

## Writing for Publication: An Editor's View



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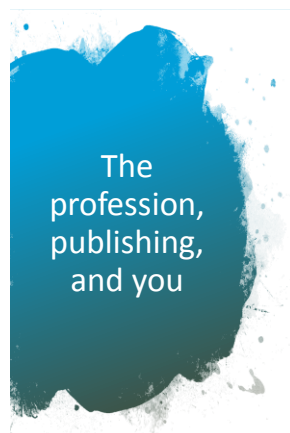


## Our Objectives

- Articulate personal responsibility for leadership of the practice of nursing through publication.
- Explain the 5 Ps of effective writing and the concept of storytelling in the development of a manuscript for publication consideration.
- Analyze the characteristics of a publishable manuscript from a DNP project for a peer-reviewed journal using the RIGOR framework.
- Apply common principles of journal publishing to DNP project dissemination through publication in a peer-reviewed journal.



## Personal Responsibility



- Publishing is a *responsibility* of the profession of nursing
- Publishing is essential to the *ongoing development* of the discipline of nursing
- Publishing is *external validation* of the quality of your work
- Publishing *makes you better* at whatever it is you do
- Peer-reviewed publications are one of the *ultimate indicators* of your scholarly productivity

*How do you fit it?*

## Scholarship of the DNP

Knowing and understanding what is known  
And  
Applying what is known to improve patient outcomes by improving nursing and health care through verifiable methods



## Purposes of the DNP Academic Product

- Conduct clinical capstone project
- Demonstrate facility with practice improvement/evaluation
- Document the process in writing
- Satisfy program faculty
- Graduate!



## What the academic product is not?

- It is not ready for publication consideration!
- Why not?
  - Audience
  - Academic prose
  - Academic requirements
  - Redundancies
  - Manuscript road map
  - Author guidelines
  - So what?
  - Etc.



## Five Ps of Effective Writing



## Effective writing is. . .

- Practical
- Parsimonious
- Precise
- Persuasive
- Passionate



## Effective Writing is *Practical*

- It says something useful
- It says it in an understandable way
- Choose nouns over adjectives, verbs over adverb, plain words over fancy ones, specific words over general ones
- Choose short sentences over long sentences, personal over the impersonal
- Use punctuation appropriately; use your spell check
- Read the APA Manual!



## Effective Writing is *Parsimonious*

- Use as few words, sentences, and paragraphs as possible to make your point and tell the story
- Every word should have a purpose and "tell" (Strunk & White, 1959)
- Every word counts; figuratively and sometimes practically
- Parsimonious writing does not waste the reader's time, but it does artfully lead the reader through the story



## Effective Writing is *Precise*

- Ideas logically expressed
- Primary sources are used
- Terms are precisely and consistently used
- Overall the manuscript is internally consistent



## Effective Writing is *Persuasive*

- The critical first paragraph – what is the problem, why is it important, and who does it affect?
- Background section shows the gap in knowledge, information, or practice that the project was designed to fill.
- Persuasive writing leads the reader from section to section logically
- The reader is convinced!



## Effective Writing is *Passionate*

- You believe in the work
- You believe in the importance of the topic
- You believe in the contribution of the work to the literature, practice, public health, etc.
- Use declarative sentences. Use first person. Avoid passive voice.
- Your message is direct and uncluttered



Characteristic  
of a  
Publishable  
Manuscript  
using *RIGOR*

- R: Readable
- I: Important
- G: Grammatically correct
- O: Organized
- R: Reliable

## Rigor: Readable

- Problem is clear
- Purpose is clear
- A funneling approach to the content
- No logical gaps/leaps
- Writing is tight
- No officialese, prolixity, windfoggery, jargon
- Respects the reader



## rigor: Important

- Contemporary
- Problem is important to nursing/health care
- Synthesis evident
- Worth the reader's time
- Clear *take home* message



## riGor: Grammatically correct

- Accurate mechanics including punctuation
- Noun/verb agreement
- Precise relations between pronouns/antecedents
- Parallel sentence structure
- Verb tense
- Active voice
- Non-personification of objects
- Correct word order



## rigOr: Organized

- Follows a clear path/outline
- Characters identified and consistent
- No sidebars or detours
- No redundancy
- Tells a single story



## rigoR: Reliable

- Truth telling
  - Primary references
  - References used appropriately/accurately
  - Replicable and verifiable
  - Scientifically accurate



## The Habit of Truth

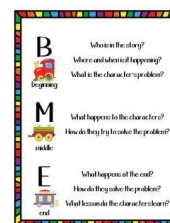
The foundation of scholarship as a collective human enterprise is neither intellect nor technical skill. It is simply honesty. If scholars did not have what Jacob Bronowski (1965) called “the habit of truth,” there could be no accumulation of reliable knowledge, and thus no science. The rules for this habit of conscience are absolute: no compromises, no evasions, no shortcuts, no excuses, and no saving face. Planning, conducting, and reporting research (*or clinical projects*) make sense only as long as the social contract among scholars is honored – *everyone tells the truth as well as he or she can know it.*”

Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2014, Chapter 2, page 25



## General Manuscript Structure

- *Beginning*: the introduction
- *Middle*: structure depends on the type of story you are telling
- *End*: the discussion



## OCAR: Story Structure

Schimmel, J. (2012). *Writing science: how to write papers that get cited and proposals that get funded*. New York: Oxford.




## OCAR: Opening, . . .



- Who is the story about?
- Who are the characters?
- What do you need to understand about the situation to follow the story?
- What is the larger problem you are addressing?



## OCAR: Opening, Challenge, . . .


- What do your characters need to accomplish?
- What specific question(s) do you propose to answer?





## OCAR: Opening, Challenge, Action, . . .


- What happens to address the challenge?
- Answer the question(s) you posed.





## OCAR: Opening, Challenge, Action, & Resolution


- How have the characters and their world changed as a result of the action?
- What did you learn from your work?
- What can your readers take away from what you learned?
- This is the discussion and conclusion





## DNP Project to Manuscripts



- Type of project
  - Quality improvement
  - Program evaluation
  - Other
- Type of academic document varies
- Does the project have import/implications beyond the study site?
- SQUIRE Guidelines





## Anatomy of a QI Manuscript

- SQUIRE: Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence
- Introduction
  - Problem description
  - Available knowledge
  - Rationale
  - Specific Aims
- Methods
  - Context
  - Intervention(s)
  - Study of the intervention(s)
  - Measures
  - Analysis
  - Ethical considerations
- Results
  - What did you find? 6 elements
- Discussion
  - What does it mean? Summary

## Anatomy of a Program Evaluation Manuscript

- Purposes
  - Determine the *effectiveness* of an intervention
  - Assess and improve the *quality* of an intervention
- Types
  - RCT: efficacy
  - Dissemination & implementation
  - Formative, Process, or Summative evaluation
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion

## For All Manuscripts

- The work reported must have been done consistent with contemporary standards of clinical inquiry
- The content must represent a deep understanding of the problem at hand
- The writing must meet scholarly standards for publication



## Principles of Journal Publishing

- The journal's mission
- The journal's staff
- Why peer review?
- Steps in manuscript development
- The "so what?" principle
- The road a manuscript follows
- Ethical issues
- Potential pitfalls

## Purposes of Peer Reviewed Journals

- To publish good work that informs the discipline and the reader
- To advance knowledge/science, research, practice, policy
- To ultimately improve the health and well-being of the public



## The journal's mission

- Find a journal's mission statement or description to determine if your manuscript is a good fit.
- The quality of *any scholarly periodical* or journal is totally dependent on the manuscripts that are submitted for publication consideration.
- *Journals do not exist to publish your work. . . they exist to publish **good** work that informs their readers in a significant way.*



## A Journal's Staff

- Authors
- Reviewers
- Editorial Board Members
- Editorial Assistants
- Managing Editor(s)
- Assistant/Associate Editor(s)
- Editor-in-Chief, the Editor



## Why Peer Review?

- *Evaluation* – goal is to select the highest quality manuscripts for publication
- *Integrity* – Because reviewers are independent they help ensure the integrity of the publishing process and the research or other scholarly activities reported in manuscripts
- *Quality* – gives authors access to experts in the field who can provide support and insight for improving the quality of the manuscript



## The "So What?" principle

*Journal editors want to publish work that helps to inform, advance, or challenge the current status of their discipline or journal's focus.*



## The Road a Manuscript Travels

- Submission
- Format review
- Peer review
- Editorial decision: accept, accept with revision, request for revision, rejection
- Revision(s)
- Peer review



## Manuscript Revisions

- Expect and plan for revisions
- *Clear directions from reviewers* (Don't expect reviewers to agree!)
- Read reviews
- Schedule time to revise
- Organize major and minor points
- Respond to each point



## The Road a Manuscript Travels

- Editorial decision to accept the manuscript
- Manuscript is edited
- Manuscript sent to publisher, copyedited, and typeset
- *Manuscript is prepared for publication*
- Page proofs to author



## The Four Rs of Revising

- **Reading** - what did you write?
- **Reflecting** - how do the reviewers' comments help you gain perspective on your manuscript?
- **Rewriting** - this is the essence of good writing
- **Responding** - precisely and thoughtfully

Pierson, 2008



## Ethical Issues

- Human subjects
- Authorship
- Copyright
- Failure to cite
- Plagiarism
- Duplicate publication and self-plagiarism
- Simultaneous submission
- Slice & dice publishing = LPU
- Conflicts of interest
- Acknowledgements



What not to do in your quest to become a published author.

## Common Writing Pitfalls!



## Common Pitfalls #1 - #3

1. Submitting the right manuscript to the wrong journal or the wrong manuscript to the right journal
2. Not having a clear focus and topical outline for the manuscript
3. Poorly developed basic writing skills including the critique and synthesis of existing literature



## Common Pitfall #4

4. Falling into the four failures trap! Failure to:
- Get private peer review before submitting the manuscript
  - Seek editorial review and assistance before submitting the manuscript
  - Access statistical consultation before submitting the manuscript
  - Adhere to the requirements of the author guidelines or style guide of the specific journal



## Common Pitfalls #5 & 6

5. Taking the reviewer's/editors comments and directions for revision as personal – allowing your personal reaction to block your ability to revise and resubmit.
6. Having faulty beliefs or assumptions about publishing.



## You as an Author

- A manuscript is a piece of you
- Writing takes time and practice
- Take your subject seriously
- Take yourself with a grain of salt!



## Final thoughts...

- Editors want your manuscripts
- Submission of a manuscript is a bit like going naked in public
- Publishing is a team effort: *author, reviewers, editors, publisher*





## QUESTIONS?



## A Few Helpful Resources

- Elsevier Publishing Campus: <https://www.publishingcampus.elsevier.com/>
- Nurse Author & Editor: <http://naepub.com/>
- "40 Things Editors Won't Tell You (But You Need to Know)": <http://naepub.com/publishing/2016-26-1-6/>
- International Academy of Nursing Editors: <http://nursingeditors.com/>



## Manuscript Guidelines for Different Types of Research & Reviews

- CONSORT: CONSolidated Standards Of Reporting Trials
- STROBE: Strengthening The Reporting of OBServational studies in Epidemiology
- SRQR: Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research
- PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items Systematic Reviews & Meta-Analysis
- MOOSE: reporting standards for Meta-analysis Of Observational Studies in Epidemiology
- EQUATOR-Network.org (Enhancing the Quality and Transparency of Health Research)



## Resources

- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2014). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Long Angeles: Sage.
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- Roush, K. (2015). *A nurse's step by step guide to writing your dissertation or capstone*. Indianapolis: Sigma Theta Tau International.
- Schimel, J. (2012). *Writing science: How to write papers that get cited and proposals that get funded*. New York: Oxford.



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