**Getting Published: Strategies for preparing manuscripts and seeing**

**them through review and into print**

Session facilitated by Rachel Beane and Andrew M. Goodliffe

**What is a concern you have about getting published?**

***Or* What is a strategy you employ to get published?**

**Write** (*“Writing is frustrating, complicated, and un-fun.” Paul Silvia)*

* Set aside a regular time without interruptions for writing. The more you write, the easier it is to write.
* "Many scholars believe that writing requires big blocks of time. They're wrong. Research shows that scholars who write daily publish far more than those who write in big blocks of time. The problem with big blocks of time is that they're hard to find.” (Tomorrow’s Professor Posting #661)
* To write daily consider keeping a daily record of your writing, and sharing those records with someone weekly.

*“Robert Boice (1989) led a series of workshops for scholars who sought to improve their writing productivity. …Participants were divided into three groups: (a) The first group ("controls") did not change their writing habits, and continued to write occasionally in big blocks of time; in 1 year they wrote an average of 17 pages; (b) the second group wrote daily and kept a daily record; they averaged 64 pages; (c) the third group wrote daily, kept a daily record, and held themselves accountable to someone weekly; this group's average was 157 pages (Boice 1989:609)”.* (Tomorrow’s Professor Posting #661)

* Start writing as you collect and analyze data. Writing can help you to identify coherence or lack of coherence in a set of observations, and it can help you enumerate a framework for inferences.
* Join a writing group. Paul Silvia (2007) suggests the following as a model: “*Set concrete, Short-Term Goals and Monitor the Group’s Progress; Stick to Writing Goals, Not Other professional Goals; Big Carrots Can Double as Sticks; Have Different Groups for Faculty and Students; (Optional) Drink Coffee*.”

**Is there a writing group you might join? If not, then how might you organize one?**

**Prepare your manuscript**

* Write with a specific journal or other outlet in mind.
* Write to convince an imagined adversarial reader; try to anticipate and answer their criticisms.
* Make it clear what you have done that others have not.

*Reviewers are more likely to recommend your work for ‘revision and resubmission’ or ‘publication after major/minor revision’ instead of outright ‘rejection’ if they recognize that the manuscript contains significant new data.*

* Use standard writing conventions.

*Write simply and clearly. Adding long and flowery introductory clauses to your sentences, or placing one or more modifying clauses between the subject and and predicate of the sentence, is more likely to confuse than impress the reader (Gopen and Swann, 1990).*

* Organize your writing.

*"To examine the organization of your writing, list the key sentences – and headings – to see an after-the-fact outline. Now, read the list and question yourself about the purpose and organization of the writing."* (Booth et al., 2003)

* Make sure that your figures, images, and tables convey information critical to moving your argument forward.
* Check your Abstract, Introduction, and Discussion sections. These are key elements in successful articles (refer to Landes, 1951 and Claerbout, 1993).

**What are problems you have noticed when you have read/reviewed an article? In what ways might these problems best be addressed?**

# Submit your manuscript

Recognize that no work is flawless and no manuscript is perfect. Your work is at a stage appropriate to consider publication when

* You have received strong feedback on an oral presentation at a professional meeting or other forum.
* You have direct corroboration or contradiction of an important result in your field.
* You have significant new data or a significant new interpretation to report.

Given that these are admittedly subjective criteria, ask someone to read your manuscript and give you feedback. If editing becomes a stumbling block to submission, consider hiring a scientific editor.

**Who might you ask for feedback?**

**Experts in field:**

**Non-expert colleagues:**

# Read and respond to manuscript reviews

Substantive reviews mean that the reviewer was interested enough in your work to spend time on it. That is a precious resource! Read reviewer’s comments with an open mind and ‘learn how to listen.’

* **Rejections:** Nearly everyone has had one or more of their submissions rejected. Remember that it is the manuscript (not you and not necessarily the research) that has been rejected. The writing, the science, or both may not meet the standards of the journal. Carefully read and interpret the reviews to learn what you need to do.
* **Clarity:** "*Clarity is a social matter, not something to be decided unilaterally by the writer. The reader, like the consumer, is sovereign. If the reader thinks something you write is unclear, then it is, by definition. Quit arguing."* (McCloskey, 2000:12)
* **Revision:** Take reviewers’ and editor’s comments into account when revising. You need not make every change requested by the reviewers or the editor. However, you must ‘Respond to each criticism.’
* **Cover letter:** When returning a manuscript, write a well-organized (and polite!) cover letter that explains both the changes that you have made and those you have not made. This letter may be shared with reviewers during “re-review.”

**Set your priorities for writing**

Paul Silvia (2000) recommends prioritizing as follows:

1. Check page proofs and copyedited manuscripts.
2. Finish projects with deadlines.
3. Revise manuscripts to resubmit to a journal.
4. Review manuscripts and grant proposals.
5. Develop a new manuscript.
6. Do miscellaneous writing.

**What are your specific writing priorities for this summer?**

**Acknowledgments**

Material for this session is adapted from a previous session led by Richelle M. Allen-King and Steven Wojtal. It draws substantially from portions of a ‘tomorrow’s professor’ posting about publishing, Boice’s research, Silvia’s book, and the experiences of colleagues and ourselves. Additional details may be found at http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/earlycareer/research/publishing.html

**References and resources**

Bates, R.L., Adkins-Heljeson, M.D., and Buchanan, R., 1995, Geowriting: A Guide to Writing, Editing, and Printing in Earth Science, American Geological Institute.

Boice, R., 1989, Procrastination, busyness and bingeing, Behavior Research Therapy, v. 27, 605-611.

Boice, R., 2000, Advice for new faculty members: Nihil nimus. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.C., and Williams, J.M., 2003, The craft of research, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Claerbout, J.F., 1993, [Scrutiny of the Introduction](http://sepwww.stanford.edu/sep/prof/Intro.html), The Leading Edge, v. 10, 39-40.

Fiske, D.W. and Fogg L., 1990, But the reviewers are making different criticisms of my paper! Diversity and uniqueness in reviewer comments, American Psychologist, v. 45, 591-598.

Gopen G. D., and Swan, J. A., 1990, The science of science writing, American Scientist, 78, 550-558.

Landes, K.K., 1951, [Scrutiny of the Abstract](http://sepwww.stanford.edu/sep/prof/abscrut.html), Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, v. 35 (7), 1660.

McCloskey, D., 2000, Economical writing (2nd ed.), Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

NAGT, Publishing Your Work by Richelle Allen-King and Steven Wojtal. <http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/earlycareer/research/publishing.html>

Williams, J. and Colomb, G., 1990, Style: Toward clarity and grace, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Science Careers, Getting Your Research Published.

http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career\_magazine/previous\_issues/articles/2012\_09\_28/caredit.a1200110

Silvia, P.J., 2007, How to Write a Lot: a Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing, American Psychological Association, 149pp.

Tomorrow’s Professor, Msg. #661 PUBLISH AND FLOURISH; BECOME A PROLIFIC SCHOLAR, summary by Tara Gray, author of book with the same title. <http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/index.shtml>

USGS, [Suggestions to Authors of Reports to the USGS](http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov/lib/lib_sta.htm), particularly the "Choosing the right word" and "Suggestions as to expression" sections.

van Leunen, M-C, 1992, [A Handbook for Scholars](http://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Scholars-Mary-Claire-van-Leunen/dp/0195069544), Oxford University Press, 368pp.