

Academic Writing and Publishing

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SESSION 4

Overview

Understanding the academic publication
process

Knowing about some key technical
aspects of writing

What do you know about academic publication?

In your group, consider these questions:

- Context (why publish?)
- Types of publication?
- Process (how do you get published?)

The Context

Why publish?

- Communicate findings of research
- Influence policy and practice
- Enhance your career
- Survive – keep your job
- Earn \$\$\$ for your department/ self
- To be famous
- Others???

Types of publication & processes

Journal articles:

- Types (eg. Scholarly; professional)
- Submission
- Blind peer review
- Responses from the editor
- Resubmit, respond to comments

Types of publication & processes

Books:

- Types (eg. Scholarly; student text; trade)
- The market
- Proposals and readers

Types of publication & processes

Conference presentations:

- Types (eg. Scholarly; professional)
- Submission
- An opportunity to share your work and receive feedback
- A step towards a journal article

Publishing in scholarly journals: Perspectives

From the Editor's/ Reviewer's
perspective?

- Appropriate to the journal (discipline, field, topic)
- News – hot topic
- Coherence – structure, readability
- Quality of scholarship

Publishing in scholarly journals: Perspectives

From the Reader's perspective?

- Useable
- News, relevance, interest – hot topic
- Coherence – structure, readability

Publishing in scholarly journals: Perspectives

From the Writer's perspective?

- Audience
- News – hot topic
- Coherence – structure/ readability

Technical Issues – coherence, structure, readability

- Drafting and re-drafting, using technology
- Sentence construction and language – can I say it more clearly?
- Headers and sub-headers – creating a conceptual map
- Paragraphs and sections
- Linking paragraphs and sections
- When to write the conclusion and what to say – exiting
- When to write the introduction and what to say – entering
- Blogging

Drafting and redrafting

- A first draft of a text will rarely if ever be the best and final draft
- If writing is part of the process of inquiry itself, then it is often the case that new insights are gained as we write
- Share your writing with a trusted colleague or friend and invite constructive feedback, be prepared to act on good advice to improve your writing

Sentence construction and language

- Consider the length of sentences
- Long sentences with many clauses are often tough to read - it is also easy as a writer to lose your train of thought in a long sentence.
- Break long sentences up
- If used carefully, varying the length of sentences can give the text an interesting rhythm
- Ask yourself whether you could say something more clearly, particularly if you are explaining a complex process or an abstract idea

Headers and subheaders

- Headings and subheadings well deployed in a text can make your writing much more reader friendly than large chunks of undifferentiated material
- They also provide a kind of conceptual map for your writing
- A reader should be able to grasp the topic and some of the main ideas or arguments from reading the headings and subheadings alone

Paragraphs and sections

- Beginners to research writing often do not know when to create a new paragraph or a new section in a text
- Sometimes it will depend on the intended audience
- As a rough rule of thumb, a new paragraph signals a new idea or a significant development of an idea
- The first sentence of the paragraph should state what that idea is
- The rest of the paragraph is then an elaboration of the idea, perhaps providing some examples or some arguments for and against
- Sections can be built applying the same principle

Linking paragraphs and sections

- Maintaining continuity in writing is important so that you move logically from one idea to another
- Avoid making conceptual leaps that may seem obvious to you (the writer) but that leave the reader floundering
- It is sometimes helpful to think of the first sentence in a paragraph and first paragraph in a section as the entry to each respectively
- The final sentence or paragraph correspondingly can be thought of as an exit, as a means of propelling the reader to the next main idea or topic

When to write the conclusion and what to say - exiting

- Just as we can think of entering and exiting from paragraphs and sections, we can also think of the introduction and conclusion of a piece of writing as an entrance and exit respectively
- An inexperienced writer, when asked ‘When do you write the conclusion?’ might say that it is the last thing that is written
- This in most circumstances may be the wrong answer. Often, it is the second to last thing to write

When to write the introduction and what to say - entering

- In most cases is that the introduction is written last. Why?
- If writing is part of the inquiry process, then we often literally don't know what we have to say about something until we have written it
- Some experienced and artful writers know exactly what they plan to say. The rest of us don't and discover as we write.
- If the conclusion is an exit that propels the reader into future investigation, then the introduction draws the reader in.
- It commands their attention, introduces the topic and establishes its importance, before providing an overview of what the reader can expect to encounter

Blogging

- Blogging can be a very helpful way to practise writing skills, as well as providing a useful means of communication in itself
- Setting an exact limit on words (say 200, precisely) and writing regularly about a range of topics help authors to write clearly and concisely
- It also helps to choose your words carefully in order to get your message across

TASK

- Write a 200 words blog to be posted on the UT Summer Institute webpage
- You can write about any part of your experience of the Summer Institute so far
- The blog can convey your experiences, feelings, tell a short story about something interesting or funny that happened, or about something that inspired or puzzled you