



# Publishing: An Editor's perspective

*Debbie Fraser*

# Objectives

Discuss why writing for publication is important

Outline the steps in selecting a topic and a journal

Develop a strategy for writing an article

Identify issues surrounding plagiarism and reference errors

Discuss the issue of predatory conferences and journals

# Fame and Fortune



- Fortune no- with the exception of commissioned work, most journals do not pay for articles.
- Consider this- in many science journals you can expect to PAY up to \$3000 for the privilege of having them publish your article

# Fame



Publishing is a great way to get your name 'out there'.

Often when groups are looking for a speaker they look to see who is publishing on their topic of interest.



# Career Building

- Publishing is an excellent way to build your CV, work towards a promotion or raise or get prepared for an academic career.
- PhD in your future? It's a competitive world out there- publishing will set you apart from others at a similar point in your field

# Contributing to your profession

- Advancing knowledge
- Clarifying thoughts
- Informing theory or practice
- Inviting help or criticism
- Stirring debate
- Sharing wisdom or innovation

# Six Myths that Haunt Writers

K. Henson

- I am not sure I have what it takes
- I do not have time to write
- I do not have anything worth writing about
- The editor will reject my work because my name is not familiar to them
- My vocabulary and writing skills are too limited
- In my field there are few opportunities to publish

Henson, K. T. (1999). *Writing for professional education*. MA: Allyn & Bacon.

# Getting Started

- Write, write, write
- Offer to review articles, do book reviews or critique colleagues work
- Read Read Read- be attentive to style, flow, what appeals to you in what you read and what irritates you.



# A word about authorship

- All persons designated as authors should contribute—that is each author should have participated sufficiently in the process to take public credit for it (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors)



# Coauthorship

- **Pros**
  - share the work
  - complementary expertise
- **cons**
  - someone else's timeline
  - different writing or practice styles
  - changing priorities or commitment



# Determining authorship

- Agree in advance
  - Who should be an author
  - In what order will authorship be listed
  - What are the rights and responsibilities of authors



# Step 1: Choosing a Topic

- 4 Basic topic Types
  - Practical
    - Applications of theory or research to improve professional practice
    - Centered on questions of concern to those in the field
  - Review or Theoretical Articles
    - To synthesize what is known
    - Concept analysis
  - Research study
    - To generate new knowledge
    - To analyze and synthesize other studies
  - Creative/artistic works



## Some Questions to ask

- What area really interests you?
- What do you want to learn more about?
- What innovative solution to a problem have you developed?
- What does your work place do really well or in a special way
- Where are the gaps in current knowledge?

# Solidifying your topic

- Read, read, read
  - Understand your field
  - Know where the gaps are
- Examine your own interests and strengths

# Step 2: Finding a Journal

- Selected a topic
- Where to go next?





# Choosing a Journal

- Think about the target audience
  - Managers, educators, those in the field
  - Beginning professionals or those with experience
  - Is the topic unique to only your region or will it appeal internationally?
  - Does it cross specialties or disciplines?
- Read a few issues of the targeted journal to be sure the topic fits and to see how the articles are written



# Making your choice

- How large is the circulation?
- What is the acceptance rate (high prestige journals have lower acceptance rates)
- Well-known editor, editorial board?
- High visibility in your field?
- Look for journals that publish similar types of work targeted for the same audience you want to reach

# Types of Journals

- Research Journals (peer reviewed)
- Applied Journals (peer reviewed)
- Journals for Specialty or Professional Groups (peer reviewed)
- General Journals (peer reviewed)
- Non-Peer Reviewed Journals
  - Newsletters
  - “Throw-away Journals”

# Open Access Journals

- Some granting agencies require that research articles be made available to the public so open access was born
- Journals that provide free access to original content
- No subscriptions
- Costs are covered by the author and or advertising
- Authors own the copyright
- Many legitimate OA publishers- PLOS, BioMed Central, eLife

# Predatory Journals



- Have any of you received an email like this?

Dear Dr. Debbie Fraser MN RNC,

You are cordially invited to submit or recommend articles to the *Advances in Lung Cancer* (ALC, ISSN: 2169-2726), which is a peer-reviewed open access journal and has been indexed by 13 databases so far. For more information about the journal and its Aims & Scope, please visit the following the website: [www.scirp.org/journal/alc](http://www.scirp.org/journal/alc).

About Our Journal

- Full peer review: All manuscripts submitted to our journals undergo double blind peer review.
- Fast publication: Fast peer review process of papers within approximately one month of submission.
- Low price: Publication Fee Assistance to Authors from Low Income Countries.

# Proliferation of Open-Access Publishers

- Need for open access has spawned a new industry- predatory journals.
- Jeffrey Beal published a list of questionable publishers- 18 in 2011, 882 by 2016
- It was estimated that, in 2014 there were 420,000 articles published in predatory journals.

# Open access red flags



- Publisher's owner may be the editor of multiple journals
- Does not identify a formal review board
- Academic expertise doesn't match journal subject area
- Depends on author fees to support publication
- Hides information about author fees
- False claims regarding indexing and impact factor

# Other warning signs

- Letter of invitation has grammatical/ spelling errors
- Journal subject doesn't match your area of expertise
- Promises short turnaround time
- Journal title may be very similar to a legitimate title
- Details about the review process are vague
- Publishers address is fictitious

Dear Fraser DF,  
Greetings! I hope you are well.

I am writing on behalf of an international publishing house,  
Science and Education Publishing, USA  
(<http://www.sciepub.com>).

Starting from October 2012 Science and Education Publishing (SciEP) is launching new series of Journals in different aspects of science, technology and medicine, we have released first issues of some journals on February 2013.

American Journal of Public Health Research

American Journal of Medical Sciences and Medicine

American Journal of Pharmacological Sciences

American Journal of Medicine Studies

American Journal of Medical and Biological Research

American Journal of Clinical Medicine Research

American Journal of Nursing Research

Journal of Preventive Medicine

American Journal of Hypertension Research



# Why worry

- Disreputable journals with little or no peer review results in the proliferation of questionable science
- Publishing in a predatory journal can call into question your research and jeopardize your career

# Predatory conferences

- Similar to journals (often hosted by the same publishers) predatory conferences play on the need for academics to build their CV's by presenting their work at a 'scientific meeting'
- Similar red flags in the invitation
- Often held in China, Japan or India
- Often use pictures or CVs of well-known researchers without that person's knowledge

# Back to writing your article

# Being in



- Each journal has its own style (both for how an article is written and also what formal reference style is used)
- Author guidelines are often published in the journal
- Most journals publish their guidelines on the web
- Look at a few issues of the journal to get a sense of how articles are written



# Style Issues to consider

- Formal vs informal
  - Professional language should always be used
  - Some journals publish articles in first person (We do this vs educators do this)
  - Some journals encourage pictures and figures, others do not
  - Some use a more ‘chatty style’, others a more formal approach to language

# How will I know if the journal is interested in my article?

- Talk to the editor
  - E-mail a query
- Check the journal website for specific calls for articles

# Do I need to talk to the editor?

- A query letter (e-mail) is not required but can save both you and the editor time
- The editor can tell you
  - if your topic is of interest or is already covered
  - If there is a particular to focus your topic
  - If there are any particular requirements for submission

# Value of the outline

- Wandering around in an idea is time-consuming – Marilyn Oermann
- Outline helps plan and organize the project, it also allows you to set goals and deadlines and track your progress
- Ensures all the important content is there
- Provides natural headings and subheadings for the manuscript



# Sample outline

- Title
- Introduction- what is the problem and why is it important
- Scope of the problem
- Literature review- what is known or not
- What should be done about the problem
- Implications- connect your research to the field

# Strategies for Success



# Most people don't plan to fail...they just fail to plan

Having a plan:

- Keeps goals realistic and achievable
- Motivates
- Helps maintain life-work-school balance
- Reduces the “last minute crunch”
- Allows you to produce your best work

# The Reading and Thinking Stage

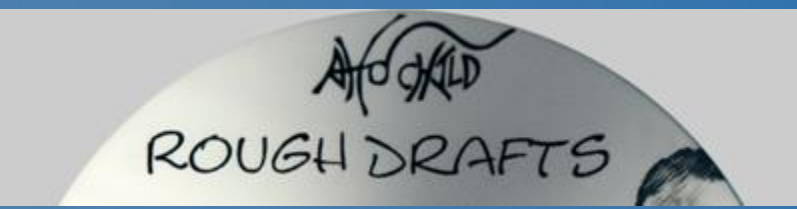
Give yourself abundant time to:

## (a) Collect the sources

- Search
- Pick up books and journals at the library
- Make photocopies
- Document delivery

## (b) Read the sources

- Highlight, underline, make comments in the margins
- Process and analyze individual authors' ideas
- Contrast and compare different authors' ideas
- Incorporate the ideas from the literature into beliefs about your practice



ROUGH DRAFTS

# The First Draft Stage

The aim = to create a working draft

Write to:

- Get the words on the page/screen
- Establish & explain your key points

At this stage, don't worry about:

- Spelling and punctuation
- Grammar and sentence structure
- Formatting

Ernest Hemingway, when asked what was the most frightening thing he had ever encountered, answered, "A blank sheet of paper".

# The Second Draft Stage

The goal = to clarify



rough  
draft

- Does it make sense?
- Have I supported my main points/arguments using reasons, examples, statistics, or research?
- Are the ideas logically connected?
- Have I used formal language?

Rewrite  
Revise  
Rethink  
Re-research?

“Writing is nature’s way of showing you how sloppy your thinking is” (Guindon cartoon, 2005).



# Subsequent Drafts

The aim = precision and attention to detail

At this stage, worry about:

- Spelling
- Grammar and sentence structure
- Punctuation
- Formatting

“Excellence is in the details. Give attention to the details and excellence will come” (Paxton, 2006)

# Searching the literature

- Look for multiple sources of information
- Internet references are accepted by most journals but should not comprise your entire reference list
- Do not rely on open sources such as Wikipedia for critical information (drug doses for example)



# Reviewing the literature

- With the exception of classic works, the majority of your references should be published within the past five years.
- If little has been published on your topic- tell your reader that so they know you have done your homework.



# Strategies for reviewing the literature

- Organize the literature review around the key concepts in your article. If your article is about educating elementary students then exclude articles about secondary or university education
- Do NOT cite all, rather cite what is relevant
- Be sure to include influential sources
- Read the sources you cite!

# Tables

- an excellent way to summarize material and make your article more reader friendly.
- Tables can be created from material compiled from several sources (and referenced) or reprinted from another published source (with permission)
- Call out your tables and figures where you want them in your manuscript and include them at the end of your paper
- Provide a brief caption for each table

# Figures and photos

- Another great way to enhance an article and illustrate your point.
- Like tables, pictures from other sources (including the internet) require permission from
- Again, provide a brief caption or explanation for each photo and figure

# References



- Submit in the style of the journal (APA, Chicago, MLA etc)
- Include all references cited in your manuscript
- Don't include articles in your reference list that aren't cited in your paper
- Use the most recent edition of textbooks

# Referencing

- Need a balance between too many and too few
  - If info is common knowledge- no need to ref
- Reference if
  - Citing another's work
  - Providing a definition
  - Citing statistics
  - Citing the results of research
  - Info is not general knowledge



# Primary vs Secondary sources

- Primary sources are always be used
- What is a primary source- when a study is done by Smith- Smith's paper is the primary source.
- When you read a sentence that says "Smith found that ... and the reference is Jones then Jones is a secondary source and when you use Jones as your source you are relying on Jones to interpret the study rather than looking at the study yourself

# Accuracy of References

- Check all references for the following
  - Consistency between references cited and listed references- use the find and replace feature in your WP program
  - Correct spelling of names
  - Accuracy of dates
  - Complete citation
  - Adherence to journal's guidelines



# Referencing Tables

- Tables compiled from text or many sources- cite each source
- Table from only one source ? Permission needed-check?



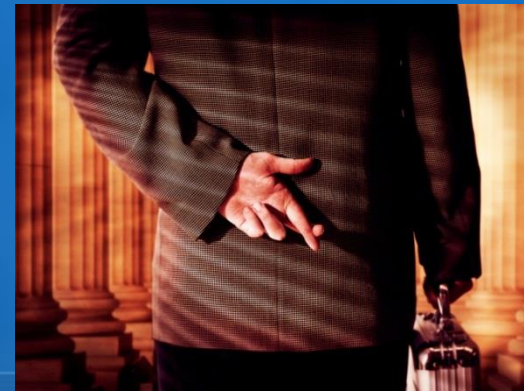
# Plagiarism

- “Substantial unattributed textual copying of another's work means the unattributed verbatim or nearly verbatim copying of sentences and paragraphs which materially mislead the ordinary reader regarding the contributions of the author”



# Misconduct or Misadventure?

- Plagiarism may represent an intent to deceive, that is to take someone else's work and claim it as one's own
  - More often it is a case of either poor writing skills or a poor grasp of the content
  - Students in particular have difficulty with paraphrasing



# Journals respond:

- Reviewers are tasked with checking references and advising in cases of plagiarism
- Increasingly, journals are resorting to plagiarism detection via text-matching software
- Ongoing debate about the appropriate response to plagiarism
  - Article retraction
  - Inform the author's employer
  - Print a notice of plagiarism

# Self-Plagiarism



## ?• Question:

- Can I still submit to a journal if my work has been presented at a scientific meeting or published as a abstract elsewhere?

## • Answer:

- In most cases – yes

- All major publishing houses (Wiley, Springer, Elsevier, Nature, Oxford, PLOS) do not consider the publication of a dissertation abstract or a pre-print of an article to be a “publication”

- a preprint is an un-refereed author version of the article

# Self-plagiarism

- ? • Question:
  - Can I publish two, three or more articles from one study?
- Answer:
  - referred to as salami-slicing, this is a gray area
  - Most publishers acknowledge that, if more than one paper is published from the same study, there will be some overlap in sections such as sample and methodology
    - HOWEVER - prior publications should be identified
- At issue - if a meta-analysis counts a duplicate pub as a separate study it can alter results



# Ask yourself

- “Does this manuscript contain enough new data, knowledge, or insight to warrant publication?” - Editor, American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology



# Good writing

- According to William Kritsonis:
  - The difference between good writing and better writing is the number of hesitations the reader experiences as they read
- Or as Joseph Pulitzer advises:
  - “Put it to them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it picturesquely so they remember it and above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light”



# Writing Tips

- Tip # 1 – Write in clear, straightforward style using an active voice. “We were told by the participants” rather than “The participants told us”
  - e.g. “The practice of \_\_\_\_ is not recommended from the results of this study.”
  - Better: Based on our results, the practice of \_\_\_\_\_ needs further study.

# Writing Tips

- Tip #2 - Proof read, and have your manuscript reviewed by a peer or advisor.
- NOTE: Spell check will not catch everything, and grammar checks are often wrong!



# Making an impact



- Start strong.
- The majority of readers never get beyond the first paragraph.
  - Open with a statement about people
  - Open in a provocative way that catches attention.
- Keep your audience in mind and tell them why they should be interested.
- Fulfill your promise to the reader by making sure your writing does what it says it will do.
- Answer the so-what question! Leave readers with what you most want them to remember. End strong!

Based on the writings of Robert Sternberg and Daryl Bem.

# Pitfalls to avoid

- Spelling and grammar mistakes
- Wrong citation and reference format
- Old references rather than classics
- Disorganized thought progression
- Lack of peer review
- Writing for the wrong audience





# More Pitfalls

- Jargon or local abbreviations
  - Always spell out abbreviations with first use
- Local practices
- Missing introduction and conclusion
- Long or complex sentences or paragraphs
- *...muddled writing means muddled thinking...*  
- Lack of transition between paragraphs  
- Stanley Gilder [1909- ] *Medical Journal of Australia*  
I:957, 1962

# Overcoming Writer's Block

- Find an efficient system- a place to work with a functioning computer and printer
- Once you have decided start immediately
- Find a place to write and keep everything you need there
- Break the process into small sections



# Overcoming Writer's Block

- Successful writers schedule time to write
- It ALWAYS takes longer than you think!
- Say NO if you don't have time to take on another project
- Tips for writer's block
  - Have confidence that you have something important to say
  - Organize your ideas before you write
  - Get your message down first, then go back and polish

# What are the reviewers looking for?

- Accuracy
- Significance
- Clarity and creativity

OR

Is it true? Is it new? Is it important?



# Reasons for rejection

- Topic not suited for the audience
- Not a current topic and not worth revisiting
- Journal has just published on this topic
- Failure to even come close to the submission guidelines
- Plagiarism
- Major problems with references

# What to Do Next

- Revise and resubmit
- Find an experienced writing partner to help revise the manuscript
- Submit to a different journal
- Begin again with a different topic
- Consider this a learning experience and move on

# Writing Resources

- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- <http://www.cariboo.bc.ca/disciplines/>
- [http://web.princeton.edu/sites/writing/Writing\\_Center/WCWritingRes.htm](http://web.princeton.edu/sites/writing/Writing_Center/WCWritingRes.htm)
- <http://www.writingcenter.emory.edu/writing.html>
- <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/resources/writingresources/>
- <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/publicationethics/>
- <http://www.wame.org/resources>
- <http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/>