to-face with an editor, then do not put it in an email. Being professional, courteous, and businesslike is sufficient. Consult the advice from a team of writers, researchers, and subject matter experts for further details on "netiquette" (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). It is important that, even when authors express their disagreement, the reviewers still know they are respected. Responding to critical comments requires authors to be gracious and blend diplomacy with prudence.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is no need to flatter the editor. Over-the-top praise can sound cloying, as when one author wrote, "I humbly accept this invitation to revise and possibly be published in your highly esteemed journal." It is sufficient to reply in a way that communicates you are willing to accept practical propositions aimed at manuscript refinement (Cummings & Rivara, 2002). Some examples of way to phrase your replies were adapted from Williams (2004) in Table 10.6.

Revise Prior to Submitting to a Different Journal

Be aware that authors need to honestly assess input from the reviewers, even if they decide to submit their manuscripts elsewhere. All too often, authors mistakenly assume that withdrawing a manuscript is a short cut. They think they can bypass the recommended revisions by sending the work somewhere else "as is." However, withdrawing the manuscript and submitting it to a different editor, untouched, can backfire. If—unbeknownst to the editor–it is sent to the same reviewer, that person may say, "Prior to being asked to review this manuscript for your journal, I previously reviewed this manuscript for another journal; the authors have not incorporated my suggestions contained in my last review" (Provenzale, 2010, p. W385). Such a statement will immediately call into question the author's willingness to accept feedback. In one incredible example, the author was so determined not to invest a single additional minute in improving the manuscript that even obvious mistakes—such as a misspelled word in the title—remained in the manuscript when it was submitted to a subsequent journal. This level of resistance to making necessary changes is totally unacceptable in scientific communication.

Demonstrate the Work That Was Done

In mathematics, students often are required to "show your work" so that the teacher can determine where any errors in computation crept in—and perhaps

Table 10.6 Examples of phrases to use in responding to reviewers' comments

• One of the reviewers remarked that, now that the study is finished, the abstract should highlight the research findings. We thank the reviewer for this suggestion and have revised the abstract accordingly
• The reviews mentioned that the manuscript exceeded the recommended page length yet asked for further details about the methodology. We shortened the Background section by four pages to make space for those additional details that now appear on page 14, paragraphs 2–3
• Although we agree with Reviewer 1's observation that _____, we would further assert, based on ____'s research, that _______
• Two of the reviewers mentioned that the sentence that appears on page 10, lines 4–6, was confusing. We have revised it as follows:
• We agree that the response rate to the survey was low. That is now included in the limitations section (pp. 14–15) and possible explanations are in the data collection section that appears on page 11
• We appreciate the suggestion of yet another area for future research and have included this idea in the conclusion
• With all due respect to the reviewer, we believe that this point may not be correct considering the most recent research findings cited below

give the student partial credit. Editors want much the same—they want to see the authors' work because, given all the manuscripts that they process, it is not possible to remember everything and instantly identify the alterations in the revised version. *Be certain to follow the specific outlet's requirements for submitting a revised manuscript.* It is authors' responsibility to specify modifications in a way that both editors and reviewers will immediately find them. If the authors fail to communicate the amendments to both the editors and reviewers, this leads to confusion that can ruin chances for acceptance. To make it easier, authors need to plainly enumerate these alterations in both their letter to the editors and include a marked version of the manuscript (Peh & Ng, 2009). Many journals specify that authors are to submit three documents: (1) a detailed letter that summarizes the changes, (2) the original manuscript that was submitted with changes indicated (this usually uses Microsoft Word track changes), and (3) the revised, clean manuscript without the changes marked (Williams, 2004).

Even after submitting a carefully constructed reply letter and considerably revised manuscript, it still might be rejected. Though editors give authors an opportunity, they are not required to publish a revised paper. If the revised manuscript is turned down, authors should console themselves with the fact that the editor had sufficient interest to spend time on it, not just once, but twice (or more). It probably has some potential as a publication. Since the revised version presumably represents an improvement, authors can consider submitting it to another journal (Cummings & Rivara, 2002).

Review the Literature Again

The review and revision process can be lengthy and new research is published frequently. Authors should consult the literature again, right before resubmission, to identify any new articles relevant to their topic. Taking the time to do this will make the work as current as possible for as long as possible. Failing to do it will date the manuscript even before it appears in print. For example, a new book, review of the literature, or special issue of a leading journal devoted the topic might be the very thing to strengthen the argument. Authors cannot afford to wait until they receive the proofs to add new material because most publishers will permit only very minor corrections and absolute errors of fact to be corrected at that late stage. The window has closed on any substantive revisions after the revised manuscript has been submitted to the publisher and typeset. Increasingly, journals post their accepted manuscripts online in advance of the hardcopies after authors and the editorial team have approved the copy. This is helpful to faculty members who are assembling their portfolios for evaluation purposes because it is shows the work just as it will appear when published, minus the page numbers. After it is posted, no further edits are permitted unless the publisher committed an error.

10.5 Conclusion: Meeting Editors' and Reviewers' Expectations

Practically any academic author who is actively pursuing publication has failed along the way. The most helpful assumption about critique of manuscripts is that authors, peer reviewers, and editors are not infallible. Everyone needs to at least entertain the possibility they could be wrong. Even ground-breaking ideas can be opposed when they conflict with prevailing perspectives and, according to Kotsis and Chung (2014), "manuscripts that later resulted in a Nobel Prize have been rejected for publication" (p. 958). Yet reasons for critical comments from editors and reviewers usually have less to do with their inability to recognize brilliant, revolutionary ideas and more to do with ordinary manuscript flaws.

A common question at workshops and in classes that focus on writing for publication is, "What do editors want? In response, I would say–without any hint of sarcasm—"manuscripts that they don't need to edit, because they are ready to publish." A good analogy is asking "What do professors want from students' assignments?" Ideally, they want papers that: (1) conform to the guidelines in the syllabus; (2) demonstrate higher level thinking skills, (3) reflect the ethical standards of the profession, (4) use evidence to support ideas, (5) generate interest in thinking further about the topic, and (6) are meticulously prepared. Whether it is the instructor for a college course or an editor, they ideally want much the same thing: high-quality work that is a joy to evaluate. As editors who are routinely waist (or neck) deep in other people's words, we dream of manuscripts that engage and enlighten us and enrich and enlarge our thinking. As we read them onscreen, they cause us to sit up, take notice, and beckon us to think along with them, sustaining our interest even when the topic is something we would not ordinarily choose to read about.

What do authors want? Again, without trying to be glib, they dream of uncritical acceptance of their manuscripts, yet this decision is a rarity, with only about 5–10% of manuscripts accepted on the first attempt (Dowd & McElveny, 1997). Across the disciplines, the premier journals usually have very low acceptance rates. The most typical way of calculating acceptance rate is to divide the number of accepted manuscripts by the number submitted. So, if a quarterly journal publishes 60 manuscripts in a year and receives 500 that same year, that's 60 divided by 500 or 0.12 for a 12% acceptance rate (Elsevier Author Services, 2023). Likewise, a bi-monthly journal might average about 15 manuscripts per issue and publish just 90 articles per year, yet may receive thousands of submissions. This places editors and reviewers in the position of accepting only those that make the most significant contributions to the field and to prefer those that require minimal editing (LaPlaca et al., 2018). As journal editor Lusher (2015) points out, "a decision of revise or reject is not necessarily the end of the road for a given manuscript, however. In fact, most manuscripts require revision after initial review" (p. 566). Revise and resubmit is an affirmation of publication potential, an invitation try again, and a route to making the work even stronger. In a perfect world, all three stakeholders would have their expectations met. Realistically, it much, much messier than this.

This chapter has provided possible resolutions to difficulties that authors confront when they are asked to revise based on peer reviewers' feedback. The principles described may help authors to effectively manage the revision process of a manuscripts and accelerate their way to publication (Provenzale, 2010). Finally, as Mikal (2021) asserts:

> Receiving a review and resubmit decision on a manuscript can be exciting. It means that reviewers and editors saw the potential in your work and are willing to continue discussing it. Unfortunately, being inundated with literally pages of feedback on a manuscript can also feel like facing a firing squad. But by consolidating, managing emotional responses and feelings of self-doubt, pruning irrelevant or incorrect comments, and involving your editors, you can more effectively engage with feedback to produce a more responsive, clearer and better version of your work. (unpaged)

Issue: Dealing with Peer Reviews that are Hostile and/or Inept

Although anonymous peer review is intended to give authors the best chance of unbiased feedback on a manuscript, the process sometimes breaks down for various reasons. One responsibility of the editor is to deal with these issues.

Making Excessively Harsh Comments

Some reviewers evidently cannot resist making sarcastic and hurtful comments. When a review came in and made the statement, "this could have been written by one of my undergraduates," the editor did not include it in the letter to the author. There is no need for such hostility toward the author and, furthermore, it was inaccurate—unless this reviewer's students were astonishingly different from other groups of undergraduates throughout the world. At any rate, the two other peer reviewers concluded that the manuscript had potential and recommended "revise and resubmit." The editor decided that, if it was going to be necessary to edit this reviewer's harsh comments before sharing them with authors, it would be better to drop him from the Board. Such criticisms are unhelpful at best and damaging at worst.

Nothing is Good Enough

Reviewers sometimes allow their own frustrations to seep into the process. One reviewer who had been denied tenure, based on an insufficient number of high-quality publications, began using the anonymity of the process to "punish" others with impunity. Nothing was good enough in this reviewer's estimation. The editor politely thanked the reviewer for her service, indicated that she was rotating people off the Board to give others a chance to serve, and replaced her on the committee.

Going off on a Tangent

One reviewer devoted three-quarters of the manuscript critique to a single point that pushed her buttons. She then went on to expound upon how she would have written the article. The editor's expectation is that reviewers use the scoring sheet provided and produce a balanced review of the manuscript. When the authors responded to the editor, they pointed out that this tangential point was not the focus of the article. They did rewrite the sentence that caused such a reaction from the reviewer. They also explained why they were not willing to completely rewrite the manuscript to conform to the way that the reviewer would write it. Sometimes, reviewers make the mistake of focusing on their own agendas instead of the manuscript in front of them. The way that the reviewer would have written the article is immaterial; the task is to evaluate the work that was submitted.

Making Superficial Comments

Rather than really analyzing the manuscript, a reviewer indicated that the article was good and publishable without any specific material to support that decision. The review stated that "the article was very interesting and one that I would recommend to my students" but that is not helpful feedback when the editor communicates with the author. Other reviewers, for example, have supplied suggestions on minor improvements, recommended additional research related to the topic, and requested that the authors provide an annotated list of online resources in their practical article. They also wanted more specific examples that would illustrate key points. If reviewers try to save time by giving a manuscript a cursory read and making a few general comments, they fail to fulfill their responsibilities.

Self-Promotion

If an area of research is highly specialized, chances are that at least some reviewers are conducting research on the same topic. Reviewers may recommend that their publications be cited. If the authors truly were unaware of the publications and they consider them to be particularly relevant and of high quality, then it is appropriate to include them. If, however, those criteria are not met the reviewer is attempting to pressure the authors into promoting his/her/their work, then that is a different matter to be mentioned to the editor privately.

In each of these situations, peer review was flawed because it failed to improve the manuscript. For clear advice on providing competent peer reviews, see George (2022) and Wiley Author Services (2023). Check the online article How to Write a Peer Review (PLoS, 2023) for numerous examples of how to critique others' work in tactful and professional ways.

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Video of How to Use Track Changes and Comments in Microsoft Word. How to Use Track Changes and Comments in Microsoft Word (2023 Update for PC and Mac) - Bing video

Springer Nature Resource: *Guide to OpenAcess Books for Springer OpenAccess Authors*. v2 (springernature.com)

Online Video: This video from the OWL Purdue Writing Lab Workshops focuses on "Incorporating Feedback on Scholarly Writing". https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hslW09-tdyE.

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11 Submitting the Manuscript for Formal Review: Efficient and Effective Strategies

Mary Renck Jalongo and Olivia N. Saracho

Contents

Abstract

One important skill for academic authors is determining when a manuscript is ready to be submitted for formal review. Both extremes–a hasty submission or, conversely, a manuscript that is perpetually unfinished—are barriers to progress as a scholar. Based on survey research with editors, lack of familiarity with a publication outlet—including its mission/goals, primary audience, and submission policies—account for many rejections. Given that the peer review cycle for journals often is 8–12 weeks, errors at the manuscript submission stage are an impediment to achieving publication goals. Learning how, when, and where to submit scholarly work is a career-long decision-making process because published authors pursue various writing tasks, work with different editors, and accept new challenges. Familiarity with the standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) offers guidance to authors about the submission process. Publishers offer detailed guidelines for authors, and these are another

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_11

underused resource to facilitate successful publication. While some may object that the quality of their ideas is the only thing that does or should matter, poor presentation of ideas and formatting flaws can become a roadblock to the acceptance of a manuscript. Prolific authors have learned, not only how to produce manuscripts of publishable quality—as important as that is–but also how to efficiently and effectively navigate the manuscript submission process. This chapter describes a strategic approach to manuscript submission that will spare authors from many troublesome, time-consuming, and dispiriting outcomes with scholarly publication.

Keywords

Scholarly writing • Manuscript preparation • Submission procedures • Guidelines for authors • Publication outlets • Peer review

Three Narratives

Novice

A doctoral candidate successfully defends his dissertation in January and is now searching for a position as an assistant professor. After two faculty members in the Department decide to take advantage of a retirement incentive from the state university system, he is offered a one-year temporary instructor position and decides to accept. During that year, with extensive support from his dissertation chairperson, they co-author a research article that is accepted for publication. The next year, the doctoral program graduate is hired for a tenure-track position at another university. The article based on his dissertation has been posted online but not yet published in the print copy of the journal, so he contacts the editor to update his institutional affiliation. The editor responds that their contract specifies no changes can be made to the institutional affiliations after the final, typeset copy is posted online. The reason for this policy is that the work was completed while the faculty member was employed at the first institution, rather than the second.

In this situation, the author and the publisher see things differently. The new faculty member wants his work to "count" with his new employer while the publisher is adhering to the ethical standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). These guidelines state that a change in institutional affiliation is addressed by an acknowledgement. Did this manuscript submission policy surprise you?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

Due to declines in enrollment, a university begins to reorganize its programs and courses so that only the most financially solvent ones survive. A newly hired assistant professor finds it very disturbing that her department is going to be dismantled. She has been productive as a scholar, making several national conference presentations, *co-editing an anthology with her former professor, and contributing one chapter to that book project. She also served on numerous committees, including the regional accreditation report writing team. The administration uses the situation to override tenure obligations, arguing that there is no suitable assignment for some of the faculty members now that their department and programs are being discontinued. In her case, she collaborated to publish a research article with senior members of a different, yet related, department. When the other department is allocated a faculty position, the job description is a good fit for her areas of expertise, they encourage her to transfer, and she manages to keep her job.*

How did networking with more established authors support this author in identifying outlets and submitting manuscripts that were accepted for publication?

Prolific

A team of eight researchers from different countries undertake a major investigation together. They correspond online frequently throughout the project and, as time goes on, the contributions made by each team member differ from what was originally anticipated. When allocating credit to each team member, the lead researcher thinks that the list of names should be changed accordingly. After conferring with the team, he reorders their names and then submits the revised manuscript. This is immediately red flagged by the publisher. They send an email and attach a form that must be signed by every author before the manuscript can be accepted for publication. Initially, the principal investigator for the research is annoyed. He is a bit embarrassed that he was unaware of this manuscript submission policy, plus it is going to take some time to orchestrate obtaining the signatures. Yet after looking at it from the publisher's standpoint, he can appreciate how contentious the credit allocated to authors could become if everyone was not consulted first. He complies with the publisher's request without complaint.

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) standards state: "Any change in authors after initial submission and before publication must be approved by all authors. This applies to additions, deletions, a change of order to the authors' names, or a change to the attribution of contributions." Were you aware of this ethical standard?

Activity: Writing a Pre-submission Inquiry

What if you could hasten the peer review process, yet continue to work with outlets that have a rigorous peer review system in place? That is the purpose of corresponding with an editor while a manuscript is still in development. Referred to as a query letter or pre-submission inquiry, the author sends an e-mail to the editor to gauge interest in a manuscript prior to submitting it officially (Murray, 2015). However, some editors flatly refuse to respond to these inquiries, so sending one would result in irritating the editor. Pros and cons of the strategy are highlighted in Table 11.1.

Guidelines for composing a letter of inquiry:

1. Look up the current editor's name rather than addressing the e-mail to "Dear editor."

Table 11.1 Pros and cons of a pre-submission inquiry

pros	• authors can determine if the work is of interest prior to a lengthy review process • authors may be more motivated to complete the manuscript if the editor responds positively • authors' succinct description of the project in the email to the editor might help to sharpen the focus • authors are more apt to look into the outlet further prior to submission • authors can contact an alternate editor promptly if another editor is not interested in the paper • authors who have presented a conference paper can pursue the query letter as a logical next step
cons	• editors might routinely give an affirmative response and suggest that authors submit a full manuscript • some editors specifically state that they will not respond to letters of inquiry • an editor's interest in the topic is no guarantee that other aspects of the manuscript will be acceptable to reviewers • authors may never complete the manuscript and waste the editor's time • the editorship of the publication may change while the work is in development and the new leadership may not be equally enthusiastic

2. Provide a specific, informative title for the manuscript.
3. Write a compelling abstract.
4. Indicate that the manuscript is not currently under consideration elsewhere.
5. Look into the publication's purpose and scope. State why this would be of interest to the specific audience.
6. Provide a one-sentence summary of your qualifications that are specific to this topic.
7. Write a business letter that is professional in tone.
8. Avoid understating or overstating the work's possible contribution.

Example of a Query Letter:

Dear Dr. ___:

Our research team has a manuscript in preparation that appears to be a good fit for [insert name of the journal]. The title and abstract for the article are:

[insert title and abstract]

The work is not under consideration by another publisher at this time. Given the [insert explanation] of the readership of [insert journal name], the article would [describe benefits for audience].

Our international research team represents specialized expertise on the [topic/approach of the article] with contributions from [briefly describe].

We look forward to your reply and will submit the completed manuscript in a timely manner if it meets publication needs for the journal. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Respectfully,

Self-Assessment: Checklists for Manuscript Submission

Fortunately, many experienced academic authors have a sense of commitment to the next generation of scholars. They have published helpful tools that support others in pursuing publication. Here is an example of a checklist for assessing empirical research articles adapted from Wilson (2016).

General Criteria for Evaluating Research Articles

Do the title, abstract, and literature review conform to the format required by the publication (i.e., MLA, APA, Chicago)?

Is the writing style suitable for the outlet?

Does the paper fit the standards and scope of the particular journal?

Is the research question clear?

Was the approach to studying the phenomenon appropriate?

Are the study design, methods, and analysis appropriate to the question being studied?

Did the researcher(s) gain ethical approval prior to implementing the study and was the study ethical in its treatment of participants and handling of data?

Is the study innovative or original? Does it challenge existing paradigms or contribute to existing knowledge?

Does the work develop novel concepts?

Is the investigation likely to be of interest to the intended audience?

Could presentation of the results be improved, and do they answer the research question?

Is the study description sufficiently clear for other researchers to replicate?

Are the methods of statistical analysis suitable and do the findings matter?

Are the conclusions supported by the data? (Adapted from Wilson, 2016).

Additional Resources: Use the pre-submission checklist designed by Crack et al. (2023) to assess your work prior to sending it in.

Prominent professional organizations, such as the American Psychological Association's (2023) Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS) offer checklists to assist authors in evaluating manuscripts prior to submission.

For checklists to evaluate practical articles, qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed-methods research, see Jalongo and Saracho (2016).

11.1 Introduction: What Manuscript Submission Implies

Over the years of teaching doctoral students, I would ask them what I do first after reading the title of a manuscript submitted to the journal. None of them guessed correctly. They assumed it would be to read the abstract or quickly scan the entire work. The first thing I did in 25 years as an editor-in-chief was to look at manuscript length. If the author does not follow the most basic guideline of producing an article-length manuscript, then the editor is under no obligation to wade through page after page to determine if there is an article in there somewhere. Although writers may think that it is their ideas only that will be considered when a manuscript is submitted, the fact is that the manuscript can be disqualified from further consideration based on presentation of their work and manuscript format. A predictable editorial response to an overblown piece would be “revise before review” or “reject without review.” In other words, authors need to conform to the submission guidelines of the outlet. If they decide to do otherwise, their work may be disqualified from further consideration.

Some authors of an overly long manuscript assume that editors will read it and then advise them on how to condense it. This is not something that professional journal editors typically do. The problem with editing *for* an author by cutting down their manuscript is that the writer knows the work better than the editor. As a result, authors may not agree about the relative importance of various parts of the manuscript. Although there may be times when places to cut are obvious—such as a lengthy preamble to a manuscript that takes four pages to get to the point–the decisions about how to craft the manuscript rest with the author. Editors have a responsibility to their sponsoring organizations and to the readership. Their job is to manage the review process fairly and render a decision about what is publishable in the outlet. They are not an author’s writing coach, although they may elect to briefly step into that role when a work is otherwise very promising.

The decision to submit a manuscript should not occur until that work has been carefully composed, thoroughly polished, and conforms to the guidelines. Everything here is the author’s responsibility. Misconceptions persist about what manuscript submission implies. When you hit “send” you are, in effect, affirming that your manuscript is thoroughly prepared—as perfect as you can make it. Successful academic authors often talk about ways they have learned to prevent a premature manuscript submission such as “letting the manuscript get cold” or “sleeping on it” so that they can look at the article with a cool head and critical eye. Those uninitiated into the world of scientific communication sometimes expect high praise to be the outcome of editorial and peer review. Instead, manuscript submission *invites* critique. Expect that the multiple professional perspectives of the editor and peer reviewers will raise questions, take issue with particular statements, and suggest modifications to the manuscript. Searching for a time-saving shortcut generally has the opposite effect. If, for example, a manuscript is evaluated as needing major revisions rather than minor ones, the editor with an ample supply of accepted work awaiting publication may decide to reject it. That would mean the author has to begin the review process all over again with another outlet. When a reject decision is reached, it is highly unlikely that it will be reversed.

When authors lavish time on a manuscript, it shows. The writing flows. The proofreading is impeccable. Usually, they have asked others to read and respond to the manuscript informally before subjecting their work to anonymous peer review. Their adherence to the guidelines is unfailing. The course of their argument runs smoothly without digressions or errors in logic. Doing this affords the best chance for producing a manuscript that will fare well in the review process. Fail to do it, and a desk rejection is the predictable outcome. Keep in mind the description of the "ideal research article" from journal editor Sillars (2004): it addresses core concerns, holds interest for the intended audience of scholars, is written in a style that is accessible to a diverse academic readership, has theoretical and social significance, and is an ambitious undertaking that includes rich/extensive data sets and careful/intensive analysis.

11.2 Submitting Journal Articles

Elsevier (2015) reports that their editors reject 30–50% of the manuscripts they receive. Sending a manuscript off to an outlet based on the journal's title alone is ill-advised and no doubt adds to these high rejection rates. So, the first rule of manuscript submission is to look beneath the surface. A good example from the field of education is early childhood. Usually, it is defined as the age span between birth and eight years of age; however, these journal editors often receive manuscripts focused outside this age range. They are promptly refused. In fact, surveys conducted with editors indicate that the number one reason for rejecting a manuscript without review is that the work is outside the journal's scope (Ali, 2010; Pierson, 2004). What does that mean, exactly? An excerpt from the description of the *American Journal of Sociology*, published by University of Chicago Press, describes their scope as follows:

> *AJS* presents pathbreaking work from all areas of sociology, with an emphasis on theory building and innovative methods. *AJS* strives to speak to the general sociology reader and is open to contributions from across the social sciences—sociology, political science, economics, history, anthropology, and statistics—that seriously engage the sociological literature to forge new ways of understanding the social.

Reading this statement immediately answers several important questions prospective contributors might have, such as, "What is the journal's primary purpose?" "Who is the audience and how technical/formal is the tone?" "Will they consider work from other disciplines?".

Mismatch with the outlet can take several forms, such as:

1. Work that is outside the stated aims, scope, mission, and purpose of the publication. For example, a publication that is for international audiences would reject manuscripts without this perspective. So, if an author writes about policy and politics that are shaping higher education in the United States only, it probably does not speak to an international readership.
2. Topics that are unlikely to be of interest to the intended readership. For example, in-depth linguistic analysis of speech patterns probably would be too

narrow, detailed, and specialized for readers who are teachers of English as a second language (TESOL).

3. In-house material. Professors sometimes try to turn their routine duties into research. For example, if they are assigned to write an accreditation report, observe several interns, or teach three sections of the same course, they present it as "research." The problem here is that the scope of this work is narrow, a conceptual framework is absent, and the activity is centered on the local context only. Another issue with this practice has to do with the ethical treatment of human subjects. If there is any hint that students felt pressured into participating, this violates the principles of informed consent (Tulyakul & Meepring, 2020).
4. Inappropriate format of the manuscript. If a journal does not publish editorials or book reviews, it is a waste of everyone's time to submit one. The Wiley journal *Clinical Case Reports*, for example, is exclusively interested in publishing cases from the medical field.

Manuscript submission strategy is a priority issue for academic authors (Barrerra-Barrera, 2022). Getting a "wrong number" at the point of submission is such a pervasive problem that university libraries, publishers, and various artificial intelligence and online tools have been developed to help authors match their manuscript to an outlet. Examples of these tools are in Table 11.2.

Given that each cycle of peer review can take months and that researchers are expected to submit their manuscripts to only journal at a time, sending it to the wrong outlet can derail authors' publication goals (Tennant et al., 2019). Those few moments supposedly saved when deciding where to submit the manuscript restart

Table 11.2 Online journal finder tools

Cabell's Online Directory
Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL)
Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
EndNote Match
Elsevier Journal Finder
Journal Citation Reports
Journal/Author Name Estimator (JANE)
Nurse Author and Editor
Publish or Flourish Open Access (Flourish OA)
Scholarly Publishing Information Hub (SPI-Hub)
Springer Journal Selector
Think. Check. Submit
Ulrich's Periodicals Directory Web of Science Master List
Wiley Journal Finder

the clock on submission. If the next outlet attempted has a different referencing style or format, even more tedious detail work is demanded. Early efforts made to achieve a goodness-of-fit between a manuscript and the publisher are likely to pay off. A case study published in a nursing journal (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002), for example, described submitting an article to six different journals before achieving acceptance. The authors' first conclusion was that they needed to match their material to the outlet. Cummings and Rivara (2002), candidly remark "One of us wrote a paper that was rejected by eight journals but was finally published in a ninth" (p. 105). That is more persistence than most authors have, but surely a strategic approach to manuscript submission could have spared at least a few of those missteps. Careful consideration of suitable outlets is well worth the time invested.

Another reason to plan the submission process is that deciding what to submit where is not a "one and done" activity (Mortimer, 2001). Productive scholars will be making those decisions continually, so it is important to get it right (Knight & Steinbach, 2008). In fact, a careful selection strategy matters, even after one or more of an author's papers have been accepted by a particular outlet and the author submits there again. Successful publishers do not remain static. With changes in a professional field, publication practices, public policies, and leadership, even a very familiar publication can acquire a different tone and focus. A good example of this is the journal of the International Reading Association, *The Reading Teacher.* Back in the 80s and 90s, practical articles that would guide teachers of reading and reading specialists in their work with children tended to dominate the publication. Yet after schools were harshly criticized for failing to attain high levels of literacy and experts advocated more "evidence-based practice," the emphasis on research increased dramatically. An article that once would have been accepted would now be rejected by the editor and board if it did not reflect that shift in focus.

Yet another reason for implementing an effective journal selection strategy is that it may be a route to increasing the originality of the manuscript. This flaw is another leading cause of manuscript rejection cited by editors (Byrne, 2000; Menon et al., 2022). When authors elect to write for a different audience, material that might be quite familiar to those within their field can be news to those in a different profession. Some good examples are a professor in a deaf education department who wrote an article about the rights of deaf individuals for an audience of emergency medical personnel and a nurse who specialized in infection control writing about disease prevention in childcare settings. In both cases, the expertise and insights of the author had value, applicability, and originality for a readership from a different field.

Successfully published authors know how to get manuscripts accepted by the journals in their discipline and perhaps other disciplines as well. Some disciplines have comparatively few publications dedicated to them. As a result, academic authors may need to "cast a wider net" in terms of possibilities for publication. Furthermore, some areas of specialization are, by their very nature, multidisciplinary—for example, health and safety, curriculum and instruction, evaluation models, information systems, or instructional technology. This is yet another reason to take a strategic approach to manuscript submission that is efficient and effective, as outlined in Table 11.3.

Submitting a manuscript is such an important step that many academic publishers have sites that walk authors through the process:

Elsevier Submit your paper - Elsevier

Sage Open **Manuscript Submission Guidelines**: SAGE Open: SAGE Journals

Springer Instructions for Authors: Manuscript Guidelines | Springer—International Publisher

Wiley Submitting Your Manuscript | Wiley

Cover Letters for Manuscripts

Some publishers require authors to write a cover letter while others do not. If it is a journal—particularly an online journal—it may not be necessary. If the publication is more "old school," composing a cover letter is advisable. A cover letter might be particularly important when submitting a book proposal because the manuscript is not complete at that point. Use the advice in Table 11.4 to compose a cover letter that will accompany your submission. In many respects, it is similar to the pre-submission inquiry or query letter of the activity for this Chapter.

11.3 Common Elements of Article, Chapter, and Book Submissions

Each type of writing project has some common elements that are required, which we discuss here. Even so, it is important to check each publisher's guidelines for authors. Table 11.5 lists the items that are frequently expected as part of the submission process.

As the table highlights, the main difference between journal articles/book chapters and scholarly books is that the former is submitted in their entirety while book contracts typically are awarded based on a proposal and sample chapters rather than the finished manuscript. Usually, publishers do not review an entire book-length manuscript prior to awarding a contract. Instead, authors develop a prospectus or proposal that conforms to the guidelines that the publisher requires. The first step is to conceptualize your concept for the book "in a nutshell." Think of this as a "commercial" that demonstrates the need for the book, supported with evidence. It is worth the time to compose this piece because it will be used in three important ways: (1) in a letter of inquiry to the publisher, (2) during brief discussions with an editor, and (3) in the marketing materials developed by the publisher after the book is completed.

Anthologies or edited books are multi-authored works. The editor may write a preface or introduction only, contribute chapters, or co-author several chapters. Many of the large publishing companies sponsor book series on various topics. This might be accomplished during a brief discussion with a representative of the publishing company at a conference or via a short email. If the book has potential, you should find an editor who is enthusiastic about the project.

Table 11.3 A manuscript submission strategy

Identify not only a topic but also a focus. General treatments of subject matter rarely succeed in scholarly publishing, unless the project is a reference book, such as an encyclopedia or research handbook. The topic must be sufficiently narrow to address it adequately in the format selected: article, chapter, or even a book. For example, choosing the topic of group dynamics for a journal article is far too broad; maybe group dynamics during class discussions of college freshmen is more manageable. Next, ask "Is the focus a good match for this particular publication or publishing company?" If it is a journal, does each issue consist of various topics, focus on a single topic (thematic) or a mixture of both? Does the focus of your manuscript fit already or does an upcoming thematic issue of the journal suggest a focus?
Choose an outlet for the right reasons. Do a "backwards search" by scanning the references of your manuscripts and those you have read (Searing, 2006), Are there articles or books that are outstanding examples of the type of material you want to publish? Have others published previously on your topic in these outlets? Another consideration is the outlet's stance: is it consistent with your philosophy and what you hope to publish?
Study the publishers' mission. Pay particular attention to the scope, defined as publishers' goals, priorities, and intended readership. Before submitting to an outlet, study what has been published there recently. Examine the tables of contents for several issues of the journal or the catalog of the book publisher. Is your work at a comparable level of sophistication? (Klinger et al., 2005). If nothing like your manuscript has appeared over the past five years, chances are this is not the best outlet for it
Think about the readership and their purposes. Does your audience consist mainly of scholars and researchers, professionals working in the field, or more general audiences (e.g., parents/ families)? Would college faculty members be likely to use the publication in their teaching? Are undergraduates and/or graduate students apt to be assigned to read the publication? Is the readership primarily regional, national, or international?
Follow the rules. Many publishers have detailed submission guidelines, such as MDPI MDPI Submission Process: Your Questions Answered - MDPI Blog Leading journals often use an online submissions system that is automated, such as Editorial Manager®. Get acquainted with it before attempting to upload files. If your abstract exceeds the word count, for example, the system will prevent you from moving on to the next step. Now you have an incomplete submission out there while you go back and condense. You might be required to separate any figures, tables, graphs, or other visual material into individual files rather than leave them inserted in the manuscript. Doing this hurriedly is a place where mistakes often creep in. If you walk through the system first, you can avoid some of these annoying disruptions
Match the broad category of manuscript to the publication. A common beginner's mistake is to write a paper that is a mixture of different article types and does not do justice to any of them. If it is a journal article, is it practical, review/theoretical, or research? If it is a research article or book, is it basic, applied, or clinical? Does the outlet publish other types of manuscripts, such as book and media reviews, editorials, or brief reports of research?
Assess the publisher's reputation. Some publications are print, others are online only, and still others are hybrids that produce a physical paper copy of the article or book as well as disseminate it online. Do you see this publisher cited frequently? What is the credibility and prestige of the publication? Does this publisher have a presence at professional conferences? What does the publisher's site say about their review process? What evidence do they provide of impact on the field? What are your perceptions of the publisher's reputation/quality, topical relevance, dissemination practices, career benefit for authors, and any costs associated with publishing?

(continued)

Table 11.3 (continued)

Consult resources. Confer with colleagues. Use your professional networks to identify others who have experience with the publisher, even if they are outside your department or institution. What are their opinions about this publisher and editor? Do you have co-authors who can provide input into the selection process? There are many online sources that evaluate publishers, so refer to them as well. If you have never heard of or cited a journal or book publisher in your work, it may be a questionable enterprise
Make a list of possibilities. Determine which publishers are most likely to be interested in your manuscript. Consider your professional goals and how they mesh with the level of difficulty in successfully publishing in this outlet. What is likelihood of acceptance, potential impact of the manuscript (visibility), and timeline from submission to publication? Generate several possibilities. Decide which one to begin with

Sources Knight and Steinbach (2008), PLOS One (2023), Springer Open (2023), Kumar (2019), PLOS One (2023), Suiter and Sarli (2019)

Table 11.4 Composing a cover letter

Check into the preferred format. The publisher or style manual may specify what to include in your cover letter. Some templates for writing a cover letter can be found at Author Services Supporting Taylor and Francis (2023) How to write a cover letter for journal submission | Author Services (taylorandfrancis.com) and the American Psychological Association (2023) Cover letters (apa.org)
Make it specific. Address the editor by name (rather than Dear Editor) and refer to the journal and publisher by name. This suggests that you have at least taken a moment to familiarize yourself with the organization or company
Describe the manuscript's relevance for the readership. State the title of the work. Remember that the editor is not necessarily an expert on your topic, so avoid excessive use of jargon or acronyms. Rather than doing a quick cut and paste of the abstract, briefly explain why the material would be of interest to the audience and what benefit they might derive from reading it
Address ethical considerations. Verify that the work has not been published previously and is not under consideration by another publisher. Also confirm that you have no competing interests to disclose, such as major funding from another source
Provide contact information for authors. Highlight, in just a sentence, the specific qualifications that supported this project. Include various ways of contacting the author(s)
Check and double check all details. Any proofreading errors in this letter will immediately tarnish your reputation with the editor. Run spell check, grammar check, and proofread multiple times. Consider asking someone else to read this important piece of correspondence

When an author submits a book proposal, it had better include some facts and figures that support the viability of the project. One of my editors described their decision-making process as a meeting where everyone has book proposals to present. All of them want the company to be solvent, so they need to convince their colleagues that the project they are advocating has earnings potential. Before the meeting, she would go through a book proposal with a highlighter, noting the arguments that could be used and ways to address reservations raised by colleagues. When preparing a book (or grant) proposal, remember that the first group of decision-makers in the process frequently are not experts in your field.

Table 11.5 What typically is submitted to the publisher: articles and books

Journal articles	Anthology/edited book	Research book or college textbook
Cover letter and/or cover page with all authors' contact information	Cover letter and cover page with editor's (s') contact information	Cover letter and cover page with authors' contact information
Title, abstract (usually 250 to 500 words), and 4 to 6 keywords for indexing purposes	A brief description of the project suitable for sharing with others who may not be specialists in the field (e.g., other editors)	A brief description of the project suitable for sharing with others who may not be specialists in the field (e.g., other editors)
Manuscript prepared for peer review–no author's name should appear anywhere on the manuscript except the cover page; any references to the author's previous work may have to be cited as "Author" until after the work is accepted	Book proposal that conforms to the publisher's required format	Book proposal that conforms to the publisher's required format
Entire manuscript. Every table, figure, chart, or graph needs a title and a number; photographs need captions	A rationale for the project that speaks to the need for the book and its contributions to the field	A rationale for the project that speaks to the need for the book and its contributions to the field
Signed permission forms for any copyrighted material, photographs, or work samples from participants	An analysis of competing works that demonstrates how the proposed book represents a stride forward or different approach	An analysis of competing works that demonstrates how the proposed book represents a stride forward or different approach
For research articles, evidence of ethical treatment of participants, both human and animal (e.g., institutional review board approval)	Description of the book's primary and secondary audiences	Description of the book's primary and secondary audiences
Visual material that meets publisher's standards (e.g., high resolution/high quality) and tables prepared in the correct referencing style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago)	A "wish list" of authors who have tentatively agreed to contribute	Detailed table of contents
Signed forms that permit the publisher to share the work with peer reviewers (e.g., consent to publish or copyright transfer)	Signed forms that permit the publisher to share the work with peer reviewers (e.g., consent to publish or copyright transfer)	Signed forms that permit the publisher to share the work with peer reviewers (e.g., consent to publish or copyright transfer)
Verification that the article is not under consideration by any other publication	Brief chapter abstracts accompanied by the authors' names, titles, and institutional affiliations and a brief biography for each contributor	For textbooks, sample elements of chapters (e.g., discussion questions) and ancillaries (e.g., online quiz for each chapter, PowerPoint slides) and a description of how some features (e.g., in class activities) were field tested with students

(continued)

Table 11.5 (continued)

Journal articles	Anthology/edited book	Research book or college textbook
Evidence that the researcher has complied with the principles of informed consent when working with human participants in a study	Evidence that the editor is qualified to undertake the project (an abbreviated curriculum vita)	Evidence that the author is qualified to undertake the project (an abbreviated curriculum vita)
For research articles, there is sufficient detail for other investigators to replicate the study	Project details such as the estimated length of the manuscript and the anticipated completion date	Project details such as the estimated length of the manuscript and the anticipated completion date
Manuscript prepared in the required format—typically, there is a word limit, a statement about footnotes, and the entire manuscript is 12-point print, double spaced	One or more sample chapters, with references that use the style guide designated by the publisher; if the editor is prolific, this requirement may be waived	One or more sample chapters, with references that use the style guide designated by the publisher
List of references correctly formatted in the style sheet (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) used by the publisher	List of references correctly formatted in the style sheet (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) used by the publisher	List of references correctly formatted in the style sheet (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) used by the publisher

Grant proposals submitted to The National Institutes of Health, for example, allow a three-sentence abstract while those submitted to the American Heart Association require a 250-word abstract written at a 10th grade level. Excessive jargon, impenetrable prose, and efforts to impress with your specialized knowledge are counterproductive. As one of the acquisitions editors I admire most put it, "I wish that professors would realize that, when they are proposing a book, we assume they know something about their subject. We will check up on that later, during peer review, with experts in the field. What we need at the first stage with the publishing company is evidence that there is a need for this book and a good fit with our publishing program." If a book proposal does not get through that first screening process, it amounts to a desk rejection by a journal editor and will not go out for peer review.

As a book proposal is drafted, it is helpful to study the criteria that reviewers will use to evaluate it. Usually, the evaluation questions are posted on the book publisher's website. Book reviews sometimes are not completely anonymous because publishers want to sign authors with a solid reputation in the field. Their work is likely to be recognized by experts on the same topic. Instead, the reviews might be "single-blind," meaning that the reviewer knows the author's identity, but the author does not know the reviewers' identities. When there is no doubt that a prolific book author is qualified to write a book, the publisher might even ask the author to list 5–7 noted authorities in the field who do not have a personal relationship with the writer to objectively assess the work. The review of book proposals usually consists of two stages. First, the prospectus is assessed for potential as a book and reviews assist the publisher in deciding to award a contract. Some publishers will require sample chapters; however, for prolific authors who have published with them previously a detailed table of contents or an abstract for chapters may be acceptable. Next, after the entire book is written, peer reviewers assist the publisher in deciding whether to move forward with its publication and what level of revision is recommended. Table 11.6 includes some of the questions used to guide reviewers of new book projects.

Across the disciplines, scholarly writing is the major mechanism for advancing thinking in various fields (Oermann, 2023; Wickman & Fitzgerald, 2019). The ways that academics inform one another through the scientific literature is the currency that supports further development within each field of study. Among the various writing genres, those that create and disseminate new knowledge are

Table 11.6 Sample evaluation criteria for evaluating books

1	Prior to reviewing this proposal, were you aware of the contributions of this author in the field and, if so, how?
2	In your professional opinion, is the author qualified to undertake this project?
3	What is your overall appraisal of the quality of this book proposal or manuscript?
4	Would this book be likely to make an original and significant contribution to the field?
5	How would you assess the clarity, accuracy, helpfulness, and accessibility of the book?
6	What is unique about this project? Please identify the main strengths of the work
7	Are all necessary topics included? If not, what would you suggest adding to the manuscript?
8	How would you describe the market/readership for this book? Who is the primary audience for this book? Are there secondary audiences you would identify?
9	Is the book logically organized? Do you have any recommendations for improving the structure of the book?
10	What was your opinion of the sample chapter(s)? If you are reviewing the entire book-length manuscript, please note any strengths or weaknesses, chapter by chapter
11	How much editing of the academic writing style and format would be necessary before the work would be of publishable quality?
12	Are you familiar with other competing works in the field and, if so, how do they compare with this book?
13	What revisions would you recommend prior to publication?
14	If it is a textbook, would you consider adopting it for a course that you teach?
15	If you are reviewing the proposal only at this stage, would you be willing to serve as a reviewer of the entire manuscript after it is finalized?
16	For each decision below, provide further explanation: [ ] highly recommend [ ] recommend with revisions as noted [ ] decline to publish

Sources Peter Lang, Springer Nature, Purdue University Press

Table 11.7 Attributes of scholarly writing and roles for academic authors

Attribute	Roles for academic authors
Research-based	Authors ground their arguments in literature review and empirical evidence rather than anecdotal impressions and unsubstantiated personal opinions
Thesis-driven and deductively organized	Authors begin with a focus and "take" on the issue and proceed to analyze it in a systematic fashion
Thoughtful, well-reasoned and detailed	Authors assemble substantive, specialized, and in-depth support for the thesis
Reflective, self-critical	Scholarly writers relate their work to past investigations, clarify the nature of the contributions made, engage in self-criticism, and avoid overstating their claims
Formal tone and style	Authors adopt the academic writing style of the outlet and avoid sexist language, colloquialisms, and casual types of speech. Professional jargon is used judiciously
Respectful of copyright and intellectual property	Scholar/authors adhere to the ethical guidelines that govern publication by requesting permission to use others' work, citing the sources consulted, and referencing them appropriately

Adapted from Moxley (2021)

pre-eminent. Academic writing is "privileged" based on the six characteristics identified by Moxley (2021) in Table 11.7.

11.4 Conclusion: Suitable Placements for Manuscripts

After retiring from the university, I volunteered at the local animal shelter for five years. I assembled a great volunteer crew, including professional photographers, and kept social media up-to-the-minute on which animals were adopted and the new ones that had come in to rescue. One heart-breaking outcome was "returned to shelter"—a dog or cat brought back by the adopters when the animal did not fit into the family. These "bounce backs" disturbed the adopters, demoralized the staff, and stressed out the animals. The key to prevention was successful matchmaking—for example, an active home for a high energy dog or a quiet home for a timid cat. This analogy works well with submitting manuscripts because authors are, in effect, finding a suitable placement for their work. When that goodness-of-fit criterion is not met, manuscripts bounce back, authors are frustrated, and editorial staff members waste precious time. Conversely, matching manuscripts to suitable outlets offers reciprocal benefits. The author's work is accepted for publication, the information is disseminated to the right readership, and the outlet's reputation for quality is reinforced/enhanced.

If unsuitable manuscripts clog the system, it does damage—to the authors who are rejected, to the volunteer reviewers who resign when they are overburdened, and to the editors, who are drowning in correspondence with authors and reviewers. Efficient and effective submission practices span the various fields of study and the professions. In their investigation into manuscript submission that included 18 different disciplines, Knight and Steinbach (2008) concluded:

> While initially we expected to find distinctions among the various disciplines, ultimately we were struck, not by differences, but by commonalities. We found that differences, when they exist, tend to exist among the journals within a discipline, not between disciplines. Thus, we conclude that the ties that unite academics seeking to publish are strong. (pp. 76–77)

It is the academic author's responsibility to broaden their understandings, not only about their fields and specializations within them but also the ties, norms, and values that bind scientific communication together.

Issue: Simultaneous Submissions

Less experienced scholars are sometimes unaware that it is a violation of research ethics to submit their research to two or more journals at the same time. This practice, called simultaneous submission, is a violation of research ethics and the policies of reputable scholarly journals. Why is it unacceptable to attempt to fast track a manuscript by sending it to several publishers at the same time? There are several reasons.

1. *Nonprofit status of publishers.* The publications programs of nonprofit learned societies are the predominant way that scholars publish their work. To illustrate, a research team found that the peer reviewed publications of learned societies accounted for about 70% of the scholarly journal articles, conference articles, book chapters, and monographs published by scholars in Finland (Late et al., 2020). Approximately 38% of the publications were open access. Commercial publishers produced only 2.6% of the journals and book series and 1.4% of the journal articles published by higher education faculty members (Late et al., 2020). Learned societies typically have few resources and major mechanisms for earning money. Customary ways of generating income, including membership fees, conferences, and consultation were disrupted during the pandemic. Perhaps more than ever before, these nonprofits cannot afford to review manuscripts that are already in review elsewhere.
2. *Peer review process.* Faculty who agree to conduct peer reviews of manuscripts do so as a service and seldom receive any compensation beyond a free subscription to the journal, a copy of the book, or perhaps a meeting at a conference with refreshments. It is unfair to exploit the reviewers' precious volunteer time.

3. *Contract violation.* Publishers routinely ask authors to verify that a work is under consideration by them alone. Authors may be required to agree and sign a document to confirm this. So, it is a violation of contract to have the manuscript in review by more than one publisher. Scholarly outlets typically require authors to give the publisher control and ownership of the work while it is under review, so writers are not within their rights to send that work around to several other publishers.
4. *Embarrassing outcomes.* If the manuscript is exceptional and it is accepted by both outlets, what then? The same work cannot be published in two places due to copyright issues. When a manuscript has not yet been published, the editor's plagiarism detection software cannot check for similarity with published sources. Reputable editors would consider the publication of the same manuscript in two outlets to be a mortifying mistake. Suppose that the decision from more than one outlet is to revise and resubmit. If that happens, the author(s) will have to withdraw their manuscript from one of the publishers. Again, this is inconsiderate of the editors' and reviewers' time.
5. *Exceptions.* There is a difference between for-profit commercial publishers and scholarly publishers. A book written as a commercial textbook, or a book written for the layperson/public may not have the same policies about simultaneous submissions. Be certain to check into this prior to presenting your concept for a book to more than one company.

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Understand how many leading journals manage submissions with Editorial Manager: A Tutorial for Authors Editorial Manager: A tutorial for authors | Editage Insights.

Springer Nature Resource: Author Tutorial on How to Submit to a Journal How to submit a journal article manuscript | Authors | Springer Nature.

Online Video: How to Get Published in an Academic Journal from Sage involves a panel of editors discussing ways to improve chances for success. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrGixQ7v4rY

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Gaining an Insider's View: The Business of Publishing

12

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Abstract

In qualitative research, one of the goals is the "emic" or insider's perspective on a phenomenon. The purpose of this chapter is to guide authors in acquiring insight into organizations and companies that publish scholarly work. Academic publishing differs dramatically from popular press publishing in terms of content, style, financial arrangements, and audience characteristics. All too often, academic authors attempt to navigate scientific communication by relying on that lowest form of learning, trial and error. After manuscripts are rejected repeatedly, scholarly writers sometimes see publishers and their representatives as human obstacles to their publishing goals. A better approach is to strive to understand publishing as a business. Reviewers and editors are in the business of selecting, from among the many manuscripts they receive, those that align

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_12

with the goals of the publication, meet the needs of the readership, include important ideas, use an appropriate academic writing style, and are painstakingly prepared. The main obligations of reviewers and editors are to act with integrity as they critique manuscripts and to select those that advance thinking in the field. This chapter delineates ways of ranking publishers, required components for different manuscript types, criteria used to evaluate manuscripts, and ways to become involved in peer review and editing as a route to gaining insight into scholarly publishing.

Keywords

Editor • Editor-in-chief • Acquisitions editor • Developmental editor • Copy editor • Editorial board • Peer reviewer • Scholarly publishing • The business of publishing

Three Narratives

Novice

At a writers' workshop for new faculty members led by prolific colleagues, participants are encouraged to work on a manuscript over the course of the coming year, invite peer review, and submit it for publication. One participant decides to revisit a practical article that was returned with a "revise and resubmit" decision from a journal editor. A hard copy has been sitting at the very back of a file cabinet drawer ever since it arrived. Looking at it again was just too painful. All three reviewers had given high ratings to the topic/ focus on the scoring rubric; however, scores on academic writing style were low. One reviewer remarked "The issue with this manuscript is that the voice seems to vacillate between a formal, distancing tone and the voice of a well-informed fellow professional in the field. The latter would be more appealing to our readership." The reviewer then highlighted a section in yellow and wrote: "The style and tone of this section is best suited for the journal. If the author can rewrite the entire manuscript in this way, it could make a solid contribution." The writer asks three widely published colleagues to read the reviews and discuss their recommendations for improving the work over lunch—her treat. Following each review, she revises the manuscript again. Their input helps her to summon up the courage to resubmit. Not only is the article accepted, it is later selected by the editor for a compilation of the best articles published in the journal. Better yet, one reviewer had mentioned that this author might be a promising candidate to write a book for the professional association and a successful book that survives to a second edition is the result. The editor and the author make presentations together at the national conference about writing for professional publication and continue to collaborate on writing projects well into their seventies.

What did peer and editorial review—both informal and formal—do to support the writer in this instance? When authors notice that some authors and editors are friendly, they may assume that favoritism is the explanation for the success of these writers. How does this true story help to explain the way that interprofessional relationships between authors and editors evolve?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

A team of three co-editors is assembling an edited book for a successful series, now in its 15th year. Following the Call for Papers (CFP) that was widely disseminated via *various listservs, they review 124 abstracts for chapters by providing detailed feedback, asking questions, and making recommendations to the authors. When the full manuscript for one of the accepted abstracts is submitted, it is unacceptable. The authors were not writing in their first language and the manuscript is marred by errors in punctuation, syntax, and awkwardly phrased sentences. In addition, the authors did not complete all aspects of the research project as described in the abstract and this weakened the rigor of their study. After reviewing the work independently, the three editors reject the chapter. When the authors receive this decision, they are angry. They assumed that acceptance of the abstract was a guarantee of publication (even though it was made clear in the original correspondence that it was not). They want to contest the decision and ask for a second chance, which is denied. In an email, the author accuses the editors of being biased against nonnative users of English, even though the authors for most chapters of the book represent an exceptionally diverse and international group.*

If a manuscript for the chapter of an edited book does not meet the standards for academic writing, how should editors respond, based on their obligations to the publisher, the readers, and the other contributors to the volume?

Prolific

A new editor-in-chief of a journal that was published quarterly watched it transition from four to eight issues per year during her involvement as an author, peer reviewer, and board member. The company's decision to expand was based on the number of downloads as well as the fact that the journal had an almost two-year backlog of accepted manuscripts waiting to be published. When asked what it was like to be responsible for eight issues of approximately 20 articles annually, the editor said, "Have you ever seen that children's game, Whac-A-Mole? It is a large gameboard that has holes in it and cartoonish moles pop up at random. The object is to hit the moles with your mallet the instant that you see them, while keeping your eye on the entire board. Editing a journal reminds me of that—you have to maintain a perspective on the big picture, yet constantly deal with situations that crop up." The previous editor, who remained on the Board to provide continuity, offered her some candid advice. "First, getting the journal out on time is a top priority, no excuses. Secondly, expect that the flow of submissions and need to correspond with authors and reviewers will be relentless. It is no respecter of weekends, holidays, or breaks.

A few days away from your desk can result in what seems like an insurmountable task. You have to work on it almost every day. Third, there are many additional roles for editors, such as preparing reports on the journal's performance, responding to authors' requests for letters of recommendation (e.g., for tenure/promotion, awards, sabbatical leaves, merit pay), and participating in research on scholarly publishing. It is a difficult job but also a satisfying one when you see that what you published is of use to professionals in the field."

Question: What responsibilities do editors have to various stakeholders—not only authors but also publishers, reviewers, readers, and the discipline?

Activity: Becoming a Reviewer
In a 2009 survey of over 4000 researchers conducted by Elsevier, the top four reasons that scholars gave for getting involved in peer review processes were to:

1. see a paper improved as a result of their input during the review process (91%)
2. fulfill an important role in the academic community (90%)
3. think about other scholars' papers and ways to improve them (85%)
4. exert quality control over scientific communication (84%)

There are numerous potential benefits to serving as a peer reviewer (Wilson, 2014), including:

1. Practice higher order thinking skills of synthesis, analysis, and evaluation
2. Learn about the innerworkings of publishing
3. Study examples of manuscripts, both successful and unsuccessful
4. Encounter more published research in your area of interest
5. Gain perspective on your own writing process
6. Hone your skills as a researcher
7. Build a positive reputation for service to others through recognition from the publisher or a system of tabulating reviews completed (e. g., Publons)
8. Keep current in the field
9. Develop mentoring skills in writing for publication
10. Prepare to become an editor in the future

Doctoral students and early career faculty may assume that they have no right to critique the manuscripts submitted because they have not published extensively (Jalongo et al., 2014). That depends on the manuscript. Of course, if it is a highly technical research project, reviewers with that expertise are necessary. However, if it is a practical article or book doctoral students and early career faculty might have more extensive, recent experience in the field than a pre-eminent researcher. Nevertheless, novice reviewers do need some guidance, training, and mentoring in learning to function as peer reviewers. Ways to get started include:

- *Begin by volunteering to evaluate conference proposals.* Study the criteria and submit your evaluations in a timely fashion. Participating in this process will help you to critique your own conference proposals more thoughtfully prior to sending them to the conference committee.
- *Engage in peer review during graduate classes.* Recognize that the goal is not to simply offer vague, generalized praise but to respond as a reader. Point out places that need further clarification, holes in the argument, statements that are highly debatable, and so forth. The goal is to improve the work with tactful, helpful feedback. View critical feedback the way that you respond if someone tells you there is food on your face—awkward at first, but intended to prevent embarrassment later on.
- *Identify local experts who review and edit.* Speak with instructors for classes and colleagues to find out who is involved with editing a publication. Editors of journals, books, and book series probably are recognized by the institution at some type of awards banquet, so their names are listed somewhere. For graduate students/assistants, faculty mentors can provide coaching on how they evaluate a manuscript. Editor's editorials that offer advice on publishing can be particularly helpful as you strive to develop skill in peer review and publication (Natriello, 1996).
- *Network with editors.* Take note of the editors who participate in various professional development activities. Check the publisher's online material to find out what is involved in reviewing for them. Usually, they ask for an e-mail that outlines your areas of interest with your curriculum vitae attached. The American Educational Research Association, for example, offers the opportunity to meet many different editors. They schedule multiple sessions in a large conference hall set up with round tables and chairs. There is a journal editor stationed at each table to answer questions or discuss writing projects.

For insights from several prominent editors from different fields on the promise and pitfalls of peer review—including potential bias–see the YouTube video from the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship (2011).

Self-Assessment: Think Like an Editor
In order to publish successfully, it is helpful to examine the process from the editor's point of view. Use the information in Table 12.1 to get a different perspective on academic publishing.

There are many additional resources available that provide insight into the editor's role. *The Scholarly Kitchen*, for example, is the official blog of the Society for Scholarly Publishing and it offers advice to authors and editors (Wulf & Meadows, 2016). Many times, editors draw upon their experiences and write advice for prospective authors (Blaine, 2020). In addition, the websites of professional organizations—such as the American Psychological Association's *Publishing Insider* or major publishing companies (e.g., Springer Nature, Wiley, Elsevier)—offer helpful resources for authors. To learn more about the editor's role, see Ginna (2017).

Table 12.1 Implications of the editor's role for academic authors

Editor's role	Implications for authors
Establish evaluation criteria, make them public, and apply them consistently	Review the scoring criteria used in advance and, better yet, gain practice as a peer reviewer yourself
Make a strong commitment to the publication and advancing the field	Consider what you have written from the readers' perspective. Would they learn something of value?
Be efficient in processing the manuscripts that come in	Conform to the submission guidelines and format the manuscript appropriately to make the review process proceed smoothly
Match the type of manuscript (e.g., practical, review/theoretical, research) as well as the content to the qualifications of reviewers	Use the abstract and keywords to draw attention to the key features of the work and aid the editor in identifying suitable reviewers
Correspond clearly, concisely, and remain respectful	If you have a legitimate complaint, explain it briefly and succinctly
Avoid getting involved in replies and counter-replies. Treat editorial decisions as final unless an actual error was committed	Realize that petitioning the editor is unlikely to change the outcome. It would subvert the process of peer review
Replace reviewers when they are tactless, unprofessional, belabor how *they* would have authored the paper, are overly directive with the authors, or lack the knowledge and skill to provide useful feedback	When responding to criticism, give a compelling reason for deciding not to take the action recommended by a reviewer

12.1 Introduction: Misconceptions About the Editor's Roles

According to schema theory, when we encounter something unfamiliar, we draw upon what we already know to try and make sense of it. The American Psychological Association (2023) describes schema as "a cognitive structure representing a person's knowledge about some entity or situation…[it is] a collection of basic knowledge about a concept or entity that serves as a guide to perception, interpretation, imagination, or problem solving" (unpaged). A good example is a writer's retreat. In the absence of prior experience with meetings of this type, a familiar "script" selected might be based on a traditional, lecture-type of college class. That would set expectations incorrectly because these retreats are apt to involve lively interaction amongst the participants, dialogue with experts, time for writing, and peer responses to the work produced.

When you read the word "editor," what schema for a person who fits that description come to mind? Those unfamiliar with scholarly publishing are likely to imagine a white, middle-aged male wearing glasses seated behind a large desk in a well-equipped office. In other popular media depictions of editors, newspaper editors are portrayed and tough and directive with writers while commercial press editors are depicted as catering to a few celebrated, best-selling authors. Editors of academic manuscripts usually are a dramatic departure from such schema about the editors. Often, they are or were university professors who are diplomatic, respectful, and professional in their interactions with fellow scholars. Rather than concentrating on a couple of best-selling authors, they usually work with many different authors—in the case of professional journals, hundreds or even thousands of them. Most of the time in scholarly publishing, it is a professor working alone from an office in the basement of their home rather than a posh office with support staff. For most research publications, the editor is also a full-time faculty member in higher education. They are referred to as "field editors" because they retain employment with the college or university and use technology to interact with the publisher and board members. If field editors are fortunate, their university might give them a one-quarter release to manage the journal because the institution wants the prestige of having the editor of a premier journal on staff. More often, however, the journal editor is paid a small honorarium per issue of the journal edited or perhaps nothing at all in the way of financial compensation. Usually, they have all the same pressures on them as the authors submitting their manuscripts—teaching, advisement, research, and service. Taken as a group, field editors have a low tolerance for authors who submit works littered with errors (most often occurring in the reference lists) or ask to have their work fast-tracked because their credentials are due for review by their employers. It is not the editor's job to correct papers and it is unethical to allow an author to jump ahead in line.

Because their names are right on the front of whatever that they edit, editors are concerned with professional reputation, quality of contributions, meeting deadlines, and avoiding disasters while the publication is on their watch. Editing functions are so essential in scientific communication that these duties might be distributed among various editors with different job descriptions. Editorial staff are involved in academic publishing early on, when an author is just proposing a writing project, at the very end when the typeset manuscript is being finalized, and at all stages in between. Table 12.2 highlights some of the different categories of editors.

12.2 Compensation for Academic Authors

Early career faculty are sometimes surprised to learn that, aside from a few keynote speakers, faculty who submit papers to present at conferences usually fund their own travel and might, if they are fortunate, get a modicum of travel support from the institution. The expectation is that their employers will use the reward structure of the university—tenure and promotion—as acknowledgement of these efforts. A similar dynamic occurs with scholarly writing. Talk with prolific authors and they will affirm that academic writing is rarely a major source of income. When academic authors hear about reporters being paid for the articles that they write or novelists getting advances from their publishers, it raises questions about the financial rewards associated with publishing. Here is the story. Practically none of the professional journals pay the scholar/authors who write for them nor their peer reviewers. That is why authors are referred to as contributors and peer reviewers as

Table 12.2 Types of editors in scholarly publications

Editor-in-chief is chairperson of the editorial board and decision maker for the publication. This editor invites suitable peer reviewers, reads the reviews, renders a decision, and communicates with authors. They also have responsibility for adhering to ethical practices and intervening when problems occur
Field editor also may function as editor-in-chief, except that a field editor does not reside with the publisher and is working remotely rather than as an inhouse employee. Field editors may work with a company located in another country for years and meet staff personnel face-to-face just once a year at a conference or rely on technology to hold meetings
Guest editor is a temporary appointment—usually for one, special thematic issue of a journal. The guest editor takes over the process of announcing a call for papers, inviting contributors from a "wish list," managing the review process, and assembling the publication. In addition, the guest editor(s) often write an introductory piece that explains the purpose of the special issue and provides an overview of what is included. Consult the journals in your field to see if they have guest editors and how they are selected
Sponsoring editor is the businessperson at a publishing house who decides which projects are most promising and proposes them to the senior editors for funding. Usually, sponsoring editors are responsible for a list of journals or books in a category and the success or failure of that list determines their ability to advance in the company
Consulting editor For a particularly important initiative that represents a major investment, an editor might ask a fellow editor with more experience to provide additional input. If, for example, if a company is launching a new journal or adding open access publications, they might commission another editor to provide guidance
Division editor For a massive project, such as a handbook or encyclopedia, the editor may delegate authority to several editors with areas of specialization and coordinate everyone's efforts
Series editor Many of the commercial publishers of scholarly books support book series that have a particular focus, such as research in neuroscience. The editor is responsible for identifying contributors to the series as well as reviewing any proposals that come in. Many times, these books are edited volumes that compile chapters from various authors rather than single-authored works
Editorial assistant is like an administrative assistant—more than a secretary with some decision-making authority. Tasks such as overseeing correspondence, providing reviewers with evaluation criteria, and compiling the reviews for the editor-in-chief are common responsibilities. Editorial assistants may work with many editors simultaneously by managing online systems that notify authors when all reviews are in, the work is posted online, and the article or book is available in hard copy. In addition, editorial assistants may be hired to field questions from authors and deal with technology glitches. University faculty may involve their graduate assistants in this type of work
Acquisitions editor is responsible for identifying and enlisting new authors as well as maintaining productive business arrangements with authors that might result in a new edition of a successful work or another venture. As their title suggests, the main role of these editors is to bring viable projects to the publisher
Developmental editor gets more involved in conceptualizing the work and outlining key characteristics with the authors. Particularly for commercial publishers, this input is based on market research, such as surveys of the instructors responsible for teaching a particular course that is a potentially large market for a college-level textbook

(continued)

Table 12.2 (continued)

Copy editor conducts a word-by-word read of the manuscript and identifies issues (queries) that the author must address prior to publication, such as "Please check the institutional affiliations of the authors," "Are headings at the right level?" "Please check the format for Figure 2. Is it set correctly?" "Jones 2002 appears in the text but not in the reference list. Please provide the citation."
Production editor leads the production team that edits the final manuscript to be typeset and published in print and/or online formats. Publishers vary in their support system for editors and authors. Some companies have production staff who check the format and proofread; some will do a check between the manuscript and the reference list. Others leave most of that to the authors

volunteers. As tradition would dictate, scholars are expected to be more concerned about truth than money. The image of academics who are dedicated to their respective fields and will not be lured into misconduct by promises of financial gain is an ethos of scholarship.

When a professor's book is available online and costs in excess of $100 U.S. dollars, many assume that authors must be making a small fortune. As Wulf and Meadows (2016) argue, professors need to understand more about the publishing industry before they venture into it, including the royalty structure when writing books. College textbooks are a good example. It is important to understand that royalties are based, not on the cover price of the book, but on the net price. The net is a fraction of the cover price because it is the amount left after deductions for such things as indexing, editing, printing, cover design, and advertising. So, a book that has a purchase price of $100 per unit may have a net price of $20 and the author with a 10% royalty would get $2 per book, before taxes. If the work is co-authored, the royalties would be shared in the proportions specified in the contract. If a used book is resold, there are no royalties. The market for college textbooks is much smaller than that of a popular press book. Unlike a best-selling novel that might sell a million copies, these books may sell only about 2500–5000 copies. Professors have many possible choices of textbooks, so the market is split among them. Even highly successful college textbooks may not sell more than 10,000 copies in their lifetime. Aside from absolute textbook dynasties that are adopted by the great majority of faculty teaching a course offered at most colleges, writing college textbooks is not a route to financial independence.

To illustrate, think about an introductory course, such as Psychology 101. A quick search online makes it clear that instructors for that course already have an assortment of texts from which to choose, and many of them have been in existence for decades. So, if an author proposes a new book, it probably will be passed over for more established, familiar textbooks that have larger budgets and allow for such things as a full color cover, more photographs, and so forth. College textbook publishers realize this and usually print only about 5000 copies of a new text. Then they wait and watch what happens. If they sell out, it is called "hitting its numbers" for the first year. Even then, they will not go to another *edition*, just print some more copies. Thus, surviving to a second edition is an achievement.

More resources might be allocated to the subsequent edition. First-time college textbook authors often are flattered by the prospect of securing a contract and oblivious to all of this. As Jandrić (2021) notes, early career faculty are expected to "figure out sets of invisible rules relating to academic publishing largely on their own" (pp. 36–37).

For the graduate student market, the textbook picture is even less profitable. There are fewer graduate students overall than undergraduates and sometimes the focus of a class is very specialized. Graduate faculty might prefer to assign various journal articles as reading and not use a textbook at all. Knowing this helps to explain why the person responsible for signing new authors—the acquisition editor–may be underwhelmed by an idea for a graduate-level textbook. To convince them the idea is viable, it might be necessary to analyze the course sequence sheet for graduate programs in a discipline and demonstrate a need for a particular book. This is what we did when proposing a book to one of the premier publishers in the field of education, Teachers College Press at Columbia University. We had found that many of our colleagues at other institutions offered an "issues and trends" type of course and reported that there was no suitable text. So, with the help of our graduate assistants, we compiled a collection of course descriptions from 50 graduate programs and tabulated the findings. Then we generated a list of trends, issues, and controversies in the field and created a "wish list" of authors to contribute each of the chapters. It is not enough to argue that no such book exists or that you have an intense interest in the topic. The counter argument is that there is no pressing need for such a book or a sufficiently large group of potential readers. Fortunately, our book was well-received and even survived to a second edition (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2003).

Most textbooks take at least a year—more often, two years–before they appear on the shelves, thus adding to the difficulty. In order to understand why book writing usually is not lucrative for authors, you first need to appreciate the publishers' perspective. It might cost $15,000 to publish a "plain vanilla" type of book when the staff salaries, workplaces, advertising, production, and print costs are factored in. So, awarding a contract to an author is an investment and publishers cannot continue to exist if they fail to get a return on their investments.

What about research books? Most scholarly publishers have a standard contract. Because the potential readership is limited and earnings potential is modest, royalty rates of 8–10% are customary. If the book is being reprinted or going to a subsequent edition because it was successful, authors should revisit their contract and ask for better terms. If the publisher is unwilling to do this, it might be possible to include an escalation clause in the original contract that would increase the royalty rate to address the exceedingly rare situation in which an academic book becomes hugely popular. Books that are intended as online downloads may offer little more than a one-time honorarium and no royalties at all. It would be difficult to get better terms than these. For edited books, editors sometimes receive a modest honorarium and no royalties while chapter authors' only compensation might be a copy of the book. Peer reviewers of short book proposals typically are uncompensated. If they are critiquing a book length manuscript, peer reviewers will sometimes get an honorarium or, more commonly, be permitted to select free books from the publisher's catalog valued at a particular amount (e.g., $150).

Publishers expect scholars' employers to provide the incentives (e.g., graduate assistant support, release time, tenure/promotion, sabbatical leave). Publishers presume that highly successful publications lead to paid speaking engagements. Little wonder then, that academic authors retain their faculty positions rather than retiring early on profits from writing. Thus, when academic authors ask if they need to hire a literary lawyer or agent, the answer is probably not. The income probably is not worth the investment. Furthermore, literary agents and lawyers work with authors of mass market publications, such as the authors of novels or nonfiction books on *The New York Times* bestsellers list rather than a research book written for a comparatively small group of other researchers in a particular field.

One valuable, yet frequently overlooked, source of advice is candid conversation with authors who have successfully published with a company. They can provide details about working on similar projects, share lessons learned, and discuss their working relationships with the editorial staff members. Inquire about those at your institution with such experiences and, failing that, use networking at professional conferences to find out more about publication outlets and their employees.

12.3 Meeting Editors' and Reviewers' Expectations

Practically any academic author who is actively pursuing publication has experienced less-than-enthusiastic responses to their work and even outright rejection. Disappointing outcomes are so commonplace among scholars that an editorial by Furst (1985) published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* argued that it would benefit new scholars to see, not only a list of senior faculty members' achievements but also of their many failed attempts. While the standard curriculum vitae documents successes, an "anti-vitae", as she called it, might reassure graduate students and early career faculty that not all of an established scholar's ideas are well-received.

The most helpful assumption about critique of manuscripts is that authors, peer reviewers, and editors are not infallible. Everyone needs to at least entertain the possibility they have made a mistake or could be wrong. Even ground-breaking ideas can be opposed when they conflict with prevailing perspectives and, according to Kotsis and Chung (2014), some "manuscripts that later resulted in a Nobel Prize have been rejected for publication" (p. 958). Yet reasons for critical comments from editors and reviewers usually have less to do with their inability to recognize brilliant, revolutionary ideas and usually are based on more ordinary types of problems with manuscripts.

A common question at workshops and in classes that focus on writing for publication is, "What do editors want?" In response, I would say–without any hint of sarcasm– "manuscripts that they don't need to edit, because they are ready to publish." A good analogy is asking "What do professors want from students' assignments?" Ideally, they want papers that: (1) conform to the guidelines in the syllabus; (2) demonstrate higher level thinking skills, (3) reflect the ethical standards of the profession, (4) use evidence to support ideas, (5) generate interest in thinking further about the topic, and (6) are meticulously prepared. Whether it is the instructor for a college course or an editor, they want much the same thing: high-quality work that stands out and is a pleasure to evaluate. If a research manuscript is sent to peer reviewers by the editor, there are some "fatal flaws" that result in rejection such as lack of novelty in the research questions, weak study rationale, failure to provide details on ethical approval, poor study design, inappropriate choice of study measures, weak study rationale, insufficient description of methodology, and poor quality of writing (Menon et al., 2022).

What do authors want? Again, without trying to be glib, they dream of uncritical acceptance of their manuscripts, yet this decision is exceedingly rare, with only about 5–10% of manuscripts accepted on the first attempt (Dowd & McElveny, 1997). Across the disciplines, the premier journals have low acceptance rates. The most typical way of calculating acceptance rate is to divide the number of accepted manuscripts by the number submitted. So, if a quarterly journal publishes 60 manuscripts in a year and receives 500 that same year, that's 60 divided by 500 or 0.12 for a 12% acceptance rate (Elsevier Author Services, 2023). Likewise, a professional journal that is published bi-monthly might average about 15 manuscripts in each of the six issues, or 90 articles per year, yet receive thousands of submissions. This places editors and reviewers in the position of accepting only those that make the most significant contributions to the field and will require minimal editing (LaPlaca et al., 2018). An editorial decision of revise and resubmit can be misinterpreted—particularly by inexperienced academic authors. Realistically, that is about as good as it gets most of the time. As journal editor Lusher (2015) points out, "a decision of revise or reject is not necessarily the end of the road for a given manuscript, however. In fact, most manuscripts require revision after initial review" (p. 566). Revise and resubmit is an affirmation of publication potential, an invitation try again, and a route to making the work even stronger. In a perfect world, all three stakeholders—author, reviewer, and editor—would have their expectations met. Usually, it is much, much messier than that.

When an author's manuscripts are rejected repeatedly, it may seem as though editors are just too demanding. It is not the case that editors are gleefully rejecting papers without any consideration of the work that went into them (Khadilkar, 2018). Rather, they think about their obligations to the audience for the publication who take the time to read and expect to have their thinking enriched, enlarged, and challenged by what is put into print. Journal editors for Springer Nature (2023), publisher of approximately 2900 journals, identified reasons for rejecting research manuscripts in Table 12.3.

Table 12.3 Research manuscripts: Reasons for rejection

• The topic, approach, or intended audience is not a match for the journal's scope
• The material does not advance thinking in significant ways
• A careful explanation of ethical practices in research was not included
• The manuscript was not structured and/or formatted properly
• The level of detail was insufficient for readers to fully understand and possibly replicate the research
• The academic writing style did not meet standards for clear communication
• The underlying logic and presentation of ideas was inadequate
• Publication ethics were violated (e.g., a high similarity score with previously published work due to plagiarism or self-plagiarism)

Just as authors' work is subjected to critique, publishers are evaluated as well.

12.4 Evaluating Publishers

Opinions about the reputation and relative standing of publishers are so commonplace that even *Wikipedia* describes them as "top-tier", "bottom-tier", and in between. Although rankings of journals by impact factor and other metrics is commonplace, research on ratings of academic book publishers is limited. Nonetheless, there are three general aspects of a book publisher's reputation, according to Zuccala and colleagues (2021) as described below.

- *prestige*—is an unwritten hierarchy that scholars in a field intuitively recognize. It implies a ranking such that a prestigious publishing house is at the top. In a study of the most prestigious publishers as rated by political scientists, university presses housed in the premier institutions of higher education (e.g., Cambridge University, Princeton University, Oxford University, University of Chicago, Harvard University, Cornell University, University of Michigan, Yale University) were at the top, not only as publication outlets but also as reading choices (Garand & Guiles, 2011).
- *quality*—is the overall intellectual and editorial quality of books published by the company. Some indicators include the recognized expertise of the authors, the persuasiveness of the evidence, the intellectual level of the discourse, the influence of the titles in the field, and the extent of editorial care in manuscript preparation (Metz & Stemmer, 1996).
- *specialization*—refers to market niches established by publishers that produce books for specific academic fields/subjects. Just as universities have a reputation for exceptional graduate programs in particular fields, publishers may elect to concentrate their efforts on specific topics as a route to establishing greater visibility within a field.

There have been various efforts to rank academic publishers, but the task is more complicated when it incorporates book publishers from other countries—so much so, that some researchers are advocating a global and multilingual register that would rank publishing houses (Gimenez-Toledo & Sivertsen, 2019; Zuccala et al., 2021). In the meantime, authors need to be well-informed and conduct their own inquiry into the publishers under consideration with strategies such as those in Table 12.4.

Table 12.4 Investigating publishers

*Visibility and viability***.** Publishers that are prominent in the literature are likely to be the same ones that have a solid reputation. Do you routinely encounter promotional material about the books they publish in the media, at conferences, and in catalogs? Which publishers are in your professional library and cited frequently in the reference lists for your manuscripts? Do not rely on the company's promotional materials alone, as they may be biased. Look into the financial status of the company
*Read the contract***.** The contract outlines the obligations of the author and the publisher. If you do not agree on things at this stage, it will be futile to change it later. Check details such as what happens if you fail to meet the deadline? What if the completed manuscript is not acceptable? What is the honorarium or royalty and when is it paid? Will authors receive free copies of the book? Will you get to see the cover before the book is published? Who is responsible for indexing the book? What rights do you retain for your work? For example, some contracts include a noncompeting works clause that prohibits authors from publishing on the same topic for two years
Format for the submission. Most large publishing companies have extensive guidelines on how to prepare the copy that include criteria for permissions, photographs, and figures. Many times, authors who hoped to use previously published materials are disappointed to find that the copyright fees are too expensive. Likewise, they may plan to use photographs taken with a camera phone that will be rejected by the art director because the resolution is too low. Some publishing houses use a template to impose a consistent style on the manuscripts submitted or require that they are sent in as pdfs rather than Word documents. Find out how and when the typeset manuscript, or proofs, will be shared with authors
Marketing. Some markets are price sensitive, so how much will the book cost? Do not assume that making it a paperback will resolve this issue; paperbacks often are done *after* the hardbound book has been quite successful. Delivery time is another consideration. How long does it take for your book to be published after you have submitted the final copy? Will it be ready in time for the major conference in your field? Authors sometimes assume that their only responsibility is to produce the manuscript. However, book authors are expected to complete a marketing questionnaire that includes a brief description of the book and their as well as contact information for experts who would be willing to write an endorsement for the book and make a list of organizations that should receive a copy
Book Metrics. Reputable publishers provide information on the number of books sent out for promotional purposes (such as examination copies of textbooks), units sold, units returned, and so forth. If, for example, a textbook is successful, there may be numerous copies of an earlier edition in the pool of available texts and no royalties would be earned on used books
Insights from authors. Contact some authors, reviewers, and editors who have worked with this a book publisher. How do they describe their experiences? If any problems arose, was there someone they could contact and how were the issues resolved?

Table 12.5 Examples of Leading Publishers and Their Websites

Cambridge University Press	https://www.cambridge.org/
Elsevier	Elsevier | An Information Analytics Business
Harvard University Press	https://www.hup.harvard.edu/
Information Age Press	IAP || Information Age Publishing || Academic Books & Journals in Education, Management & Psychology (infoagepub.com)
Oxford University Press	https://global.oup.com/education/covers/oxed/large/9780192774613.jpg
Pearson	https://www.pearson.com
Peter Lang	https://www.peterlang.com
Princeton University Press	https://press.princeton.edu/
Sage	https://group.sagepub.com/
Springer Nature	https://www.springernature.com
Taylor and Francis/Routledge	https://www.taylorandfrancis.com
Wiley and Blackwell	https://wwwblackwellpublishing.com

There are many different online sites that evaluate scholarly publishers and rank them. In academic publishing, the company's reputation for quality is more important than income alone. Some of the companies that have solid reputations in academic publishing and their websites are listed in Table 12.5.

12.5 Becoming an Editor: Why and How

In *The Elements of* Editing, Plotnik (1982) remarked that, when selecting candidates to become editors, he considered such useful attributes such as work ethic, brilliance, and disdain for high wages. Given that editing generally is not accompanied by major financial incentives, what motivates someone to become an editor? Roediger (2008) speaks to the learning experience aspect when he writes,

> Editing a journal is like spending several more years in graduate school, except the education is ten times more informative. It is the most exciting job in academia. You learn a huge amount, you think hard, you see new work on the cutting edge, and it can change your own research for the better. I am so glad I did it. (unpaged)

Most editors for nonprofit organizations pursued the role because they had a keen interest in the business of publishing, experienced success at publishing their own research, and have a long history of providing useful feedback as peer reviewers. As editors, they could extend their sphere of influence on a field by getting involved with many other scholars' contributions to the discipline.

Table 12.6 Advantages and disadvantages of edited books

Advantages of the edited book
1. An author can "divide and conquer" an ambitious book project without having to write the entire manuscript
2. If the conributors are carefully selected, the anthology can become a repository of the best current thinking on the subject
3. Rather than attempting address many aspects of a topic/focus, each author can concentrate on a specific area of strength
4. Compilations can delve into an area of interest in greater depth and provide a resource to other scholars
5. Networking with a group of scholars can establish a support system for future collaborations
Disadvantages of the edited book
1. Disreputable publishers compile these books with minimal quality control
2. The editor may approach the project as offers of publication to friends rather than as keen insights from leading experts
3. In the absence of a unifying vision for the project, it may fail to accomplish its goal
4. Without skillful editing, chapters may be jarringly inconsistent and uneven in quality
5. The visibility of chapters may be less than that of a journal article
6. For a variety of reasons, a chapter author delay might have to be replaced or dropped entirely. This can disrupt the timeline and in require a reorganization of the table of contents

Career-wise, another motivation for becoming an editor is the name recognition associated with being the editor and the prestige associated with having responsibility for a publication. That responsibility can be formidable. Editors' names are prominently featured and, by implication, they have signed off on what is published in that outlet. For more advice on editing, see Times Higher Education (2017) and University of Kansas Libraries (2022).

Before you agree to accept long-term responsibility as an editor, there may be opportunities to "try on" the editor's role. Variously referred to as edited books, compilations, or anthologies, multi-authored books can make important contributions to the field because they involve experts on many different facets of a persistent or especially timely issue, trend, or controversy in a field. Advantages and disadvantages of edited books are highlighted in Table 12.6.

Producing a compilation book requires skill in networking and managing a complex project that involves many different personalities. Editor (Eise, 2019) makes the recommendations in Table 12.7.

12.6 Conclusion: Why Edit?

A faculty member accepted the invitation to guest co-edit an issue of a leading journal in her field of counseling. When she met a former colleague for lunch, she said "I know that you do a lot of editing and, after going through this, I would not want to do it again. Getting high-quality manuscripts was difficult–finding suitable peer reviewers, even more so. Instead of an entire issue dedicated to the theme, we had to 'fill in' with manuscripts on other topics. Authors did not always follow

Table 12.7 Recommendations for editors of anthologies

1. *Understand your audience.* Know exactly who you are aiming the book at and make this abundantly clear to your contributors, both in the letter of invitation and again in the guidelines for preparing the chapter. Is it (mainly) fellow researchers? Disciplinary insiders? Students? The general public?
2. *Make a sensible timeline.* The first thing a busy professional wants to know is the deadline for submission of the chapter, the revisions after editing, and so forth. There probably will need to be several months in between these deadlines. An overly ambitious time frame can create problems if it has to be renegotiated and some authors are relying on the chapter as a publication completed in time for a tenure/promotion application
3. *Avoid unpleasant surprises.* Make sure that authors understand that an invitation to submit a chapter is not a guarantee of acceptance and that all chapters will be peer reviewed
4. *Provide clear instructions.* Determine the style and general content restrictions for your book. Provide concise and well-written guidelines that specify the word count, image restrictions, formatting, literary style, and anything else you think might be important. Reiterate these requirements multiple times and supply examples
5. *Recognize that academics are juggling multiple demands.* They may misunderstand or overlook instructions. Rather than getting frustrated, just patiently request that they revisit their chapters
6. *Identify the incentives.* There may not be much reward for publishing a book chapter at authors' institutions. Make them aware of the contribution when you first invite them and remind them of it as you progress through the project
7. *Being an editor means editing.* Editors need to invest time in providing thoughtful feedback and responding to the revisions made. At some point, they must really delve into the manuscripts and do in-depth edits, right down to the proofing stage. You cannot be afraid to diplomatically suggest changes to a manuscript if those modifications would genuinely improve it. If all of this seems like an onerous task, don't agree to edit a book
8. *Edit at different levels.* If you do not edit well, the volume will lack cohesion and fail to deliver on the promise of the proposal. It is not sufficient to edit for the academic value of the content alone; you also have to consider the style and flow of the writing and an appropriate placement for each chapter in the volume
9. *Remind people of deadlines.* Do not assume that every author will submit work by the deadline. Build a bit of flex time into the calendar so that submissions that arrive a little bit later are not a major issue. Stay in communication with contributors and gently remind them of the promises they made
10. *Market the book.* Do what you can as the editor to publicize the book by speaking on the topic, arranging a panel discussion at a conference, and sending the brief description out to the media
11. *Express gratitude and celebrate.* Compose a celebratory email that revisits the purposes for the project that were in the book proposal. Make sure that each contributor gets a copy of the book. Celebrate the collective contribution and share any positive publicity the work garners, such as the number of downloads (Adapted from Eise, 2019)

instructions and, in a few cases, even after we worked hard to get comments back to authors in a timely fashion, some of them never followed through with the revisions. We were working with a tight deadline but not compensated in any way beyond having our names listed as the editors. I just don't get the appeal.

Truthfully, I'd rather focus on my own research than all the frustrations of working with a group of authors."

As this prolific author's first experience captures, there are many challenges and pressures associated with accepting the role of editor. A journal editor must mediate among the reviewers, the authors, and the disciplinary community to fulfill expectations for papers in the publications that they represent (Starfield & Paltridge, 2019).

Publishing companies need to be profitable to continue to exist, and even non-profit professional organizations need to be financially solvent. Editors support the sustainability of scholarly publication outlets when they make good decisions that maintain or enhance the publisher's reputation. If they do otherwise, they are out of work—or replaced, even when working as uncompensated volunteers. Unlike mass market publications that might have potential for millions of readers, academic publishers usually work with narrow profit margins and marketability for specialized audiences. As sociologist/editor Kivisto (2016) points out, there are burdens associated with accepting leadership for a publication:

> while outsiders tend to see the role as characterized by power, editors are inclined to understand what they are doing in terms of the responsibilities of the job. They have a responsibility to the journal, and to that end want to enhance its reputation and ranking. This can only happen if the manuscripts chosen for publication are of high quality and of interest to scholars in the field. The flip side of the quest for quality is avoiding making a mistake by publishing something of questionable value. Thus, the quest for that article that will really ring the impact factor bell is matched by the wish to not have a respected colleague ask, "How could you have published that piece of rubbish?"

The minefield of mistakes—whether they are entire manuscripts that lack quality or one embarrassing typographical error that goes undetected—is an ever-present worry when it is your name on the cover of a publication. Understanding this about the editor's role gives academic authors an insider's view on why publishing professionals often seem so demanding and detail oriented. What they decide to publish is apt to be read by professionals with bright minds and extensive experience. Their readers tend to be unforgiving. They demand authoritative evidence, detect holes in arguments, challenge ideas, and have zero tolerance for errors. Gaining an insider's perspective on publishing ventures is a route to generating manuscripts that are more likely to earn acceptance from editors and peer reviewers.

Issue: The Peer Review Crisis

In the wake of the pandemic, scholarly publishing is experiencing a reviewer crisis (Dance, 2022; Flaherty, 2022; Petrescu & Krishen, 2022). Danielle Parrish (2022), editor of *The Journal of Social Work Education*, characterizes the situation well when she writes:

> It is not surprising that in the aftermath of this worldwide pandemic and other societal stressors, academic faculty have needed some room to rest, recover, and even deal with burnout.

> As we recover, there is a need to prioritize the work that we value most. In addition to finding meaning in what we do and where we spend our time, it is also important—as with any disaster—to assess the damage and decide what we want to repair…Like so many other vulnerabilities in societal systems laid bare during the pandemic, the delicate system of peer review that relies on the goodwill, and often free labor of our peers has pushed this system to a potential breaking point… I get it. We are all tired and maybe burned out. There has been a priority to focus on the tasks that are essential and considered for tenure, promotion, and merit. However, we must be collectively responsible for not just producing scholarship and research, but also ensuring its quality as a profession. (pp. 619–620)

When scholars decline to participate in peer review, it can unduly narrow perspectives and make it increasingly difficult to match a manuscript to an expert on that specialized topic. One editor reported that, on average, she invites ten people to review each of the approximately 25 manuscripts submitted per week before finding two experts willing to review each one. This activity alone requires 250 pieces of correspondence (DeLisi, 2022). Large, international surveys estimate that researchers in developed countries produce three times as many peer reviews per paper than researchers in emerging nations and that ten percent of reviewers are responsible for nearly 50% of the reviews submitted to journals (Publons, 2018; Vesper, 2018). Even prior to the world health crisis, a survey conducted in the biomedical field estimated that one-fifth of researchers were responsible for 94% of the reviews (Kovanis et al., 2016).

A Publons (2018) report on the global state of peer review cited three leading reasons for declining a request to review: (1) the article is outside their area of expertise, (2) the researchers are too busy to complete the critique, and (3) the prospective reviewer has not received any training in how to conduct a review. There is also evidence that, even though peer review is nearly always an uncompensated form of service, reviewers want recognition for their service. Some journals use Publons to track the reviews completed, publish a list of reviewers' names at the end of the year, give vouchers toward defraying the cost of publishing Open Access, or give awards for top reviewers nominated by the editors. Increasingly, book publishers offer reviewers free books from their catalogs at a predetermined price point (e.g., $150) and/or a copy of the book when published.

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Top Tips for Early Career Peer Reviewers.
https://www.wiley.com/network/researchers/being-a-peer-reviewer/top-tips-for-early-career-peer-reviewers

Springer Nature Resource: Course on Code of Conduct for Journals. Course on code of conduct for journals | Editors | Springer Nature.

Online Video: In this video from the Navigation Academia collection, Dr. Phoenix Singh advises scholars on how to review an article submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnZd6q-5lg8

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Expanding Competence: Skills and Challenges

13

Mary Renck Jalongo

Contents

Abstract

Growth in skill and confidence as an author requires writers to work at the edge of their competence. International doctoral students studying at institutions where English is the language of instruction (but not their native language) may encounter additional writing challenges. English often is regarded as "the language of science" and some university faculty members worldwide are pressured by their institutions to publish in Anglophone outlets. The main arguments in favor of this practice are that it increases visibility of research and elevates the institution's international reputation. Doctoral students and early career faculty whose first language is English can encounter writing difficulties when they are confronted by the task of writing for new discourse communities consisting of scholars and researchers. Even well-established, prolific authors need to make an additional effort in expanding their writing skills when they pursue new writing projects. Across the spectrum of facility with academic writing, particular situations can cause self-doubt, demand the development of new skills, and

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_13

increase the probability of failure. Why do some authors avoid writing, others stay in their comfort zones, and still others become increasingly versatile and accomplished? The field of positive psychology provides some clues. Studies of fluency, optimal experiences, and identity-based motivation help to explain the growth of competence as academic authors. Successful scholar/authors accept that learning to write well is a lifelong ambition that is a perpetual work in progress.

Keywords

Writing habits • Flow theory • Optimal experience • Well-being • Nonnative speakers of English

Three Narratives

Novice

When two researchers submit their proposal to become co-editors of an established journal, they include two doctoral students as part of their anonymous peer review team. The editors prepare the students for their role with some coaching, examples of written feedback, and a scoring rubric to use. After receiving the first manuscript to review, a doctoral student has some questions. She writes in a private email to one of the editors—who is also the chair of her dissertation committee– "I'm having trouble with this manuscript. How do you tell the author (in a diplomatic way) that the main problem is with the presentation of ideas? It is just the facts—dry and dull. Are you supposed to offer suggestions about how to make the material more appealing to the readers, or is that outside the purview of a reviewer?" The editor writes back, "*You are not alone in your assessment of this piece. It would require a major rewrite. Even though the author was invited to submit based on name recognition in the field, the work does not advance thinking on the topic, the literature review is dated, and the academic writing style is disappointing.*"

Editors have endorsed mentoring doctoral students in the skills of peer review through various initiatives (O'Connor, 2016). What would novices need to learn before critiquing others' work? How could serving as peer reviewers benefit them?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

The international conference of the leading professional organization in the field includes several research forums that are presented throughout the three-day meeting. A moderator and prominent researcher introduces each of the four researchers, serves as time keeper, and makes a summary statement at the end. Presenters are expected to distribute a one-page synopsis of their study to the audience. Before the group convenes, the moderator takes one of the presenters aside because she failed to submit the research summary to him, despite two reminders. The moderator is not pleased because he did not have what he needed to prepare concluding remarks. She hands him a copy now, apologizes, and he quickly scans the page. When the presentations begin, it is evident that this presenter has not practiced enough to stay within the time limit. As explained in the research forum guidelines distributed to presenters, the moderator signals that just two minutes are remaining by raising *his hand. However, this presenter continues to talk and does not get to the findings/implications before the moderator has to say, "Unfortunately, we are out of time to report on this study. In consideration for the three other researchers waiting to be heard, we need to move on." The next presenter is a seasoned researcher. He begins by identifying the gap in the existing research, briefly explains the conceptual framework, states the purpose of the study, and shares the research questions. A flow chart of the data collection/analysis offers a quick overview of the methods/procedures. This leaves time to highlight key findings, describe the implications/contributions of the research and respond to questions.*

What are your views on this situation? How might these presentations affect the audience as well as the reputation of the presenters and the moderator?

Prolific

A psychologist from the United Kingdom has published 25 books, mainly in the field of criminology. In his work, he has seen how animals can support people with mental health issues, including prison inmates. Hollin (2021) *proposes a book that would compile accounts of both current and classic research in psychology that relied on observations of nonhuman animals and their interactions with humans as a route to understanding behavior.* An Introduction to Human-Animal Relationships: A Psychological Perspective*, is a departure from the material that he has published in the past. The human-animal bond is a burgeoning area of research in psychology, so the topic is timely. Given the expansion of postsecondary programs focused on the human-animal bond, the book could serve as a textbook in courses as well as background reading for those with a special interest in the topic.*

What would motivate a scholar to venture beyond a particular area of specialization with writing? How far afield can or should a scholar go in pursuing new research agendas or different audiences?

Activity: Changing Habits

Changing habits as a writer takes time. A frequently cited study in sociology estimated that it takes between 18 and 254 days to change a habit (Lally et al., 2009). Of course, there are many variables that influence how long it takes to replace an unproductive habit with a more beneficial habit. Psychologists have concluded that four strategies appear to be most successful in establishing new habits: (1) identifying triggers, (2) altering the environment, (3) finding an accountability partner, or (4) using a reward system (Manoylov, 2021). Examples of how this applies to academic writing are:

- "I have to get past the idea that the first sentence has to be perfect before I can start writing." (identifying a trigger)
- "I have invested in a desk that allows me to stand while at the computer because I spend so much time sitting in meetings and need to prevent further problems with my back." (changing the environment)
- "I promised my co-author to have a draft of my section of the article ready on Thursday, so I will get up earlier to meet that deadline." (accountability partner)

Table 13.1 Research-Based Strategies for Improving Habits

Strategy	Response
Trigger	–
Environment	–
Accountability partner	–
Reward system	–

- "I generated several pages today—time to walk the dog and get outside on this beautiful day." (reward system).

Now apply these strategies to your writing for publication habits by filling in Table 13.1.

Self-Assessment Becoming an Expert
For those of us with little additional practice, training, and coaching in singing, our voices do not progress much beyond what we could sing at 7 or 8 years of age. A similar outcome can occur with scholarly writing. In the absence of further skill development, academic writing may remain at the graduate school level rather than rising to the expert level. In a frequently cited statistic from Malcolm Gladwell (2008), he estimated that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to achieve elite performance in a field. The media latched onto this statistic but glossed over one crucial aspect: it depends on what people actually accomplished during practice. A basic principle of human learning is that guided practice provided by a more competent role model is a surer route to success than individual trial and error. In other studies of expertise across fields, there has been mention of seven years to achieve a high level of competence, emphasizing the "extracognitive" factors (i.e., those that go beyond knowledge alone) in exceptional performance (Shavinina & Ferrari, 2004). Variables such as resourcefulness, resilience, and persistence may make the difference between success and failure. In the edited volume, *Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance*, Ericsson et al., (2018) argue that experts appear to differ from non-experts in terms of influences such as their:

- general, practical, and creative intelligence
- ability to monitor their own learning and be growth-seeking
- dedication to deliberate practice (not only quantity but also quality)
- responsiveness to training and efforts to seek out opportunities for development
- capacity for benefitting from social support
- intense interest and passion to pursue a goal.

Which of the following strategies have you used to expand your skill set as an academic author? Check off those you have tried and make a list of others you would consider pursuing.

_____ Identified a person whose critical, yet helpful, comments increase motivation to revise.
_____ Co-authored a manuscript with one or more experienced authors.
_____ Analyzed reviewers' comments on a "revise and resubmit" paper with a colleague's help.
_____ Served as an informal peer reviewer for manuscripts of classmates or colleagues.
_____Transformed part of a dissertation into a journal article or other publication.
_____ Converted a successful training or conference presentation into a publishable manuscript.
_____ Participated in a writers' group or retreat.
_____ Attended an online training for academic authors.
_____ Completed a writing for professional publication course.
_____ Used audience feedback from a conference presentation to improve a manuscript.
_____ Joined an editorial board.
_____ Provided formal peer review for a publication outlet.
_____ E-mailed a letter of inquiry to a journal editor.
_____ Critiqued a book proposal or book length manuscript.
_____ Used an online tool, such as Grammarly.com, to identify manuscript flaws.
_____ Joined a listserv that disseminates calls for papers.
_____ Studied publishers' websites and online tools for authors.
_____ Reviewed the tables of contents of a journal prior to submitting a manuscript.
_____ Contacted an editor of a book with a proposal for a chapter.
_____ Briefly discussed an idea for a book with a publisher in person or via email.
_____ Studied the catalog of a publisher prior to submitting a proposal for a book.
_____ Drafted a proposal to guest edit a journal.
_____ Compiled class notes or prepared an outline for a college-level textbook.
_____ Responded to a request to be interviewed about your research.
_____ Used your publication(s) to enhance college teaching.
_____ Networked to form a collaborative group to prepare a manuscript.

13.1 Introduction: Fluency with Academic Language

When learning to speak an additional language, it often is the case that the ability to read and write in that language is at a higher level than conversational ability. The reasons for this are a topic of ongoing debate. Some attribute it to inadequate teaching methods that focus on formal grammar lessons and do not provide more immersive opportunities to use the target language. Some point out that conversations can be unpredictable, demand quick thinking, and require a more extensive vocabulary. Yet another influence is how willing the speaker is to engage in verbal exchanges and commit some of the inevitable mistakes that will occur. From this perspective, negative emotions—such as anxiety, stress, fear of ridicule, or perfectionism—may cause a nonnative speaker to avoid conversation and further limit opportunities to practice (Krashen, 1982). Engaging in conversation with confidence and ease may be a formidable challenge.

Similar dynamics can affect writing for publication efforts. Just as speakers of another language wonder when they can consider themselves to be fluent, academic authors wonder at what point they can refer to themselves as "real" writers. Authors' efforts to avoid negative judgments of their writing include behaviors such as persistent procrastination, refusing to share their work with anyone prior to submission, clinging to ways of writing that have not served them well in the past, or refusing to revise in response to constructive criticism. When people learn to perform a task fluently, it helps to counteract these avoidance behaviors and the imposter phenomenon (Baldwin, 2022). The motivation to improve fluency, however, appears to be identity-based (Oyserman, 2015). Authenticity—the sense that we are being true to ourselves and that our actions are consistent with the personal theory of who we are—explains why one person avoids a difficult task while another takes on the challenge.

In their interview study of critical incidents experienced by early career and more experienced academics, some of them credited professional academic writing with providing an array of learning opportunities, helping to develop ideas, fostering collaborations, and creating spaces for creativity to flourish (Heron et al., 2020). Robert Boice (1994), a psychologist who has studied the scholarly writing of professors, labeled the chapters of his book with the major influences on successful outcomes for authors: (1) motivation, (2) imagination, (3) fluency, (4) control, (5) audience awareness, and (6) resilience. When these elements are activated through professional writing and publication, writing can become an optimal experience, as the next section describes.

13.2 The Psychology of Optimal Experience

The writing process can operate from being completely blocked to flowing smoothly—and at all stages in between. The theory of optimal experience provides some insight into why this is the case. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has studied what people think and feel when they are engaged in activities that they enjoy and would pursue, even in the absence of external rewards or recognition. He also has studied professionals who are widely recognized as brilliant innovators in their respective fields (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). According to the theory of optimal experience or flow, the level of skill and the challenge need to be matched. If a task is too easy, boredom often results. If a task is too difficult, frustration is the typical outcome. When individuals' skill level and are equal to a task they want to complete, this provides the best conditions for growth and progress. During a flow state, people become so absorbed in the activity that they tend to lose track of time. They persist at the task, decide when they are ready to advance to a more difficult project, capitalize on all available resources, and experience a sense of satisfaction when the work is completed.

As applied to writing for publication, there are several important implications of research on optimal experiences, or flow theory, for authors (see Table 13.2).

When authors describe their writing processes, there is a tendency to emphasize the difficulties rather than any of the satisfactions associated with the work. Groups of aspiring authors sometimes "borrow" the angst of a few notoriously tortured souls who produced great novels. Yet most academic writing is quite a departure from expectations for this level of creative genius. Nonfiction—especially research—is more analysis, synthesis, and evaluation than high art. Researchers refer to "writing up" research for a reason. Creativity was front-loaded when the study was designed, and the conceptual framework was developed. Now the task is to produce a succinct account of that research project, start to finish, and demonstrate the contribution made. That is quite different from producing a best-selling novel.

Some prospective academic authors are attracted to the terminology of "writers' block." When it is mentioned in a group, there are knowing nods all around. Yet, when you really think about that terminology of writers' *block*, it implies that you have written something previously. Usually, if a celebrated novelist experiences writer's block, it is because the pressure to repeat previous success is overpowering. Difficulty in getting started with a writing task does not qualify. That is procrastination, not writer's block.

Table 13.2 The psychology of optimal experience applied to writing for publication

Challenge and skill levels	Example	Typical consequence
Low challenge/high skill	A doctoral student is given the same assignments as master's degree students	Boredom
High challenge/low skill	An early career professor expects to produce independent, ground-breaking research that changes the field on the first try at publishing	Frustration, disappointment
A challenge can be met at the current skill level, but support is needed	A doctoral student tries to convert the dissertation study into a publishable article without guidance or support	Lack of experience with writing research articles will make this task exceptionally difficult as the author attempts to condense a large document into a concise article
Task and skill are matched	Prolific authors submit articles to outlets they have published in previously	Fluency with the task and familiarity with the outlet support a successful outcome

Table 13.3 Seligman's (2011) PERMA™ Theory of Well-Being Applied to Writing

The field of positive psychology focuses on influences that promote human flourishing. Seligman attributes it to five building blocks: **P**ositive Emotion, **E**ngagement, **R**elationships, **M**eaning, and **A**ccomplishment (**PERMA™**). Each of these components is important as scholars undertake unfamiliar writing challenges
Positive Emotion: Positive feelings serve to "broaden and build" our capabilities (Frederickson & Losada, 2005). Rather than dwelling on writing failures—often from the distant past–authors need to savor small successes and build hope and optimism about future writing endeavors
Engagement: Authors need to identify subject matter that truly captivates them. Engagement with the task supports acquiring new skills, working to strengths, and accepting new challenges
Relationships: As social beings, interpersonal relationships can help to counteract the feelings of isolation sometimes associated with writing. A sense of wellbeing as an author is supported as we learn from one another, build reciprocal trust and respect, experience joy and laughter, take pride in accomplishments, and give as well as receive helpful feedback
Meaning: The hormones associated with positive emotions—such as oxytocin—are elevated when we feel that we belong and participate in tasks that matter. The most admirable academic authors write, not simply to get hired or promoted, but for goals that extend beyond self-interest. They are strongly committed to their fields of study and fellow professionals in it
Accomplishment: People pursue achievement, competence, success, and mastery for their own sake through various activities, such as hobbies, interests, sports/games, and community service. Publishing scholarly manuscripts in respected outlets is widely accepted as an important accomplishment of graduate students and university faculty

Patterns of whose work gets published are another supposed advantage. Students see some of the same names repeatedly in the literature and may think that these individuals surely must have good connections with the editors and reviewers. However, as discussed earlier, the anonymous peer review system is specifically structured to conceal authors' identities. What if, instead of searching for privileges amongst prolific authors, aspiring authors adopted a more positive stance? Table 13.3 draws upon the field of positive psychology to look at academic writing in a more favorable light.

13.3 Writing Challenges for Nonnative Speakers of English

The English language is notoriously difficult to learn. In part, it is because English is not "close enough" to other languages to be of much help. Unlike the similarities between Spanish and Portuguese or German and Dutch, English has no corollary (Niktina, 2016). Furthermore, English has borrowed shamelessly from many different languages (McWhorter, 2015), resulting in inconsistent spellings of the same sounds, exceptions to many rules, odd grammatical structures, and perplexing word meanings. In one memorable incident, my Chinese graduate assistant went shopping to equip her apartment. As she explained, "So, I am thinking, what is this word? I found a dish drain*er* and a rice cook*er* at that store. I wanted a place to hang my coat, so, I asked a person who worked there, 'Where can I find a hooker?' He looked strange, and I thought he had not heard me, so I said it louder and he walked away! I asked another worker, and she did the same thing. Then my friend told me, 'Oh no, that is called a *hanger.* A hooker means a prostitute!'" So, even though my student attempted to apply the "rule," it had an embarrassing outcome. In the paper she wrote for class, she tried to be consistent and follow the rules about plurals and wrote "Many researches have been done on the topic of…". But the singular form of the word, *research*, is used, just like the word *deer* is used to refer to one or many.

Issues with learning English are exacerbated when the goal is to publish scholarly work because mastery of a specialized vocabulary and referencing style enter the mix. English is regarded by some as "the language of science" (Drubin & Kellogg, 2012), so successful publication in Anglophone journals is used as a marker of excellence. Academic authors writing in a nonnative language may feel inadequate when attempting to express their ideas (Soler, 2019). They may feel more comfortable reading in English than composing in English or carrying on a conversation. International graduate students who come to the United States and enroll in institutions where English is the language of instruction often face numerous challenges, such as acquiring a specialized vocabulary, learning the correct pronunciation of key terminology, adapting to regional dialects, understanding idiomatic expressions, reporting research findings clearly, and avoiding language mistakes. Native speakers might have two distinct advantages if they (1) need less time to write in academic English, and (2) already write in a style that is more likely to be accepted by publishers (Politzer-Ahles et al., 2016). Yet it is important to avoid overestimating the advantages of native speakers when it comes to scholarly writing and publication. For many scholars who speak English as their first language, publishing in a discourse community of scholar/researchers is unfamiliar territory, language-wise. Both native and nonnative users of English will be required to meet the standards of quality for academic writing style. Although it may be tempting to accuse editors and reviewers of being biased against international submissions, anonymous peer review—while not without its flaws—is an effort to extend greater opportunities based on merit.

Table 13.4 highlights some of the multilingual challenges that can be especially troublesome for scholars writing in English as a second or additional language.

Books for Nonnative Writers of English

Ascher, A. 2006. *Think about editing: An ESL guide for the Harbrace Handbooks.* Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Englander, K., Corcoran, J., & Muresan, L. (Eds.), *Pedagogies and policies on publishing research in English: Local initiatives supporting international scholars.* Routledge.

Glasman-Deal, H. (2020). *Science research writing: for native and non-native speakers of English* (2nd ed.). World Scientific.

Hanauer, D. I., & Englander, K. (2013). *Scientific writing in a second language.* Parlor Press.

Table 13.4 Common Challenges for International Scholars Publishing in Anglophone Journals

• **Confusing one word with another**. Particularly for words that sound similar, authors sometimes make the wrong choice. The word *illicit* means immoral or illegal activity. The word *elicit* means to draw forth as in, "the open-ended questions on the survey elicited many interesting comments from the participants."
• **Sounding translated**. Relying on an online translation tool can result in language that sounds stilted or does not communicate effectively. To illustrate, the word "if" typically is followed by the word "then" in a sentence (i.e., If A occurs, then B occurs). Likewise, if a sentence includes "not only", the expectation is for it to be followed by "but also."
• **Typographical errors**. Mistakes do happen, but if the manuscript is checked, checked, and checked again—by multiple readers—these errors should show up. Particularly if English is an additional language for an author, it can be helpful to ask a native speaker to read the manuscript. A careless error can create a very negative impression and spell check, while helpful, will not "catch" everything. One author, for example, accidentally omitted the word "not" in a sentence within the abstract, which completely changed the meaning and contradicted the remainder of the manuscript
• **Apostrophes, plurals, and possessives**. These can be tricky, even for those who are native speakers. The most common error is *it's* (a contraction for it is) and *its* (possessive). Avoid this mistake easily by writing out "it is" for the verb. Possessive plurals are another common error. If it is a singular possessive in English, it means that something belongs to somebody. Usually, a singular possessive is formed with an apostrophe and an s (e. g., author's book, editor's role). If it is more than one–a plural possessive–usually it is formed by an s that has an apostrophe after it (e. g., reviewers' assessments, authors' responsibilities). If the word is already a plural, use an 's (e. g., women's, children's)
• **Complex sentences**. Write in short sentences that communicate effectively. If that results in writing that sounds too simple, you can always go back, combine a few of the sentences, and elaborate a bit
• **Lack of familiarity with standard punctuation**. When you use the word "however" to signal that your line of argument is about to shift, be careful about the punctuation. If the words before and after *however* can be read as complete sentences, then you will need to put a semi-colon in front of it and a comma afterwards. For example: *Academic authors sometimes try to impress readers by writing complex sentences; however, shorter sentences often communicate more clearly*

Soler, J. (2019). Academic publishing in English: Exploring linguistic privilege and scholars' trajectories. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, *18*, https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2019.1671193

Tang, R. (Ed.). (2012). *Academic writing in a second or foreign language: Issues and challenges facing ESL/EFL academic writers in higher education contexts*. Continuum.

Zheng, Y. (2020). *Publishing journal articles: A scientific guide for new authors worldwide*. Cambridge University Press.

Online tools that can support authors when they encounter questions about the English language are in Table 13.5.

Table 13.5 Helpful Online Sources for Writers

General Writing Advice
• The Purdue Online Writing Lab (Purdue OWL) This site has an extensive variety of writing resources, including a detailed reference guide for American Psychological Association (APA) style, and a shorter guide for American Medical Association (AMA) style (to get to these, click the Research and Citation tab
Word Choice and Sentence Structure, and Punctuation
• Thesaurus - Official Site http://www.thesaurus.com/ • Grammar Girl This site provides user-friendly explanations of grammar rules and word choices with great memory tricks to help you recall and apply
Intellectual Property and Copyright
• U.S. Copyright Office (2023). Frequently asked questions. Frequently Asked Questions | U.S. Copyright Office • World Intellectual Property Organization (2023). Frequently Asked Questions: Copyright (wipo.int)

13.4 The Myth of Effortless Writing

During the intermission of an international ballet performance, a young child attempted to imitate the style of dancing she had seen as she waited in the lobby. Onlookers smiled as the preschooler stood on tiptoe, extended her arms, and twirled about—occasionally losing her balance, and then trying again. The ballet troupe's performance had been so skillful and captivating that it appeared almost effortless and eclipsed the thousands of hours of classes, practice, recitals, and rehearsal that were no doubt completed by the dancers. A similar situation can occur with academic writing. We read a brilliantly presented, polished, published manuscript and it looks deceptively easy. Surely the author must have some innate talent–or at least a flair for writing. Yet there is a major difference between *writing* with ease—just laying down words to fill up the pages—and writing *that can be read with relative ease* because it flows.

Take, for example, the common task of writing a paragraph. As children, we probably were taught to write paragraphs that begin with a topic sentence or main idea, but that practice may have fallen into disuse. Generating papers for college class assignments has sometimes caused writers to drift from the basics that were introduced long ago. They might generate paragraphs without a clear structure in mind, arbitrarily stopping when it starts to get too long, and then indent for a new paragraph. Authors can be surprisingly unaware of the underlying structures that make paragraphs in scholarly writing more readable and effective in advancing their arguments. Applying them to manuscripts can improve confidence and further develop a successful academic writing style. Azariadis (2018), for example, recommends structuring expository, academic paragraphs with four basic components, as described in Table 13.6. Not every paragraph must follow an invariant structure; however, framing most of them this way from the beginning can save quite a bit of cut-and-paste later. It also helps to meet editors', peer reviewers'

Table 13.6 The MEAL structure for a paragraph in a scholarly manuscript

M stands for the **Main Idea** or topic sentence. It is a claim that requires supporting evidence. Think of it as the "headline" of the paragraph—for more information and examples, consult McCombes (2022)
E stands for the **Evidence**. Relevant evidence is assembled to support the debatable statement that introduced the paragraph. This includes such things as definitions, reviews of research, statistics, examples, and opposing views. Evidence may take the form of summary, paraphrase, direct quotations, analogies, cause/effect, comparison, and contrast
A stands for **Analysis**. It is the writer's evaluation, interpretation, judgment, or conclusion of how the evidence supports the claim that began the paragraph. This is where authors share their logic and insight with the reader to persuade them that the topic sentence is a supportable statement
L stands for **Link.** It is a connection between the main idea of the paragraph and the one that follows. The link not only smooths the transition from one paragraph to the next, but also prepares the reader for the next assertion in the progression of your logical argument

and end-use readers' expectations for the "assert, then support" style of scholarly writing.

For more exercises that can be used to improve writing skills, see Goodson (2016). Tewin (2022) provides guidance in doing a better job of proofreading an article.

Another common assumption is that writing is easy for those who publish prolifically. Surely, successful academic authors are operating at some sort of advantage that is inaccessible to struggling authors. For example, when I told doctoral students that I majored in English as an undergraduate, some were quick to conclude that this was the explanation for numerous publications: I just "liked" to write. It was easy for me. As I have said many times, I don't necessarily enjoy revising my work substantially at least 15–20 times. In Murray's (2014) study of prolific academic authors, they reported 8–15 major revisions as the average number of rewrites prior to manuscript submission. So, the widely published may not be, based on their first drafts alone, inherently better writers. Instead, they could be better at *revising* what they write (Conn, 2007; Demaria, 2011; Haag, 2021) and analyzing, not just the content, but also the moves that skillful academic authors make as they advance their arguments (Graff & Birkenstein, 2018). With practice, they become more determined and invest more time in refining their writing. Rather than protesting when they get recommendations for improvement that will require more work, they weigh the suggestions carefully and decide how the input might strengthen the work. To illustrate, here are three actual responses from authors whose articles required major revisions.

Response 1:

We have decided to withdraw the manuscript.

Response 2:

Dear Editor:

We have made all the changes suggested by the peer reviewers. Thank you.

Response 3:

We would like to thank you and the reviewers for the detailed feedback on our manuscript and for the opportunity to make additions and revisions. This input gave us a different perspective and not only helped us to improve this manuscript but also gave us ideas to keep in mind for future manuscripts. We have carefully considered all comments and addressed them accordingly. In the table below, we provide a detailed list of what was changed in the manuscript to respond to each reviewer's feedback. Please find our revised manuscript attached. We have also included a copy of the marked manuscript for reference.

This manuscript has gone through several proof-reading sessions and the references have been updated as requested.

The first author team flatly refuses to change anything about what they have submitted. As a result, they miss a second chance at publishing. The second author team neglects to do their "homework"—they give the editor nothing that demonstrates their responses to the reviewers' comments. Maybe they did the work, but they leave the editor wondering what, exactly, was done and where it appears in the revision. The third author team supplies evidence that they have truly revised the manuscript and highlights where these changes were made. Furthermore, they may have spared themselves from another round of peer review because the editor can determine if the authors' responses were sufficient to address flaws in the original submission.

Increasingly, publishers have begun requiring a letter that accompanies the revised manuscript. With hundreds of manuscripts coming in annually, it is just not possible for an editor notice the changes made without some reminders about what transpired previously. The Editorial Manager® system for managing submissions to a journal used by Springer Nature, for example, now prohibits authors from submitting their revised manuscripts without a detailed letter. Even if the publisher does not specifically require it, authors can enhance their chances for a successful outcome by taking the time to write a letter of this type.

Another influence on success with writing that is frequently overlooked is developmental changes within the authors. Based on interviews with 100 authors worldwide, even the most prolific and celebrated authors describe efforts at continuous improvement in academic writing skills (Sword, 2017). To illustrate, I have written two position papers for the Association for Childhood Education International. In both cases, the manuscripts were reviewed by at least 8 different members of the Publications Committee. The goal of these position papers was to represent the organization's stance on an issue of importance to educators. ACEI Position Papers are widely disseminated to the membership upon publication, both as a journal article and as a stand-alone document. For the first one, I barely made the submission deadline and I received quite a few recommendations for revision. For the second one, I lavished attention on it and submitted it, well in advance of the deadline. One morning, I thought "I wonder if anyone noticed the amount of work I put into this?" Months later, I learned that the organization had nominated it for a national EDPRESS Award as the "Best Learned Paper" and it earned second place, right after a scholar whose work I had admired for many years.

Effective writing does get noticed and, sometimes, other professionals are kind enough to assist. A former doctoral student who had a short article published in a state-level journal, for example, was contacted by the editor of the national publication for the same organization—the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics. The editor invited her to submit a full-length article on the same topic, making it clear that the work would need to go through a formal, anonymous review process. As editor-in-chief of a leading journal, I would attend conference presentations, scan through the tables of contents of other journals, and review book publishers' catalogs. Many times, I would encounter the names of authors I had worked with on various articles. When those outside the publishing world encounter the same names frequently, they sometimes assume that some sort of favoritism is being shown. It may be more the case that these authors are honing their skills and have established a reputation for getting the work done, turning it in on time, and presenting it effectively.

13.5 Resources for Improving Academic Writing

One of writing's greatest frustrations is sitting and staring at a blank computer screen, stomach churning, while trying to get the writing started. Conversely, one of writing's most exhilarating feelings consists of insights about how to organize a manuscript that succeeds in propelling the writing project forward. Those uninitiated into distinct types of scholarly writing often overlook that myriad resources that could make their efforts more focused and efficient. Having some idea of where to begin and avoiding seemingly endless revisions to arrive at a structure can be brought under some control by following a predetermined structure or template. To illustrate, every chapter in this textbook follows a consistent format. Why? Because making the various components stand out supports readers, facilitators, and course instructors in locating what they would like to use. Table 13.7 suggests different strategies for structuring manuscripts.

13.6 Conclusion

Institutions of higher education are in the knowledge business. At their finest, they are focused on knowledge creation, dissemination, and learning (Metaxiotis & Psarras, 2003). As writing researcher Brandt (2005) contends, this positions scholarly writing at "the heart of the knowledge economy," fueled by "communication, brain power, technology, learning, and creativity" (p. 166). There are particular forms of writing (i.e., genres) that are associated with new knowledge creation, such as experimental, theoretical. and review articles and conference papers (Tardy et al., 2020). This chapter has recommended various ways to participate in those genres that include replacing less successful habits with more effective ones, applying principles of positive psychology to writing for publication, addressing the challenges confronted by nonnative speakers of English, and accessing helpful

Table 13.7 Writing tasks, audiences, and tools for structuring the manuscript

Writing task/goal	Primary audiences	Ways to structure the manuscript
Composing the first draft	The author needs to specify the intended audience for the writing from the start	Murray (2013) coaches academic authors on preparing to write a professional journal article
Conference proposal	It depends on the conference and type of session—it might be fellow researchers or practitioners in the field	Jalongo (2013, 2024) and Jalongo and Saracho (2016) guide authors through the process of writing a successful proposal to make a conference presentation
Conceptual/theoretical article or book chapter	Scholars in the field and graduate students	Reese (2022) explains how these theoretical/think pieces differ from reports of original research with data
Practical article or book chapter	Practitioners in the field and professors preparing the next generation of professionals in the field	For clinical articles in nursing, Happell (2012) suggests using the questions Why? Where? How? What? and What now? to arrive at an initial structure for the manuscript Jalongo (2013, 2024) uses the classic structure of the essay to produce a template for the practical article and illustrates it with a published example
Review of the literature article or book chapter	Graduate students, scholars, researchers, and policy makers	Medical researchers Winchester and Salji (2016) describe the different purposes that literature reviews serve and walk writers through important stages in writing a review of the literature
Quantitative research article or book chapter	Fellow scholars and researchers not only in the field but also in related fields	For quantitative, original research, Ibrahim and Dimick (2018) suggest the headings of Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, and Tables/ Figures to plan a journal article. See Borja (2021) for 11 steps in writing a scientific article, Reyes (2017) on the basic format, and Zuckerman (2021) for a checklist to evaluate research articles
Qualitative research article or book chapter	College students, scholars, and researchers	Roberts et al. (2020) describe the process of writing qualitative research while Mitchell and Clark (2018) suggest five ways to make qualitative research more engaging for readers

(continued)

Table 13.7 (continued)

Writing task/goal	Primary audiences	Ways to structure the manuscript
Mixed methods research article or book chapter	College students, scholars, and researchers	George (2022) defines mixed methods research, offers guidelines, and illustrates with numerous examples. Health researchers Leech, Onwuegbuzie and Combs (2010) take a step-by-step approach to writing a publishable mixed methods research article
Book review	Professionals in the field	Lewis's (2021) thorough treatment of how to write a book review answers common questions, lists key phrases used in published reviews, and includes an annotated example to highlight features of publishable book reviews
Editorial or an essay	Professionals in the field	Peh and Ng (2010) describe the purpose and structure of an editorial or essay in the scholarly literature. It differs from a letter to the editor in the popular press because it is includes evidence rather than relying on unsubstantiated opinion
Book proposal or prospectus	The acquisitions editor will rely on the input of peer reviewer/experts and colleagues at the publishing company to decide which projects to support	Major publishing companies have detailed guidelines for writing book proposals. Portwood-Stacer (2020) highlights 8 common elements of a successful academic book proposal and goes into the subject in greater depth in a book (Portwood-Stacer, 2021)
Preface or Foreword of a Book	Readers of the specific book	The preface is written by the author or editor, while a foreword (note that it is not a *forward*) is a professional endorsement of a book by an established scholar/author (see Scribendi, 2016)
Introduction to a book	Those who are trying to decide or have decided to read the book	Portwood-Stacer (2019) suggests a template for composing the introduction to a scholarly book and how much space to apportion to each section

(continued)

Table 13.7 (continued)

Writing task/goal	Primary audiences	Ways to structure the manuscript
Grant proposal	The primary audiences are the funding organization—who may not be specialists in the field–and the peer reviewers who are experts in the field, so both groups need to be satisfied with the proposal	The Writing Center at University of Wisconsin-Madison (2023) has a wealth of resources on grant writing, including examples of three major grant proposals that were funded
College-level textbook	The first audience is peer reviewers, then faculty responsible for selecting a text, and finally, the end users—students, undergraduate or graduate	Bauman (2003) gives a brief synopsis of the basic strategies when planning a college text while Lepionka et al. (2016) book is a thorough guide to developing a college textbook

resources to support different writing tasks. Generating peer-reviewed, published work products is a time-honored value for academics and a career-long project. As Rowena Murray (2015) cogently argues:

> writing is so complex, so daunting and so important in so many ways; for demonstrating learning, or as a mechanism for learning, for career progression, clarifying thinking, creating new knowledge—there's a seemingly endless list of writing's functions, processes, practices, and potential in both educational and work settings. Writing is also so personal—so much of ourselves is invested in our writing. (p. 1)

With determination and continuous improvement to academic writing skills, we can become better, clearer, more insightful contributors to scientific knowledge and communication.

Issue: Can We Say "I"? Personal Pronoun Use in Scholarly Writing
The ways in which we reveal something of ourselves as academic authors differ from one area of specialization to the next. The sciences have a long tradition of remaining impersonal to underscore the objectivity of research and deliberately downplay the author's identity. Scholarly writing continues its struggle with authorial identity and the use of personal pronouns. Contemporary academics wonder when it is permissible to use "I"; they strive to find the best way to "construct a credible representation of themselves and their work …." (Hyland, 2002, p. 1091). In addition, the gender identity of authors affects which of the personal pronouns they opt to use. If an author identifies as both female and male, "we" and "us" may be used rather than the singular form of "I."

One clue to what is acceptable personal pronoun use consists of the articles or books published recently in the outlet. Some editors are more "old school" about pronoun use while others are very receptive to it. Qualitative studies that rely on narratives as ways of reporting findings, for instance, routinely use personal pronouns. Authors also need to think about how necessary it is to use personal pronouns. If, for example, you want to make it clear that both members of a research team did something, plural personal pronouns can communicate that. On the other hand, if you are the single author, it might be obvious that you are the originator of the idea, so “I think…” or “It is my opinion that…” really are not needed.

Tang and John (1999) research identified several ways that academic authors use personal pronouns:

- the representative who is a member of a general group, for example, “We know [referring to other researchers] that correlation is not the same thing as causation.”
- the guide or architect who leads the reader through an argument or the specific structure of the paper, for example, “Based on the review of the relevant research, *we identified* a *gap in the existing knowledge about…”*
- *the recounter of the research process* who explains the methods and procedures, *for example, “We conducted interviews using a prepared set of questions with the 30 volunteers. Our focus groups were held in a meeting room at the facility and five sessions lasting an hour or more were audio recorded. To arrive at an estimate of interrater reliability, transcripts were typed and coded independently by four graduate assistants who had been trained for this purpose*.”
- *the opinion-holder* who *describes a thought process, for example: “A major limitation of the study was the use of a convenience sample, so our findings should be interpreted cautiously. Future research might pursue using the instrument we developed with a larger, normally distributed sample drawn from the population.”*
- *the originator* who claims authority and ownership over the work, for example, *“One possible explanation for the comparatively high return rate on the survey was the timing of when the online survey was distributed. I deliberately sent it out during what is a traditional break between the semesters at most postsecondary institutions.”*

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Investigate the professional editing services for hire through American Journal Experts (AJE) AJE: English Editing and Author Services for Research Publishers | AJE.

Springer Nature Resource: Writing in English Writing in English | Authors | Springer Nature.

Online Video: Dr. Darren Lipomi, Engineering Faculty at University of California San Diego, talks about rejection at all levels in Academia—when applying to graduate school, submitting grant proposals, manuscripts, and even post-doctoral positions. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zBoZzOgNts

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14 Writing Together: Collaborative Work

Mary Renck Jalongo

Contents

Abstract

Finding a suitable writing partner and working with a successful writing team can be one of the most satisfying ways of generating a publishable manuscript. Conversely, when collaborative writing arrangements and agreements falter or fail, they can be exceptionally troublesome. This chapter is designed to help authors maximize the benefits of collaborative writing and minimize the mistakes. Writing relationships built by academic co-authors are complex and should not be entered into lightly. Rather, each project undertaken requires thoughtful consideration of the unique contribution that every contributor will make. A common mistake of beginners is to invite someone affable, equally inexperienced, and like-minded to be a co-author in hopes that it will expedite matters, make writing more pleasurable, and offer uncritical acceptance. This approach runs contrary to research and practice on collaborative writing. Evidently, collaboration is more often successful when inexperienced writers partner with more experienced authors, co-contributors have unique perspectives/complementary strengths, and team members critically evaluate one

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_14

another's work. Furthermore, while a "divide and conquer" strategy with writing has intuitive appeal, assembling various pieces is insufficient. The finished product still needs to have a consistent tone and voice, and this can require an additional investment of time during editing. Even more difficult are situations when co-authors fail to meet deadlines, produce something unusable, or expect more credit than deserved. Throughout this chapter, we argue that collaborative writing is both an interprofessional and an interpersonal relationship. As such, it merits careful selection of co-authors, thoughtful planning, ongoing communication, and skillful editing of the final, published version of a manuscript.

Keywords

Research writing • Co-author • Collaborative writing • Writing teams • Credit for authorship • Authorship policies • Author contribution statements • Ethics in authorship

Three Narratives

Novice

An in-service teacher and doctoral student uses a class assignment as her first attempt at publication by writing a practical article for classroom teachers. The instructor invests considerable time in responding to her work and suggests that, while the manuscript has potential, it would require further development to be publishable. The professor has an outlet in mind. She has published in the journal frequently, served as a peer reviewer for ten years, and co-edited an issue of the publication. They agree to collaborate with the student as first author. As second author, the professor adds several key pieces and edits the manuscript multiple times. Following anonymous peer review by three experts, the article is accepted and published. Over a year later, the journal editor notifies them that their article has been selected for inclusion in a book of the best articles in education. The professor is stunned by her former student's response. The student questions why her permission was not obtained in advance and demands to know the "financial arrangements." The faculty member's reply is that the publisher retains the copyright, as stated in the contract they both signed; thus, contacting them is a courtesy. Furthermore, there is no monetary remuneration. As with the original journal article, they are contributors who do not receive payment for their work.

As this experience illustrates, even a highly successful collaboration can have some disappointing outcomes. What went wrong here?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

An author with a solid track record of publications invites two early career faculty members to contribute to a book chapter in their shared area of expertise. One of them makes a real effort by reviewing the literature and writing several components of the chapter. The other lifts paragraphs from his recently completed dissertation, most of which is cut during editing. It simply does not fit the topic, focus, or academic writing style for the book. Months later, the Departmental evaluation committee requires him *to provide documentation about the percentage of the chapter that he authored. His colleague and book author closely examines the published chapter and estimates it to be 20% of the total work. He first disagrees angrily, then pleads with, "This is my only publication. Can't you say that it was at least one-third?" She refuses and, to put the matter to rest, she goes through the chapter and highlights the portions he wrote in yellow. If anything, the 20% was a generous estimate.*

Were you surprised that the evaluation committee required this information about how credit for the published work was allocated? What could be done to prevent such misunderstandings among co-authors?

Prolific

Two professors who had made numerous conference presentations together and co-authored multiple articles signed a contract to write a college-level textbook. The undergraduate textbook consisted of 12 chapters, so they agreed to write six chapters each. After the book was published, a professor and seasoned textbook author from another institution greeted them at a conference with "Congratulations on your new book! I adopted it because the field really needed a different approach at this time, and you accomplished that. I asked my students to evaluate the book and they indicated that they liked it more than many of their other required texts. Their main reasons were that it was not a chore to read, and it included many practical suggestions. One thing I noticed—and this may be attributable to the fact that we know one another well—is that I could tell which of you was responsible for writing each of the chapters. For the next edition, you may want to consider that. I have no doubt it will be successful." Rather than objecting to this input, the co-authors took it to heart. For the next edition, one member of the writing duo suggested that, as soon as a chapter was a completed draft, they could exchange chapters and finish/edit them for one another. Her co-author was very skeptical but willing to give it a try. After both of them invested time in all twelve chapters, however, they were better satisfied with the outcome.

What are some strategies you have used or could use to give a co-authored manuscript greater uniformity in academic writing style?

Activity: Assessing Prospective Co-Authors

Use the following four criteria and questions (Jalongo, 2002) to guide you in the process of selecting a suitable co-author.

Criterion 1: Fair, Reliable, and Trustworthy

- What evidence do I have that this person will complete the writing project?
- Has this person established a reputation for honorable, principled, ethical behavior?
- Can we arrive at initial consensus regarding each collaborator's contribution and the allocation of credit?

Criterion 2: Mutual Trust and Respect

- Do I hold this person in high professional esteem?
- Does this person have confidence in my capabilities?

- If our authorship roles change in unanticipated ways, could we renegotiate our writing arrangement?

Criterion 3: Complementary Strengths

- Will the tasks that each of us agreed to undertake match our talents and competencies?
- What unique experiences, expertise, perspectives, or work style does each member bring to the project?
- What might we accomplish collectively that would be difficult to achieve independently?

Criterion 4: Shared Commitment

- How important is this book to me and my co-authors?
- Are we on a similar timeline for project completion?
- What will we do if the work is rejected or major revisions are required?

Self-assessment: The "Soft Skills" of Collaboration

Hard skills are technical, specific abilities which can be taught, such as learning to use word processing software or mastering disciplinary content in a profession. Soft skills, on the other hand, are comparatively more difficult to teach and evaluate. Instead, soft skills tend to be acquired incrementally, commencing early in life. Soft skills encompass character traits, attitudes and behaviors that influence both personal behaviors and interpersonal relationships (Robles, 2012). Although lists of soft skills vary, all of them affect how you think, work, and relate to other people (Marr, 2022). Soft skills matter for scholars because they help us to adapt, overcome obstacles, establish productive relationships with colleagues, and thrive in the workplace (Appleby, 2017). For each item in the list, indicate whether this is a strength for you as a collaborative academic author.

- Motivation—I am passionate about my field and the particular topic/focus of our project.
- Adaptability and Flexibility – As the co-authored writing project evolves, I am open to instituting changes agreed upon with my partner/group.
- Commitment—If I accept responsibility for some portion of the work, others can rely on me to get it done.
- Enthusiasm—I do not dwell on the difficulties and maintain a growth mindset that supports professional productivity.
- Talents—As we write together, I strive to give everyone a chance to work to their strengths.
- Attendance—If there is a meeting, I show up when expected, arrive prepared, and participate in the discussion.
- Interpersonal Skills—I am comfortable being a leader, equal partner, or follower based on the task and the group's decisions.

- Emotional intelligence—I am perceptive about my co-author's (s') feelings and diplomatic when giving feedback about their contributions to a writing project.
- Appreciation of diversity and inclusion– I respect individual differences in my collaborators and value how other scholars' minds work rather than judging them as inferior to my ways of thinking.
- Ethical Awareness—I fully appreciate the ethical implications of writing together, recognizing that we share responsibility for the integrity of the work.
- Creativity—I can confidently generate new ideas and share them with my co-author(s).
- Self-care—I consider the physical and mental health of my collaborators and support work/life balance.

14.1 Introduction: Defining Collaborative Writing

In the ancient legend passed on by Roman writer Cicero, Damocles was envious of the king's wealth, privilege, prestige, and power. The king invited him to a sumptuous banquet and Damocles was seated with a sharp sword suspended by a single thread hanging directly overhead (Encyclopedia.com, 2018). The intended lesson here was that being the country's leader brought with it relentless pressure and fear of making the wrong decision. "The sword of Damocles" has become a metaphor for a sense of dread so intense that it paralyzes action. In her book, *Write No Matter What: Advice for Academics*, Jensen (2017) likens scholars' fear of writing for publication to this myth. She advocates that authors step out of harm's way, cut that line, and—as the British say—"just get on with" writing. Pursuing academic writing while in the good company of respected fellow scholars is one way to "unfreeze" inaction.

Historically, higher education has been dominated by individual pursuit of excellence, hierarchical structures, and competition for rewards/recognition. Kerr (2011), former president of the University of California, once characterized the dominance of solo effort amongst faculty by remarking, "I have sometimes thought of the modern (U.S.) university as a series of individual faculty entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance over parking." The image of the lone scholar, working in self-imposed isolation, persists. Research and writing activities frequently are hidden from others and ignored when calculating faculty load. Academic authors speak of finding, scheduling, stealing, and protecting time to write—so much so that scholarly writing can seem like a subversive activity in unsupportive postsecondary environments. Even at major research institutions, writing solo can be privileged over writing with others. To illustrate, a committee that evaluated a professor for tenure was critical of the fact that all her publications to date were collaborative. They wanted her to demonstrate the "ability to function as an independent researcher" through single-authored work. Increasingly, academic authors today are challenging such restrictive views; they see collaborative writing as a refreshing, capacity-building alternative that resists the independent, authoritarian, market-driven agendas and neo-liberal practices present in Academia (Diversi et al., 2020; Gale et al., 2014). Writing researcher Badenhorst and her colleagues (2016) pose a question that speaks to this perspective: "How can competitive, hidden barriers be broken down and replaced by open, encouraging spaces?".

Despite obstacles imposed by some postsecondary contexts, writing collaboratively has gained prominence as the preferred workstyle of researchers (Pahl et al., 2023). Establishing bonds with writing partners and teams extends across disciplines and approaches, including science and engineering (National Science Foundation, 2018; Wagner et al., 2017), the social sciences (Henriksen, 2016), interdisciplinary research (Editors of Nature, 2015), and international studies (Ribeiro et al., 2018). The response to a global pandemic also played a role in furthering the cause of collaborative research (de Caux et al., 2022). Sequestered in homes, scholars envisioned more ways of conducting research and completing writing projects remotely with the support of technology tools (Barbosa & Ferreira-Lopes, 2021). Another influence on collaboration has to do with hiring practices. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) (2023) reported that, in the United States, approximately 70% of college instructors were contingent, defined as nontenure track hires who are part-time or full-time. These faculty members may view scholarly work products as a route to securing their continued employment yet be underprepared as academic authors. As a result, they may seek to collaborate with established scholars. Gender differences in scholarly productivity could be mitigated through more collaborative approaches as well. In a massive study that examined 75 million scholarly articles published between 1970 and 2020, Haghani et al. (2022) found a persistent, worldwide gap in articles with at least one female author and those authored by males alone. They conclude that this gap will not close "even a century from now unless interventions are introduced" (p. 1). Co-authorship is arguably one such intervention. Evidently, academic authors are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of collaborative writing ventures.

A survey of academic authors conducted by Springer Nature (2019) reported that:

- When presented with possible professional development topics, 79% of scholarly authors chose collaborative writing and publication as important subject matter that would be beneficial
- 2/3 of academics regarded training in collaborative research as something that would further their career development
- More than half of science and engineering faculty had at least one co-authored publication with a colleague from another institution
- Only 20% of academics had received any training in collaboration through their institution or externally
- Respondents described a gap in the training on collaborative skills provided to junior academics

When academic writing teams and partnerships function smoothly, they share the general characteristics that underpin effective interdisciplinary teamwork, namely:

> positive leadership and management attributes; communication strategies and structures; personal rewards, training and development; appropriate resources and procedures; appropriate skill mix; supportive team climate; individual characteristics that support interdisciplinary team work; clarity of vision; quality and outcomes of care; and respecting and understanding roles. (Nancarrow et al., 2013, p. 11)

Nevertheless, defining co-authorship is not as straightforward as it might first appear. It may be literally co-authored, as when every name listed on the manuscript played an important role in composing the manuscript. But collaborators can contribute significantly in other ways, such as designing the research and its conceptual framework. Thus, the first step in co-authorship is clarify what counts as being an author, which can vary depending upon the field and the type of manuscript (Nature Portfolio, 2023). Although a universal definition of co-authorship amongst scholars does not exist, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) (2021) has established four rigorous criteria that define authorship:

1. Substantial contributions to the concept or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content: AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Although this definition about what merits authorship apparently is accepted in medical research, other disciplines and contexts may object. The University of Virginia's (2023) online ethics center for engineering and science, for example, argues that:

> Authorship might be justified by significant contributions to the ideas that preceded the work, design of the study, execution of the study, data analysis, or drafting of the manuscript. Yet some questions about who deserves authorship are not easily answered. Can simply performing the data collection ever be enough to justify authorship? Should it be necessary that every author be able to defend all aspects of a manuscript or only some? Correspondingly, should all authors bear equal responsibility if any part of a manuscript is later found to depend on falsified or fabricated data?

While debates about what deserves recognition as a co-author persist, there is one area of agreement. Minor contributions or peripheral activities in support of the project do not merit co-authorship; they are appropriately credited with an

Table 14.1 Ways to determine what merits first author, co-author and an acknowledgement

Senior author	Co-author	Acknowledgement
Originates and develops the concept	Writes a significant portion of the work	Searches for previously published research relevant to the project
Contributes the most to the overall product	Completes an important task (e.g., data analysis)	Supervises the work group but does not contribute to the manuscript
Writes and rewrites most of the manuscript	Makes substantive revisions to the manuscript	Provides a site for the research
Completes the highest level thinking tasks (e.g., data interpretation and implications)	Answers questions, at least about the material they contributed	Responds to the completed work (e.g., reads/comments, edits, proofreads)
Bears full responsibility for answering questions and the integrity of the entire work	Bears responsibility for the integrity of their contributions	Does not answer questions about the work or its integrity

acknowledgement (Baggs, 2008). Table 14.1 differentiates among the responsibilities that frequently are used to differentiate among the senior author, a co-author, and a contributor. Reading down each column provides a list of tasks associated with each role.

Clearly, deciding on these roles depends upon the norms of the discipline and particular features of each project. There are many different types of collaborative writing and research. Some of the common writing arrangements are highlighted in Table 14.2.

14.2 The Rationale for Collaborative Writing

Writing together—whether the authors are undergraduate students (Axelrod et al., 2021), doctoral students (Lam et al., 2017), or higher education faculty members (Nevin et al., 2011)—relies on skills of collaboration. As Lowry et al., (2004) contend, effective choices in group awareness, participation, and coordination are essential. Each writing team needs time to form, [brain]storm, and norm (Chisolm, 1990). Bear in mind that collaborative writing is a planned behavior and social exchange that is shaped by attitudes toward co-authorship, ideas about control, and perceptions of its benefits (Xia et al., 2022). Kramer (2023) categorizes the reasons for collaborative writing into two categories, those that affect the content and those that affect the writers, which we elaborate on in Table 14.3.

Collaborative writing arrangements vary widely, not only in terms of satisfaction for the participants but also with respect to the effects on scholarly productivity. These important interprofessional and interpersonal relationships represent an investment of that most precious resource for faculty—time. Use the

Table 14.2 Common types of collaborative writing

Type of writing arrangement	Description	Example
Mentor/protege	An author with more experience invests in socializing a less experienced writer into ways of successfully publishing a manuscript	A student who has completed a thesis collaborates with a faculty mentor (Darvin & Norton, 2019); an early career faculty member collaborates with senior faculty
Same discipline authors	Authors with the same disciplinary background meet regularly to support scholarly writing	A group of nurse educators (Smith et al., 2020) or academic medicine faculty (Pololi & Knight, 2005) form peer support writing groups that generate published works
Interdisciplinary teams	A complex topic is addressed by authors with complementary areas of expertise	Healey and Matthews (2017) discuss the unique contributions of interdisciplinary teams who collaborated on writing about the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)
Mega-authorship	A large team—frequently international—takes on a very complex project	Studying global health issues is such a massive undertaking that it frequently relies on large international and interdisciplinary teams (Errecaborde et al., 2019; Kohrt et al., 2014)
Division of labor team	Each member of a writing team has a distinct role that supports the project yet not all of them may write portions of the manuscript	Nurse educators Ness et al., (2014) formed a team in which each contributor had a clear responsibility for some part of the work
Genre specific	A group of faculty is unified by the need to master a particular type of writing—such as case reports—and collaborative ventures ensue	A group of health professionals participate in a writers' group focused on narrative writing (Remein et al., 2022)

guidelines in Table 14.4 to maximize the potential when writing with a partner or group.

14.3 Caveats About Collaborative Writing

As editor Eise (2019) points out, the metaphor of attempting to herd cats–who are notoriously independent–comes to mind when working with a diverse group of scholars. Taken as a group, scholars tend to be independent thinkers who sometimes prefer to do things their own way and respond negatively to efforts to manage them. A team of writers from Eastern Kentucky University (Phillips et al.,

Table 14.3 Advantages of collaborative writing

Potential improvements to the content
• Provides multiple perspectives that can generate keener insights about the topic • Expands the capacity to take on complex, time consuming projects as authors share the workload • Capitalizes on different areas of expertise to give a more authoritative treatment of various facets of the topic • Improves the depth, originality, and cohesiveness of the work • Propels the project forward, even when one member of the team feels stalled or frustrated • Enhances reader engagement because co-authors are writing for an audience from the outset • Identifies errors of logic and promotes critical thinking • Provides a preview of how others perceive the work and preempts questions that might be posed by peer reviewers • Quickly spots minor mistakes and fixes them prior to manuscript submission • Furthers the development of a publishable academic writing style • Increases the citation and impact of research, particularly when authors from different institutions collaborate (Parish et al., 2018; Wuchty et al., 2007)
Possible advantages for the writers
• Reduces feelings of isolation • Counteracts difficulty in getting started • Addresses the imposter phenomenon through a supportive peer group • Urges authors to "stretch" beyond their comfort zones • Discourages procrastination because authors are accountable to one another • Immerses authors in writing to be read—at first, by their co-authors • Supports learning of new research, writing, and editing skills • Offers a quicker turnaround on feedback to manuscripts and "instant editing" • Gives practice in the skills of peer review and formulating constructive feedback • Increases visibility of publications in print and social media • Guides less experienced authors through the entire publication process from concept to typeset copy

2009) discuss potential problems with collaborative writing that we expand upon in Table 14.5.

Problems with co-authors frequently center on ways of allocating credit for the work done. Although disagreements about what contributions deserve recognition as an author persist (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2021) and may differ across the disciplines (da Silva & Dobranszki, 2016), there are unethical practices that undermine the personal/professional satisfactions of working together as well as the quality of the writing products. Four issues with collaborative writing that can become contentious include:

1. **Disputed claims to authorship**. Both underestimation and overestimation of contributions can occur. Writing for the Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences, McNutt et al. (2018) refer to the unethical practice of orphan authorship. This occurs when a person makes a significant contribution to a manuscript yet is unfairly excluded from the list of authors. At the opposite end of the spectrum, unsupportable claims to authorship are sometimes set

Table 14.4 Strategies that support effective collaboration

Know your co-authors and their work habits. Do not enter collaborative writing arrangements lightly. They are a marriage of sorts and impulsive decisions can lead to disaster Listen to one another, think about the best use of individual talents/skills, and agree upon each person's contributions
Set the stage. Describe scope and objectives for the project. Outline how you will review one another's work. Anticipate, discuss, and resolve possible areas of disagreement. Achieve consensus on a timetable for completion. Discuss long-term goals as well, such as how the work is to be disseminated and projections about how soon it will be released
Establish ground rules. Agree upon a division of labor and allocation of credit, realizing that this can change and will need to be renegotiated. Devise a sort of "prenuptial agreement for scientists" (Gadlin & Jessar, 2001) and create a written agreement (Scott, 2022). Plan for consistency regarding matters of style, documentation, and formatting for manuscripts so that the collaboration will run smoothly
Determine the process for working together. Team members may have different expectations about how each person will contribute and how they'll be credited. Discuss these ideas openly. Some prefer an asynchronous approach where writers compose text by themselves and later merge their documents. Others prefer a synchronous strategy that engages co-authors in generating text simultaneously, often with technology support from Microsoft Word and track changes, Google Docs, or Dropbox Paper. For a list of the top seven online composing tools, see Compose.ly (2020)
Persist with communication. Don't assume that collaborators will read every message, much less remember it. Chances are, they'll see your email, note that there is an attachment, and decide to come back to it later–which may or may not occur. If contact is met with silence, it should not be interpreted as everything is progressing smoothly. Follow up with errant collaborators
Never give credit where it is not due. Listing the names of people who contributed minimally or not at all as authors is a violation of publication ethics. When people supported the project in some minimal way, it usually deserves an acknowledgement rather than co-authorship. An author should be familiar with the entire project and capable of answering questions about it
Handle data in accordance with research protocols. Not all parties may have access to all data, so establish who will have access to what information. If the project's direction changes or the project grows, revisit the question of who has access to which data. Confidentiality that was agreed to initially pertains. Collaboration on research also means a shared responsibility responding to challenges related to the integrity of the work

forth. For example, a professor who discusses an idea with a colleague over lunch may want to be credited as co-author without any involvement in the research or writing. Often it not simply the idea, but its successful implementation, that is the hard part. To illustrate, many medical researchers had the idea of a vaccination for COVID-19. Arriving at a workable plan was the contribution. Nevertheless, if an idea is exceptionally valuable or ground-breaking, an author's best protection against someone else stealing it is to produce published work. A publication that antedates others helps to establish the origin of the concept.

2. **Ghost authorship**. Ghost writers work behind the scenes and are paid to generate a manuscript. Their names are excluded from the publication. Most people

Table 14.5 Potential problems with writing collaboratively

1. Writing teams take time to gel and members may make the mistake of searching for "mirrors"—those who share their interests and strengths—rather than seeking difference and diversity in perspectives and approaches
2. Evaluation committees may have trouble crediting collaboration and ways of documenting the equality (or inequality) of co-authors may be inadequate
3. Disagreements about content, process, or work styles may occur. Some may want to forge ahead while perfectionists may disagree about when the material is ready for publication
4. Resentment can surface and lead to a dissolution of the group when some feel that they are carrying more than their share of the workload
5. Those who fail to fulfill responsibilities must be jettisoned from the group and members may not agree on this or be willing to participate in discussions about the problem
6. Power relationships (senior VS. junior) faculty can be replayed and overshadow new voices. Internal politics can impede group progress
7. Some members may give praise rather than constructive criticism out of a misguided sense of being "nice" and the recipients may resist revision as a result
8. Differences in academic writing style may be evident, particularly when work is distributed among various writers, and no one is willing or skilled at editing the manuscript to arrive at a consistent voice
9. Pressures on higher education faculty can increase tensions, efforts to protect turf, deepen the dividing lines among disciplines, and intensify disagreements over genre
10. Discord may surface when "old school" perspectives about scholarship run up against enthusiastic advocates of social media, ways of constructing an online identity, strategies for publicizing work, and participation in online networks (Tusting et al., 2019)

are familiar with ghost writers in popular press books—for example, writing a book about a famous (or infamous) person based on interviews. The parallel in scholarly writing occurs when researchers conduct the experiment and generate the data but do not write the article. This practice sometimes occurs when millions of dollars of potential profit are at stake. In medical research, for example, there may be a race by a pharmaceutical company to get the drug approved for human use. A ghost writer is hired to hasten the production of a manuscript. Author attribution statements that delineate every person who played an important role in the manuscript and exactly what they were responsible for doing are now required by many professional journals. In the interest of transparency, the person responsible for writing the manuscript should be named rather than ghosted.

3. **Credit without consent**. Anyone listed as an author or in the acknowledgements must be informed and provide written consent. It should never come as a surprise. The reason for this is that, if anything goes wrong—such as questions about the integrity of a published paper—all people affiliated with the project are expected to respond to the criticism. Co-authors "swim or sink" together. Many journals ask author teams to identify a *corresponding author* who will respond to requests for revision, communicate with all other contributors, obtain permissions/ signatures, and coordinate corrections to the proofs prior to publication. A major role of the corresponding author is to document team members' input and agreement.

4. **Guest/gift authorship**. People who are tangentially involved in a project—such as searching the literature for articles—typically are credited by an acknowledgement. For example, a graduate student who writes and publishes an article based on a thesis may include the advisor's name as a co-author, even though contributions to the study were minimal. Likewise, an administrator who notified faculty about a grants competition and signed off on the document may inappropriately expect to be included as an author of a manuscript without any participation in the research or writing. Conversely, the motive for listing a guest/gift author may emanate from an unscrupulous author who is seeking a "celebrity endorsement." A prominent scholar in the field may be sought as a guest co-author because that person's reputation could increase credibility and impact. As a general rule, everyone listed as an author ought to be knowledgeable about the content of the manuscript as a whole and should have made a substantial contribution to the work.

When working on a major research project, such as a funded grant, there are further considerations. Writing for the Office of Research Integrity, Gadlin and Jessar (2001) list questions specific to collaborative research teams in Table 14.6.

Table 14.6 Questions for Collaborative Research Teams

- What are the scientific issues, goals, and anticipated outcomes or products of the collaboration?
- When is the project over?
- Are all members of the research team on the same wavelength regarding these issues?
- What are the expected contributions of each participant?
- Who will write any progress reports and final reports?
- How will you decide about redirecting the research agenda as discoveries are made?
- What will be your mechanism for routine communications among members of the research team (to ensure that all appropriate members of the team are kept fully informed of relevant issues)?
- How will you negotiate the development of new collaborations and spin-off projects, if any?
- How, and by whom, will personnel decisions be made? How and by whom will personnel be supervised?
- What will be the criteria and the process for assigning authorship and credit?
- How will credit be attributed to each collaborator's institution for public presentations, abstracts, and written articles?
- How and by whom will public presentations be made?
- How and by whom will media inquiries be handled?
- When and how will you handle intellectual property and patent applications?
- How and by whom will data be managed? How will access to data be decided? How will long-term storage and access to data after the project is complete be decided?
- Should one of the principals of the research team move to another institution or leave the project, how will you handle resources, data, authorship and credit?

Source Gadlin and Jessar (2001)

14.4 Conclusion: Trends in Support of Co-authorship

As this chapter has described, reciprocal trust and respect among academic writing team members is foundational to success (Salas et al., 2005). Collaborative writing ventures are simultaneously one of the most frustrating and one of the most satisfying approaches to productive scholarship. At their worst, collaborative writing arrangements can result in fractured relationships, a lower quality product, or even major losses of time and work when a project is scuttled. At their best, they result in a highly valued community of practice (Matthews et al., 2016).

Some common errors with co-authored work are: (1) making impulsive decisions about writing partners/teams, (2) expecting the workload to be equally distributed, and (3) assuming that co-authorship will be a huge time saver. First, careful selection of work partners is a must. Each person needs to bring something to the table, as the saying goes. Second, uniformity in the workload is not a realistic expectation. It is more likely that one person will be doing much more than others in certain phases of the project, but it has been agreed upon and is not a basis for resentment. A third misconception is that writing together fast tracks publication. In some instances—particularly when writing is a tool for mentoring—it might be more efficient for a seasoned author to write a manuscript solo. If none of these presumed advantages consistently pertain, why then do academic authors collaborate? As Nairn et al. (2014) argue, writing with partner or group gets its appeal from two primary sources: pleasure and productivity. If a prolific author collaborates with a novice, the newcomer benefits by launching a research agenda while the senior faculty member's need to support the next generation of scholars is met. Both are more productive and can bask in their achievement.

Yet even when collaboration meets the pleasure and productivity criteria, difficulties can surface if an academic culture is inimical to collaboration:

> Collaboration in scholarship holds the peculiar position of being expected, encouraged, and, in the process, somewhat taken-for-granted as monolithic academic practice. Collaboration is important for the cultivation of a rich ecosystem of ideas, thoughts, methods, theories, and experimentation. It seems safe to assume that most scholars would agree with the need and the possibilities of collaboration. Yet, collaboration in scholarship is often understood in reductionist and pragmatic ways: While ideas and thoughts flow in certain stages of the collaboration, labor is often divided among collaborators, authorship is ranked and quantified, and subjective lived experiences are almost ignored or codified in rigid fashion. (Diversi et al., 2020, p. 302)

Such hierarchies in the academic context may be inescapable, yet they can be challenged, renegotiated, and replaced. It is a particularly opportune time for Academia to support collaborative scholarly writing. Several concerns have created a "perfect storm" for wider acceptance of co-authorship:

- Escalating mental health issues. As is the case in the aftermath of previous pandemics, stress and mental health issues tend to increase. This is no less true for faculty (McMurtie, 2020) and students (Abrams, 2022). American college presidents cited the mental health of faculty/staff members and students as their second and third most pressing concerns, right after their institution's financial situation (American Council on Education, 2023).

- Further financial constraints. Declining enrollments have reduced institutions' overall operating budgets. Programs and departments were dismantled and reconfigured to save money. Financial constraints further restrict space and time for writing (Hyer et al., 2021) and professional development resources for faculty (Strawser, 2019).
- Intensification of pressures on mid-career faculty. In the wake of the pandemic, many senior faculty who were near retirement decided to exit higher education and often were replaced by nontenure track, part-time or full-time. This means that the few remaining mid-career faculty members are responsible for the operation of their departments—recruitment, scheduling, staffing, and various forms of student support (Reardon, 2019). In a survey of more than 1100 faculty members (Fidelity Investments and The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2023) more than two-thirds of faculty members said they had felt "very" or "extremely" stressed or fatigued in the past month.
- Changes in academic writing genre. Cold, clinical, authoritarian, and distancing voices that lay claim to The Truth rang hollow and pompous when played against the backdrop of a worldwide health crisis. The narrative mode gained traction as researchers not only published but also dared to include compelling stories about their research and participants. Venturing into different genres is yet another impetus for collaborative writing as authors who lack the inclination, skill, and experience with writing narratives seek out partners and team members who do.

Nurse educators Smith et al. (2020) framed their inclusive scholar support group around the following question: "What would make you feel more supported as a scholar in our school?" (p. 185). Many times, collaboration is part of the answer to this question.

Issue: Avoiding Disputes Over Co-authored Work

An opinion piece called "When the Mentor Becomes a Thief" (Woolston, 2002) describes a doctoral program graduate who felt that she was seriously wronged by her faculty mentor. Her dissertation adviser later published an article on that study with the former student's work credited not as a co-author, but in the acknowledgements section. The issue remained unresolved. In another instance, a newly appointed dean appropriated entire pages and paragraphs of one faculty member's work and presented it at a major conference, adding a footnote that the professor had "assisted" with the literature review. Because the work had been accepted for publication, its provenance was established, and the dean was reprimanded. Egregious examples such as these contradict ideas about co-authorship. Other situations are not as clear.

Based on your experiences as a student or professional colleague, what are some of the issues surrounding credit for group work? Have you ever felt that your work was appropriated by someone else or that you did not get sufficient credit for your contributions? Similar problems can surface within academic writing teams. As Gomez-Ferri et al., (2019) aptly point out, there is a fundamental discordance in the knowledge production system in higher education. While the work completed often is cooperative in nature, the systems for evaluating merit and distributing rewards are individual, and this mismatch can result in inappropriate practices. To address this issue, it is important to consider the following four sources of conflict surrounding collaborative research, writing and publication.

1. **Failure to communicate**. Writing for the Office of Research Integrity, Schwartz (2011) indicates that most difficulties in collaborative writing teams are attributable to a communication breakdown. To summarize, she states: "The cases the Ethics Committee examined have convinced us that the single most important measure in successful collaboration is keeping the lines of communication open" (Schwartz, 2011, para. 4). She reminds co-authors that silence is *not*—as the adage states—golden. Co-authors should not assume that nonresponse indicates all is well and collaborators are working away—it might be just the opposite. When a co-author falls silent, it might signal an end to the presumed collaboration.
2. **Disagreement over what "counts" as authorship**. One way to sort out whether a contribution is significant or not is to return to the primary purpose of scientific communication: advancing knowledge in the field. Those with direct involvement in conceptualization/implementation and actual writing of a manuscript usually deserve credit as authors. The Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) (docs.casrai.org/CRediT) offers guidance on allocating credit. More publishers now require authors to write an author attribution statement that delineates every person listed as an author and the nature of their responsibilities. To avoid possible confusion about authors with similar names, writers are encouraged to generate and use their ORCID persistent digital identifier (https://orcid.org).
3. **Disputes over the order in which names are listed**. Although it may be assumed that, if three co-authors are named, the first author was the leader who contributed more than the second author and the second author invested more in the manuscript than the third, that may not be the case. Names are not necessarily arranged hierarchically. Some author teams who write together regularly rotate first author status on their publications. Teams may add a notation to clarify the nature of the writing relationship, such as "Authors' names are arranged alphabetically. Each contributed equally to the research." Clarifying these ways of allocating credit need to be discussed and agreed upon.
4. **Changes in the original composition of the group**. Ways of addressing a group member's failure to fulfill responsibilities is a common difficulty. Speaking candidly about someone's disappointing performance is a dreaded, yet necessary task among colleagues. Complaining about it privately surely will get back to them. Avoiding the issue, waiting until the manuscript is going to press, and informing the errant collaborator of their lowered (or nonexistent) status as author is even worse. Particularly if a peer reviewer targets something that one author contributed as problematic, this can cause a rift in the team. If that member wants to abandon the project while others do not, the additional work required will need

to be taken into consideration. Failure to follow up with the member who exited the team can pose a serious problem when attempting to sort out contributions.

5. **Institution-wide responses**. Academic integrity policies are grounded in honesty, trust, respect, fairness, courage, and responsibility (Manny & Levitas, 2023). The academic integrity policies of institutions should clarify what "counts" as authorship, establish criteria to avert disputes, specify forms of misconduct, and outline sanctions associated with violation of the policies (Rasmussen et al., 2020). It is not necessary to invent these policies because examples already exist; the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) (2005), for example, has detailed guidelines in its Authorship Policy document. Each institution should agree upon authorship guidelines for its academic integrity policy statement and make faculty and students aware of these regulations.

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Using Googledocs to Collaborate How To Collaborate in Google Docs (zapier.com).

Springer Nature Resource: Check out medical researcher Lingard's (2021). Practical advice on collaborative writing teams Collaborative writing: Strategies and activities for writing productively together | SpringerLink.

Online Video: Using technology for collaboration in writing provides a quick overview of not only how to use email for collaborative communications but also how to navigate document tracking systems (such as Microsoft Word's Track Changes feature or Adobe Acrobat) as well as web-based collaboration systems (wikis, Google Docs). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJlJCwmnV8M.

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Extending Your Academic Footprint: Readability, Originality, and Altmetrics

15

Mary Renck Jalongo

Contents

Abstract

In their first edition of *The Elements of Style* that was published in 1932, Strunk and White (The elements of style. Independently Published, 2022) criticized scholarly writing for being less readable and accessible than other forms of writing. Their book became a classic guide to American English, yet these problems persist. At times, academic writing is more an effort to display authors' superior intelligence than to communicate effectively with readers. Convoluted sentences, obscure vocabulary, and excessive use of jargon characterize some academic writing even though experts advocate a more readable style. Changes in the scientific communication environment underscore the need for greater readability. Now that the number of scholarly publications has grown exponentially and can be accessed instantly through online search tools, readers can scan, skim, and move on when the writing does not flow. Thus, the efforts that authors make to improve their academic writing style can enhance the discoverability of their work. Altmetrics—defined as various quantitative indicators

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M. Renck Jalongo and O. N. Saracho (eds.), *Scholarly Writing*, Springer Texts in Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39516-1_15

of how influential published works become—are not without controversy. Nevertheless, statistics on the number of downloads/citations of articles and the prestige/competitiveness of publication outlets are used by committees to evaluate scholars' contributions. In this final chapter, we argue that authors who manage their own professional development, pursue a research agenda, and implement strategies to extend their "academic footprint" are better equipped, not only to survive but also to thrive in Academia.

Keywords

Academic writing style • Readability in writing • Originality in scholarly writing • impact factor • Altmetrics • Professional editing services

Three Narratives

Novice

A doctoral student gets very positive feedback from her advisors on a dissertation chapter that reviewed the literature on leadership styles. Rather than reporting on one study after another, she has synthesized the literature into six themes. Her table of contents for the chapter includes headings and subheadings that systematically move from the general (theories about leadership) all the way down to the specific focus of her study—the decision-making processes of female university presidents. One of the committee members remarks, "To use a metaphor, when I read your review of the literature, it felt as though you were taking me on a guided tour of a mansion, pausing at each 'room' to point out important features, and then progressing to the next one. You were a very capable tour guide who clearly explained the layout of the literature." Another professor had written the following comment on the doctoral candidate's paper: "Your review reflects a high level of synthesis and a solid argument that situates your study in the literature." The student is thrilled to get such positive feedback and wonders if she might surprise her committee by getting her work published. She decides to submit it to a leading professional journal without further refinements and dreams of an acceptance letter. Sadly, the manuscript is rejected and the editor does not send it out for peer review. The editor does take a moment to offer a bit of encouragement, however. The letter states "Although this is an interesting review of the literature, it is not presented in the format of a professional journal article. For example, the author did not describe the search strategy, the data bases consulted, and selection criteria for the studies included. All of this is customary in a published review of the literature."

Were the faculty members wrong about the publication potential of this student's work or was something else involved? If you were this student, how would you proceed with attempting to publish a review of the literature?

Collaborators at Different Levels of Experience

Shortly after they presented their papers at a national conference, two faculty members were contacted via email about their work. One was invited to submit her paper to be published in the peer-reviewed conference proceedings. He wondered if this *would prohibit him from pursuing publication in a journal. Another author received a very flattering letter of invitation to publish her manuscript in a journal but, after looking into the terms further, the open access publication charges a hefty fee of approximately $2000 U.S. dollars. After these emails were received, both professors had questions such as, "Is this invitation legitimate?" "Will it 'count' toward tenure/ promotion?" "Is it ever worth it to pay the open access fees or article processing charges?".*

What multiple sources of information could be used to answer questions about invitations such as these?

Prolific

Academic authors are sometimes reluctant to venture into writing for the popular press, yet some research findings have important implications for general audiences. A prominent neuroscientist, Zak (2015) of Claremont Graduate University wanted to "map" the brain's activity when it encountered exceptionally moving messages. In one research project, he studied advertising campaigns that were highly effective in generating donations. One of the most successful television commercials was first aired by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) in 2007. It featured heart-wrenching images of dogs and cats in need, accompanied by Sarah McLachlan's mournful song, "In the Arms of an Angel." During a year when the ASPCA's entire annual budget was $50 million, the advertising campaign generated approximately $30 million in donations during the first two years alone (Strom, 2008). Most recently, Zak's research has studied how powerful examples increase engagement and build trust in organizations.

Are you aware of other respected scholars who have made their research accessible to a non-specialist readership? Vannini and Abbott (2019) use the term "public scholarship" to describe the manuscripts that scholars publish for general audiences. Their book highlights the stories of five academics who have engaged in what they refer to as "knowledge mobilization" to reach hundreds of thousands of readers. Are there aspects of your work that might be of interest to the public?

Activity: Emulating Excellent Published Examples

Which would you prefer when you are given directions: a paper map or a navigation system that provides turn-by-turn verbal directions? Most people would feel more confident with the latter because they are less likely to make a wrong turn. Likewise, examples of particularly successful manuscripts can be very instructive. As graduate students, we are conditioned to search for material on specific subject matter. Now you are going to deliberately depart from that. This time, you will look for structure instead. So, if you are writing about focus group interviews, you search for top-cited articles that used that strategy—irrespective of the content. Or, if you are reporting on an exemplary project, you now look for other project reports that have been downloaded and cited many times.

Great examples are sometimes required reading in graduate courses. In most fields, someone has identified frequently cited and highly influential publications (e.g., Azer, 2016). Publishers, such as Springer Nature, list their top downloaded articles, and professional organizations sometimes compile top articles into edited collections of readings. The international indexing service, ProQuest, has a whole section on award-winning dissertations and theses.

Think of these examples as your textbook. How did the authors structure the piece? For example, many researchers conducted online surveys during the COVID lockdown. How did they succeed at producing a very well-received article? Medical researcher Eysenbach (2004) created a checklist for conducting high-quality internet surveys. At last count, the article had been cited in other sources 2205 times, including 111 highly influential citations, 219 background citations, and 775 methods citations. Based on these metrics, the article had an impact. Start a collection of exemplary articles that you can refer to when writing your own.

Self-Assessment: Incorporating Elements that Enhance Readabilitys

Readability is generally defined as the comparative ease with which written material can be read and understood, based on the linguistic features of the text. The simple, traditional ways of assessing readability (e.g., length of sentences, use of familiar words) are being replaced. Analysis of readability is now powered by technology that relies on sophisticated algorithms that take multiple variables into account (Crossley et al., 2022; Zamanian & Heydari, 2012). Contemporary definitions of readability also place greater emphasis on readers' interest and background.

Revisit a paper you have written. It could be a manuscript submitted to fulfill a course requirement, a conference paper that is not yet published, or a manuscript that was rejected. Use the following strategies of successful academic authors and apply each one as a "lens" to your writing.

- *Get to the point*. Too much of the introduction might be a "warm up"—like a stretching routine before running. Cut out long-winded rehearsals and quickly introduce your thesis. Effective introductions stride confidently into the topic and get to the point immediately.
- *Vary sentence length.* Readable writing has a rhythm to it. If a series of sentences is short, it sounds like gun fire. If all the sentences are long, readers can grow weary of wading through words. Analyze your manuscript. If there are several long sentences in a row, break some into shorter ones. A short sentence can make a point standout. Listen to your manuscript read aloud to identify places where changes in sentence length would enhance readability.
- *Incorporate visual material*. Search through your manuscript to find places where verbal explanations could be cut down with the use of a diagram, photo/caption, figure, table, chart, graph and so forth. For ideas on ways to organize graphics (e.g., hierarchy, process, matrix, pyramid), click on SmartArt on Microsoft Word. Let your manuscript "breathe" by introducing some white space into long, unbroken stretches of text.
- *Be concise and condense*. If you are reporting on research, journals are not going to publish every statistical table generated by data analysis software. Sometimes, a table describing the sample can be replaced by a sentence [e.g., "The sample consisted of 305 first-year college students of color (167 females and 138 males)".

Likewise, a publisher probably will not allocate precious journal space to lengthy quotations from participants in qualitative research. So, you might make a table of the themes identified in a qualitative study and report short, verbatim comments from interviewees that illustrate each theme. Many publishers provide the option of making supplemental materials available to readers who want further details.

- *Use headings.* As readers, we appreciate manuscripts that we can skim through to determine how useful they might be before investing time in a word-by-word reading. Effective headings make this possible. For a research article, the headings tend to be predetermined, such as introduction, methods, research findings, and discussion (IMRaD). For other types of manuscripts, headings need to be specific to the thesis rather than "generic". Effective headings are like signposts that alert readers when a shift in the argument is about to occur. Try to make the format of each heading consistent; for example, each one with a single word followed by a colon and then a brief explanation. Go through your manuscript and look for the main sections. Write a heading for each one and center it on the page. If there are subheadings, align them with the left-hand margin.
- *Make lists.* Not everything has to be in sentence format. Sometimes, a list is clearer and stands out from the surrounding text. Use a bulleted list when no definite sequence is necessary, such as "Four characteristics of…". Use a numbered list when sequence matters, such as "Steps in…". Whenever you make lists, be consistent. For example, you might list four elements of a definition for a key term, such as professionalism. Each item in that bulleted list would begin with the name of that element, followed by a description and a brief example.
- *Include concrete examples.* If you write in a very general way throughout the manuscript, it will read like a badly written textbook. Think about what would make this a manuscript that only you could write. For example, former student and school counselor Charlotte Krall co-authored a practical article about her work with children and shared candid comments from her students, such as: "My mom has no hair. She gets chemo" (Krall & Jalongo, 1998). Her recommendations for supporting children in desperate situations let readers know that she had lived these experiences.
- *Sharpen the focus.* Throughout 25 years as editor-in-chief of a scholarly journal, manuscripts have come in that have one section that was more interesting—and considerably longer—than other sections. My response sometimes was that this seemed like the part that was fresh and original while much of the other material was background. In some cases, authors decided to do a major rewrite and that section became an article. Go through the manuscript and see if this might be the case with what you have written. What is the best part, the dimension that you really want to write about?
- *Strive for balance.* Balance can be literal or figurative. After inserting the headings, there may be some sections that are very different in terms of length. If a section is short, look at how it might be combined with another section under a slightly different heading. The principle of balance applies to the argument as well. If, for example, you discuss disadvantages of something, your readers will expect you to discuss possible advantages as well.

- *Compare beginnings and endings.* In the classic structure of the essay, the beginning and the ending are mirror images of one another. Conceptualize the beginning as an inverted triangle that moves quickly and smoothly from the general to the specific point. Conversely, envision the conclusion as a right-side up triangle that recaps your thesis, touches upon the main headings/points, and sends the reader off to reflect on the broader implications—all without sounding repetitive. Germano (2021) says that conclusions are like the off-ramp of a highway: "It's the last gesture, the last backward glance at the reader and the subject before the writer disappears. Whatever else those final sentences and paragraphs do, the writer wants to be sure that they leave the reader with ideas and tools for thinking…Conclusions are about work done and work *to be done*" (p. 141).

15.1 Introduction: Changing as Writers

Developing an academic writing style is a career-long and life-wide learning process. The question that doctoral students and faculty members ask most frequently when I meet with them in classes and training session is some version of "does it get any easier?" As others have argued, the best writing combines skill with art to become a craft (Alley, 2018). Competence increases only if you practice extensively, rebound from disappointments, and persist at honing your craft. As Sword (2017) explains, the sense that you have arrived as an author and write effortlessly is out of reach:

> More than 20 years after publishing my first scholarly book, I still find academic writing to be a frustrating, exhilarating, and endlessly challenging process that never seems to get any easier—but that I wouldn't give up for the world. (p. 7)

While I agree that it never becomes easy, if you allow yourself to continue to learn, you can grow in skill and confidence. You begin to sense what instincts to trust and that makes the writing more focused, efficient, and satisfying than previously. Still, writing better and eventually writing well is made up of thousands of baby steps toward a goal rather than a magical transformation. When academic authors first attempt to write for publication, those who are successful quickly recognize that they need to rethink writing.

According to change theory, people generally progress through three stages in their acceptance of an innovation (Loucks-Horsely, 1998). When first confronted with a new challenge, people tend to focus on self-concerns and wonder what changes will be demanded from them. At the next level of acceptance of change, the focus is on the *task* and ways to accomplish it. If you are an experienced academic author, this probably sounds familiar. At first, you wondered if you were capable of publishing at all but then you set about actually doing it. The third and final stage of acceptance of change is *impact.* For a published academic author, it may no longer be sufficient to have a publication accepted; rather, you want to

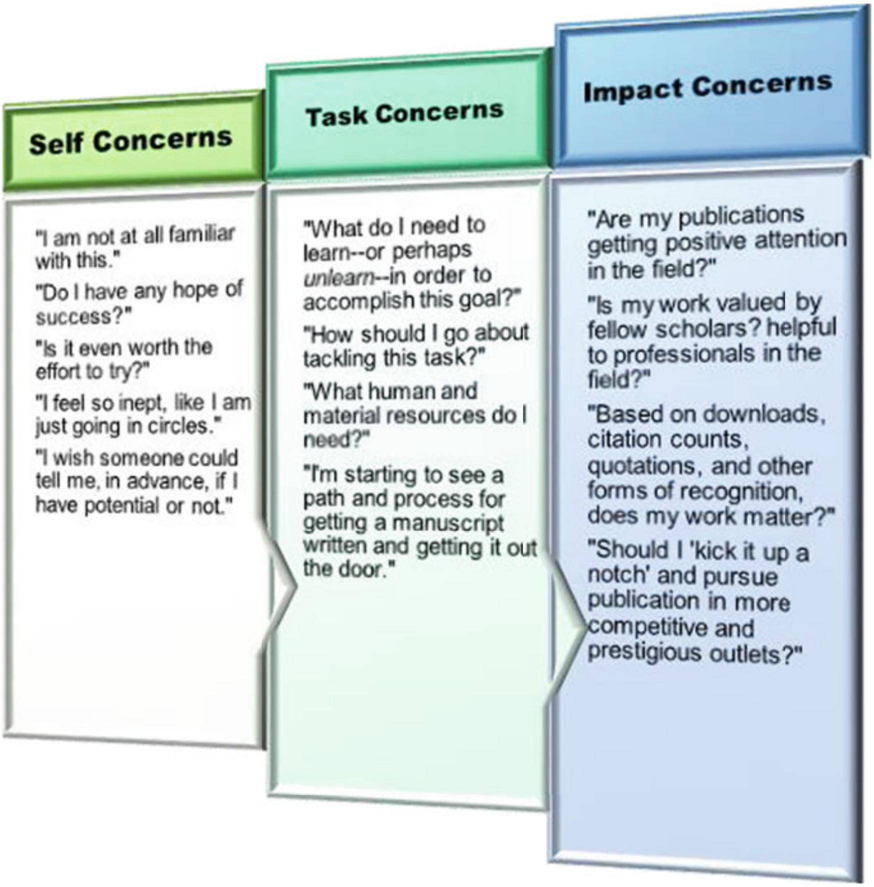


Fig. 15.1 Change theory applied to writing for publication

gauge the responses of fellow scholars. Figure 15.1 applies the three levels of use of an innovation to scholarly writing.

Another way of analyzing change is through diffusion of innovation theory. It attempts to explain the process that people use when they adapt to and adopt something (e.g., an idea, practice, philosophy, etc.) that is new to them (Kaminski, 2011). Rogers (2003) has conceptualized it in five stages that we apply here to writing for publication in Table 15.1.

15.2 Matters of Style: Writing to Be Read

Languages may be conceptualized as consisting of four basic building blocks and each of these components affects readability (Table 15.2).

Table 15.1 Innovation theory applied to scholarly writing

1. *Knowledge or awareness stage*—the person is exposed to the change but lacks complete information. This is the stage at which many doctoral students and early career higher education faculty operate when it comes to publishing their writing. They recognize that publication in professional outlets is important, yet how to accomplish this remains a mystery
2. *Persuasion or interest stage*—the individual becomes interested in the new idea and seeks additional information. This is the stage when academic authors go in search of courses, workshops, trainings, online resources, print resources, and other writers with more experience to provide them with guidance
3. *Decision or evaluation stage*—the person appraises chances of success with the innovation, now and in the future, and decides if it is worth it to attempt the new behavior. For academic authors, individualized support—such as thoughtful peer review by people they know and trust—can tip the balance in favor of attempting to write for publication
4. *Implementation or trial stage*—the person makes full use of the innovation. This is the stage where writers' identity can be fragile and damaged by harsh criticism. Usually, they approach the task with trepidation. Negative feedback may cause them to think publication is beyond their capabilities. Much of the time, this trial stage is supported by mentors, such as members of a student's dissertation committee, a more experienced departmental colleague, or a helpful collaborator found through networking
5. *Confirmation or adoption stage*—the person decides to make the innovation part of their repertoire and continue to use it. For academic authors, this is the stage at which they decide that they will persist at writing for publication and continue to contribute to the field through published work. Merely adding another line to the curriculum vitae will not suffice. True scholars want their work to be of use to others

Thought and language are intertwined. Stated plainly, if your thinking is muddled, your academic writing cannot be clear, and the line of argument set forth will not be persuasive.

There are many variables that affect how well readers can process a text. Based on a complex computational assessment of text readability, Collins-Thompson (2014) has arranged these influences hierarchically (from most important to least important) (see Fig. 15.2). Note that the end user's interest and background are positioned at the pinnacle of the pyramid. That is why it is so important to clearly identify your intended audience before you begin.

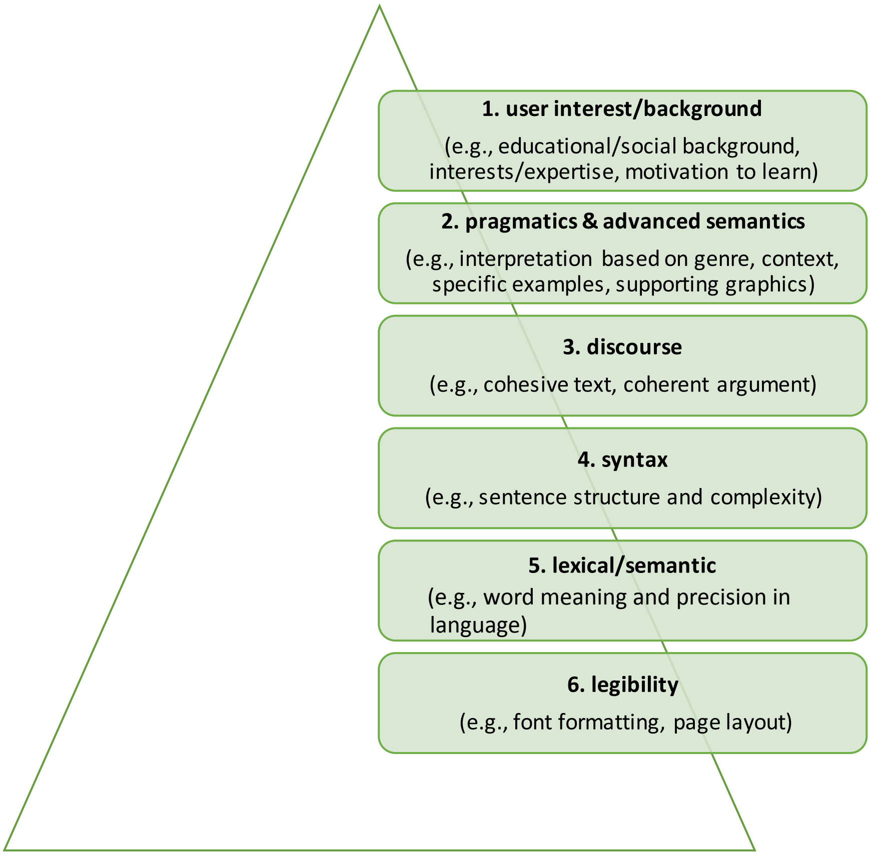
We know that academic writing relies on persuasive argument, so get the focus and thesis established at the start. Germano (2021) has coached many novice authors and suggests they:

1. describe the project in 10 words, not written as a sentence.
2. write a declarative sentence that describes the problem you are writing about.
3. write a question asking about the problem you have identified.

Another helpful strategy is Gopen's (2004, 2016) reader expectation approach. He argues that the bottom-line question is "Has the writer has successfully delivered the message to the reader?"; if not, the writing simply is not good enough. As readers we have learned "where to look for what." Authors need to reciprocate by

Table 15.2 Components of language, readability, and helpful tools

Language component/ Definition	Implications for readability	Helpful tools
Phonology—refers to the sound system of languages	When the cadence of language is off, the reader's "internal ear" may object. A series of short, choppy sentences can sound very elementary while several lengthy, complex sentences in a row can become tedious. Readers may lose patience and decide to read something else instead	• Use the read aloud function of word processing to listen to your manuscript • Edit your work at the sentence level (Azariadis, 2017)
Semantics—refers to the meanings that languages hold, including the definitions of specific words	Using too many stock phrases or idiomatic expressions can be off-putting (e.g., "the acid test"). Excessive jargon and use of acronyms can become distracting and reduce readers' comprehension—particularly if they are reading in a language other than their first	• Refer to an academic phrasebook (Morely, 2020) • Consult a print or online thesaurus to extend vocabulary, avoid repetition, and select a word with the right shade of meaning
Syntax—refers to the structure of language, including grammar, word order, and so forth	Failing to vary the sentence structure can cause readers to lose interest. If three sentences in a row use the same structure, such as: "The (noun) (verb)…" this can cause readers' attention to wane. Keeping sentences manageable can facilitate communication with an international audience	• Develop strategies for making writing more concise (McCloskey & Ziliak, 2019) • Study the grammar choices in academic writing (Caplan, 2019) • Practice ways to polish grammar (Goodson, 2017)
Pragmatics—refers to the social dimensions of language use and its appropriateness for the circumstances	In academic writing, we know that sweeping generalizations and sensationalistic language are unacceptable. The expectation for scholars is that they will present a balanced perspective and support their assertions with evidence rather attempting to manipulate emotional responses from readers	• Revisit the expectations for writing at the graduate level (Swales & Feak, 2012) • Establish the habits of effective scholarly writers (Gray, 2020) • Know when and how to incorporate narrative into scholarly writing (Nash, 2019)



Collins-Thompson, 2014

Fig. 15.2 Hierarchy of influences on text readability

knowing "what to put where." He suggests the following self-questioning sequence that authors can apply to their own work:

What is going on here?

Whose story is this?

How does this sentence connect backwards and forwards to its neighbors?

What word or words in this sentence should be read with special emphasis because they are the stars of this show?

Analyzing your written work in this way offers three major benefits: (1) greater control of your writing process; (2) consideration of the reader's interpretive process; and (3) insight into your own thinking process that determines if you have completed your thoughts (Gopen, 2016).

As a former graduate dean once remarked about a faculty member who earned the university-wide award for outstanding research, "She certainly knows how to get published in the premier journals in her field." Yet an academic writing style and readability will only take academic work so far. Originality matters as well.

15.3 Originality as a Strategy for Manuscript Improvement

As we have argued throughout this book, scholarly work attempts to advance thinking in a field rather than echo what is already understood. Sometimes, when novices consider this expectation, it is paralyzing. They wonder how they could possibly be, as the British say, brilliant. One of the journals I worked with for many years had a bottom-line question about the articles submitted: What is the quality of thinking behind it? Based on decades of research into dimensions of quality in professors' work products, Pellino et al. (1984) identified a factor that they labeled as "engagement with the novel". Even when assessing the accomplishments of faculty members whose areas of specialization were very different from their own, professors and administrators evidently were able to identify originality in work. "Engagement with the novel" characterized outstanding performance whether it was a statistician's new approach to data analysis, a musician's composition performed by an orchestra, or a sociologist's study of violence in families. Creativity cut across colleges and disciplinary boundaries.

Before you allow this to deter you, realize that creative ideas usually arise from seeing things differently, making interesting juxtapositions, and recombining seemingly unrelated elements into something new. Creativity is a concept that is widely misunderstood. It often is equated with being unconventional and a "free spirit" who deviates from the norm. Based on the work of researchers in psychology, creativity would be more accurately described as a form of intelligence (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). How, then, to arrive at fresh insights while writing? Table 15.3 provides evidence-based strategies for boosting innovative thinking gleaned from the research literature.

15.4 Increasing the Impact of Scholarly Publications

After receiving the "Best Essay" award from the American Society for Higher Education, I was invited to present a workshop at their annual national conference that was held in Chicago. The essay "Faculty Productivity in Higher Education" had been published in *The Educational Forum,* the journal of the honorary society Phi Delta Kappa (Jalongo, 1985). A group of four doctoral students arrived early. They sat in the front row and we chatted while I set up the room. I asked why they had chosen the session and one said they wanted to know "the secrets to successful publishing." Afterwards, one of them said that they wished there was a whole course devoted to developing the skills of academic authorship included in their doctoral program. Almost 40 years later, some senior faculty responsible teaching doctoral students continue to resist the idea of systematic, universal education for future scholars in academic writing, objecting with "they just don't need it."

Table 15.3 Strategies to enhance creativity in academic writing

- **Break the frame**. The human brain tends to look for patterns in complexity. While this tendency serves to bring order out of chaos, it may also restrict innovative thinking. Try to "go against the grain" of prevailing paradigms to arrive at fresh perspectives. Some strategies that support creative thinking include observing more closely, changing perspective, examining the opposite, making analogies, and recombining/rearranging ideas (Ness, 2015)
- **Plan to capture new ideas**. When discussing ideas at a conference, it is not unusual to jot down ideas on a paper napkin during dinner to avoid losing those insights. Make plans to store and retrieve new thoughts in various ways—such as a voice recorder in the car, a laptop at the airport, or on the back of the agenda for what feels like an interminable mandatory meeting
- **Broaden your knowledge**. The academic author's first rule for success is to have a well-stocked mind—one that not only delves into the topic at hand in considerable depth but also has a breadth of understanding beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries. Conduct an interdisciplinary review of the research. Venturing beyond the obvious search terminology is a route to greater originality
- **Sleep on it**. That twilight state between wakefulness and sleep or even dreams themselves may be a particularly productive time in which to think through a challenging problem (Barrett, 2001). Keep a pen and notebook on the nightstand to make a note of any insights acquired in this way
- **Collaborate—in writing**. Presenting ideas in words to a group—for example, brainstorming—can be daunting. Brown and Paulus (2002) proposed as an alternative "brainwriting". Members of the group wrote their ideas on paper and then passed them along to others who built upon others' ideas on the list. A similar dynamic can occur when authors are responding to drafts of manuscripts or corresponding via e-mail about a project. Committing ideas to written form may be preferable to conversation—particularly when the goal is to generate a manuscript
- **Consider the physical environment**. Writers need to identify the environments that are most conducive to supporting their writing process. Usually, they need a place that is not too distracting and where they are not interrupted frequently. Neither of these criteria are met by most faculty members' offices on campus—unless you go there when classes are not in session. In a home, it might be early or late that yields the best opportunity to write while other family members are asleep or in a space that is apart from it all, such as an attic or basement. Sunshine and natural environments can be refreshing and restorative as well
- **Build positive emotions**. Creative responses are more likely to emerge when people are intrinsically motivated to pursue a problem (Amabile & Fisher, 2009). Follow where your curiosity and interests lead you, because this tends to increase commitment to task completion. Stimulate thinking further by interacting with interesting people and discussing your ideas. Find critical but helpful reviewers and coaches
- ***Put life into your manuscript***. We are storytelling animals. Think of your scholarly writing—even your research writing—as telling a story. In your practical writing, use vignettes, narratives, anecdotes, and cases. Show readers how you have "lived the question" As Germano (2021) "Don't worry if the idea of narrative feels like something they don't do in your field. They do. They just call it other things" (p. 22). Effective writers do more than tell—they also show

Sources Amabile and Fisher (2009); Barrett (2001); Epstein (2000); Lubart (2017); Ness (2015); Novotney (2009)

The specious argument from established scholars that they had no such experience themselves as students persists. The point is not whether one person feels that no damage was done; rather, the focus should be on continuous improvement in doctoral-level study. It also should be on democratizing access to the knowledge, skills, and support mechanisms that emerging scholars require. Waiting until doctoral program graduates are newly hired faculty members and expecting their departmental colleagues to do this is another approach that is fraught with problems. The novice may be reluctant to share concerns for fear of being labeled as incompetent or needy. The colleagues may be competing for some of the same accolades and be loath to share credit—particularly if their department distributes a short list of scholarly journals that count toward tenure and promotion. Furthermore, reciprocal trust and interprofessional relationships take time to develop, so support may be lacking early on.

Unsurprisingly, when working with doctoral candidates and faculty members seeking to write and publish in academic outlets, participants would ask some variation of the question, "What do editors and reviewers want?" In Table 15.4 is a synthesis of my answer, phrased as the questions editors and reviewers frequently ask themselves.

15.5 Establishing Expertise: Your "Academic Footprint"

We began this book by discussing the identity work of authors. As Adams and Crafford (2012) note, people continually redefine themselves within varied environments and contexts, informed by both personal and social dimensions (e.g., family, work, friends, religious groups, leisure activities). These self-definitions influence them to make decisions that enable them to function effectively withing different—and sometimes contradictory—contexts. This expansive concept about identity is particularly relevant to academic authors.

Recent research using Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) mapped brain activity as people described themselves (Hershfield, 2011). It provides some insights into identity formation. When participants were asked to describe their future selves as well as strangers/celebrities, they processed their future selves as if they were strangers (Opar, 2014). Another strategy was to use a program that digitally ages an image of a person's face. When participants were asked how they would spend $1000, those who saw a digitally aged image of themselves decided to set aside twice as much for retirement. [There are various free programs online if you want to try an age progression app (Bethelmina, 2021)]. Perhaps if authors felt greater affinity with their future selves, they could act now to benefit that "other" person rather than procrastinate. In a longitudinal study with 4963 participants, more continuity between the current and future selves predicted greater life satisfaction ten years later (Reiff et al., 2019). Taking charge of your own professional development is one way to better align your current self with your future self. Prepare a research agenda includes short- and long-term goals. What do you want to accomplish this month? This semester? In a year? In several years?

Table 15.4 What editors and reviewers seek in the manuscripts submitted for publication

Know—what quality of thinking is reflected by the manuscript? • Is the topic important and does the contribution have significance for the field? • Is the information accurate and unmarred by errors in logic? • Has the author demonstrated subject matter mastery and credibility as an expert? • Is the manuscript likely to be thought-provoking and useful to the intended readership? • Does the argument follow a steady progression and avoid digressions?
Flow—can the reader move through the manuscript without needing to stop and reread frequently? • Is the manuscript appropriately concise and organized effectively? • Will the academic writing style match expectations from the intended audience? • Has the author used transitions to smoothly move from one point to the next? • Does the conclusion provide a sense of closure by connecting it to the introduction/thesis? • Is the writing free from mistakes in spelling, syntax, citations, and format that disrupt and distract?
Show—are insights made accessible to the readers? • Did the author use scholarly sources to define and clarify key terminology? • Does the literature review reflect a high level of synthesis and evaluation? • Are assertions supported by evidence from the research, both classic and current? • Are memorable examples included to illustrate key concepts? • Did the author make effective use of visual material as suitable (e.g., lists, tables, figures, charts, graphs, etc.)
Grow—does the manuscript have potential for advancing the discipline? • Did ideas in the manuscript go beyond what is already generally understood in the field? • Are there elements of creative thinking and originality in the work? • Is the manuscript likely to generate many downloads and respectful citations by other academic authors? • Would the quality of this publication bring pride and recognition to the sponsoring organization?

Greater continuity between the real and ideal self can build positive emotions. Take a strategic approach to pursuing your research agenda. This should not be viewed as shameless self-promotion; rather, what follows are ways to make your work more discoverable to the intended readership.

- *Respond to calls for papers.* Select a specific issue or topic and make sure it is compelling to you and aligned with your future self.
- *Write reviews of research.* They can be highly cited by others in the background section of their work. Doctoral students may find that the traditional Chap. 2 of their dissertations has potential for a publication of this type. Remember that a high level of synthesis is required for a publishable review of the literature.
- *Publish open access.* First, make certain that the open access is not a scam by consulting the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). If the topic of a paper is exceptionally timely, the expense might be worth it. Some OA publishers offer vouchers to reviewers, so that can help to defray costs. It may not be worth it go open access unless the topic has a bit more general appeal and is of interest to a wider audience.

Springer Link

- Article metrics
- Last updated: Mon, 23 Jan 2023

The Effects of COVID-19 on Early Childhood Education and Care: Research and Resources for Children, Families, Teachers, and Teacher Educators

Access & Citations

- 33,000
  Article Accesses
- 19
  Web of Science
- 24
  CrossRef

Online attention

- 213 Mendeley

This article is in the 44th percentile (ranked 181,672nd) of the 348,204 tracked articles of a similar age in all journals and the 45th percentile (ranked 12th) of the 20 tracked articles of a similar age in Early Childhood Education

Fig. 15.3 Example of a publisher's metrics for a journal article

- *Increase your publication output*. If readers see your name cited repeatedly in reference to a topic, frequent citations can result in additional citations. Publicity related to your research in different online formats and the popular press can bring greater attention to your research as well.

Knowledge of how a publication is performing can be accessed in many ways. Perhaps the easiest is to type your name into Google Scholar and view the number of citations. Authors can create a profile of their work as well. Writers select which publications they want statistics about, and the profile is updated regularly. The publisher's site is another simple way to assess impact. Figure 15.3 reports on an article that I published Open Access with Springer Nature. Authors can just type in the article title and click on the word *metrics* to get the most up-to-date information on how their work is performing.

There are many other ways to assess the impact of publications but be aware that the statistics will vary, due to the type of data used for the analysis. Collectively, the statistics on how an article is performing are referred to as altmetrics (see Table 15.5).

Table 15.5 Altmetrics and scholarly publication: Quantitative indicators of an "academic footprint"

Metric	Definition	Where to find your score	What is a "Good" score?
Altmetrics stands for "alternative metrics"	It monitors the online reach and impact of scholarship in traditional citations and bookmarks (e.g., Mendeley) as well as popular and societal impact (e.g., Twitter, Facebook). It attempts to calculate the number of downloads/shares, coverage by new agencies, comments by other researchers, and countries in which the work is being used	Publishers have started providing this information to readers, including BioMed central, public library of science (PLoS), Frontiers, Springer Nature Publishing group, and Elsevier For more information, see: https://pitt.libguides.com/altmetrics and https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-source/blog/blogposts-communicating-research/an-introduction-to-altmetric-data-what-can-you-see/16593236	Greater than 20 for a midcareer scholar

(continued)

Table 15.5 (continued)

Metric	Definition	Where to find your score	What is a "Good" score?
The H-index (Hirsch-index)	The h-index is a metric to assess both quantity and quality by comparing publications to citations. The formula corrects for the disproportionate weight of highly cited publications or publications that have not yet been cited. If a researcher has 15 papers, each of which has at least 15 citations, their h-index is 15. It can also be used to evaluate journal quality	For more information, see: https://subjectguides.uwaterloo.ca/calculate-academic-footprint/YourHIndex https://scientific-publishing.webshop.elsevier.com/publication-recognition/what-good-h-index/	An h-index score should at least be equal to the number of years a scholar has been publishing After 20 years of research, an h-index of 20 is good, 40 is outstanding, and 60 is truly exceptional

(continued)

Table 15.5 (continued)

Metric	Definition	Where to find your score	What is a "Good" score?
i-10 index	A simple calculation of the number of publications with at least 10 citations	Google Scholar For more information, see: https://guides.library.cornell.edu/impact/author-impact-10	If the author/researcher has an i-10 index of 25 or more, it is considered an excellent research profile. An i-10 index of 25 means that, out of total publications, the researcher has received at least 10 citations for every 25 published articles

(continued)

Table 15.5 (continued)

Metric	Definition	Where to find your score	What is a "Good" score?
Web of Science (WoS)/Clarivate	Web of Science (WoS) uses a master journal list (MJL) that includes a curated collection of publications that meet criteria for quality. It reports the number of citations for your work in those sources. It also assists with locating a suitable outlet for the publication of a manuscript through the Web of science core collection manuscript matcher service	file:///C:/Users/mjalo/Downloads/Crossref%20as%20a%20source%20of%20open%20bibliographic%20metadata.pdf	As with Google Scholar citation counts, a higher number indicates that more people cited your work

(continued)

Table 15.5 (continued)

Metric	Definition	Where to find your score	What is a "Good" score?
Crossref	Crossref uses the digital object identifier of published works (doi) to link your work to other journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, or preprints	https://mjl.clarivate.com/home	If you click on the Crossref icon for your publication, it shows a list of other works that are related to your work. It can facilitate networking with other scholars
Mendeley	Mendeley from Elsevier is a free reference manager and social networking tool for scholars. Mendeley can automatically generate a bibliography on a topic of your choice. It is used to store, organize, note, share, and cite references from anywhere. It also can facilitate working with collaborators on research data	https://www.mendeley.com/ https://pitt.libguides.com/citationmanagement/mendeley	The Mendeley number is the number of Mendeley users who added your article to their personal library. This count is an indicator of scholarly attention to the work and there is a positive correlation between downloads and citation counts

15.6 Conclusion

When presenting at a conference in Amsterdam, I decided to take the water taxi and view the sites after the sessions had concluded for the day. One of the stops was the Anne Frank House, the home where this Jewish family hid from the Nazis during World War II. In the lobby was a display case of various editions of her book, *The Diary of a Young Girl* (Frank, 1997). It had been translated into practically every language with which I was familiar. Rather than chatting loudly as many groups of tourists are apt to do, the visitors were subdued and solemn. When small groups got their turn to enter the attic that once housed Anne's family for two years, most people had to bend at the waist to avoid hitting their heads on the ceiling. Some expressed quiet wonderment at how cramped it must have been while others dabbed at tear-filled eyes with handkerchiefs. Throughout the history of this book, there have been detractors who challenged the work's authenticity or even, inexplicably–despite overwhelming evidence—questioned the very existence of the Holocaust. Rigorous study suggests that Anne did indeed write the book (https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/authenticity-diary-anne-frank/). In her diary, she speaks of trying to find a way to become what she would like to be and could be, something that would require turning her heart inside out, with the sad and angry part on the outside and the good part on the inside.

If three words could capture that "sad and angry part" where academic authors are concerned, it probably would be the phrase, "publish or perish." Why is this phrase so prevalent in discussions about academic writing? Admittedly, the alliteration is catchy. The brevity helps to communicate some of the pressures that faculty members feel to those outside Academia. Yet I suspect that those who are most fond of repeating it use it as an excuse. Perhaps it sums up why they are not thriving in the postsecondary context. Conversely, the phrase serves as a shorthand way of declining to take on time-consuming tasks that remain largely unacknowledged for tenure/promotion purposes. Navigating the expectations for effective teaching, scholarly productivity, and service to the institution, larger community, and academic field is no small achievement. Sword (2017) eloquently captures the challenges associated with higher education when she writes:

> To be a successful academic, it is not enough merely to have mastered the craft of writing intelligibly. You must also be creative enough to produce original research, persuasive enough to convey the significance of your findings to others, prolific enough to feed the tenure and promotion machine, confident enough to withstand the slings and arrows of peer review, strategic enough to pick our way safely through the treacherous terrain of academic politics, well organized enough to juggle multiple roles and commitments, and persistent enough to keep on writing and publishing no matter what. (p. 67)

This more positive stance on writing for publication considers how it can help us to succeed in higher education environments where the reward system (e. g., tenure, promotion, awards) is tied to attempts to evaluate scholarly work products. But what about Anne Frank's insight that becoming a writer requires a focus on what we would like to be and could be? Interestingly, that is exactly what one team of authors suggests to university faculty members:

> In the current performative climate of higher education, where academic outputs are highly valorised, professional academic writing has become 'high stakes' and is often framed as fraught with tension and anxiety. In this article, we contest the phrase 'publish or perish' and argue that is not necessarily helpful or, indeed, always true. Through interviews involving critical incidents with a team of academics, the authors found that tensions in experiences of scholarly writing do indeed exist. However, participants also reported on the affordances of the process of professional academic writing in terms of developing ideas, collaborations, and creating spaces for creativity and desire. We… argue that writing for publication needs to be highlighted as a process permeated with learning opportunities for both early career researchers and more experienced academics. (Heron et al., 2020, p. 538)

Those who choose to depart from such expectations are apt to experience lower job satisfaction. True, groups of people are, as statisticians would phrase it, outliers. There *are* faculty who neglect their students in pursuit of their own career agendas and perquisites. There *are* faculty who are devoted to teaching or service activities. Yet, much of the time, professors somehow manage to make contributions in all three areas. Ideally, productive scholars use their research to enhance their teaching, exemplify their commitment to ethical professional behavior, and demonstrate that they are lifelong learners.

Consider the most accomplished and ethical faculty members you have encountered in your lifetime. They are memorable and, even decades later, you recall the advice they offered. My Introduction to Sociology professor offered this pearl of wisdom: "When you are trying to determine the motivation for human behavior, never overlook expedience as a possible explanation." I hurriedly scribbled it down in my notebook, marveling at how a person's speech could sound like a book. I now understand that, when my instructors for college courses fielded questions so expertly, it was because they had written about these topics. They had delved into ideas in a deeper way and organized their thinking. Rather than pitting one dimension of the scholar's role against another, they did justice to all three—teaching, research, and service.

Issue: Paying for Professional Editing Services

There are various professional editing services for hire that are available to authors. Before you pay their hefty fees, consider the following steps.

Use free services first. Microsoft Word has a Review tab function that can perform such tasks as identifying the more common errors of spelling, grammar, and punctuation; translating from one language to another; calculating the word count; suggesting synonyms in a thesaurus; and deleting unnecessary words/phrases to be more concise. Likewise, questions about grammar can be answered at www.Grammarly.com. If you aren't sure about the meaning of similar words, such as complement and compliment, just type both words into your search box as "complement VS compliment" and read the explanation.

Do your homework on complaints against the company. Professional editing services are a "buyer beware" situation. Check their reviews on the Better Business Bureau site. Some companies have been criticized for selling their clients' contact information and those who used the services are barraged by other academic services for hire. At other times, the authors have invested substantial sums of money in editing a manuscript without succeeding in getting it published. In still other instances, those who work for the companies have complained about being exploited.

Set expectations appropriately. The costs vary, depending on manuscript length and the number of times the work is reviewed. Before paying their substantial fees, authors need to understand that this is in no way a shortcut that makes writing a publishable piece easy. The role of these services is to complete what is called a copy edit—the finishing touches to formatting a publishable manuscript—rather than advise authors on content or significantly improve their writing style. They sometimes provide help with creating professional-looking figures, tables, and graphs as well.

Understand the services offered. It is important to check into the service's policies and reputation. Research Square, for example, has a service called American Journal Experts (AJE). If you read their advice on how to make the best use of their services, they direct authors, first and foremost, to submit "as final a draft as possible" and have a colleague or advisor critique the manuscript for flow and argument, particularly if sections of the work have been written by different authors. (Wolfson, 2022, unpaged). After you have done all of this, your manuscript might be ready to submit anyway. There are different levels of services, each with its own price tag.

Investigate support for authors writing in English as second or additional language. Sometimes, authors who are writing in English for research purposes (ERP) may be hoping that paying a hefty editing fee will resolve any translation issues. It might be just as effective to ask a native speaker and colleague to assist with this. If you are reluctant to ask because it seems like an imposition, you might be able to reciprocate by assisting with some aspect of their work, such as coding interviews to establish interrater reliability for their study. One of my former students was an excellent cook and would prepare a meal of several different delicious Chinese foods for those who assisted with critiquing his articles—an exchange they considered to be ample compensation.

Evaluate assistance with citation style. The site www.scribbr.com walks you through your creating a reference list in APA, Chicago, and MLA style. They also have a citation checker that checks your reference list against the manuscript and notes all discrepancies. This can be tedious process, particularly for a lengthy document. Bear in mind that it only points out the errors—you still must correct them. If you neglected to include the volume number of a journal or the doi, for example, you have to track down that information. A sample of what the citation checker does is posted at https://suite.techademia.io/check/2b14db4b-8482-4f58-9ce5-359a3a142fbe/report/latest Particularly if you are publishing in a style different from the one you know, a service such as this might help with converting it. Alternatively, you could do your best to format the references by referring to the relevant style manual and then ask an experienced editor to check for you.

Make sure that you are not duplicating efforts. If you are writing for a professional journal or commercial publisher, you may find that they already provide professional copy editing after a manuscript is accepted. So, the very services you have paid for may be unnecessary or, they may be at odds with the "house style" of a particular publisher. House style refers to the minor deviations that publishers sometimes make from the basic style guide that they are otherwise following. For example, Springer Nature journal might use American Psychological Association Style, 7th edition, but their house style abbreviates the word "Chapter" as "Chap", the word "minute" as "min" when mentioned in text to conserve space.

Applications of Technology

Tech Tool: Enroll in Duke University's free scientific writing massive online open course (MOOC) https://cgi.duke.edu/web/sciwriting/index.php.

Springer Nature Resources: Try the recommendations in maximize your visibility and promote your publication. | For researchers | Springer Nature.

Online Video: Judy Swan works with18 different academic disciplines through her work with the Princeton Writing Program. In this TEDX talk, she addresses the issue of why so much of the scholarly literature fails to communicate effectively and argues for technique and style in academic writing. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pzjxYCwb08.

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