Simple Guide to Writing a Journal Article

March 2014
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Methodspace
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Quick review and decision times for authors; Technical editing crucial stage

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$99 special author acceptance fee; $495 for Engineering; $995 for Medicine

SAGE Open Engineering, SAGE Open Medicine and SAGE Open Medical Case Reports now accepting submissions

Article Processing Charge available for these OA journals

SAGE Open: 2,000 submissions and 65% rejection rate
In July 2013 G8 science ministers endorsed need to increase access to publicly funded research

Hybrid OA not a fan of many; Doesn’t matter whether Green or Gold although most OA advocates prefers Gold OA

In January 2014 EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) participate in FOSTER (Facilitate Open Science Training for European Research) and PASTEUR4OA (Open Access Policy Alignment Strategies for European Union Research)

Making OA a reality is more difficult and time consuming; Universities organising OA week
End notion that the value of a research is dependent on what journal publishes it. The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) working in the right direction.

OA movement should focus on education and its is growing in importance in developing nations.
Mitchell Duneier, Princeton University Professor of Sociology – pulled out of the MOOCs movement

Chronicle Survey July 2013:

- 60%/79% positive about Hybrid courses with face-to-face and online components
- 49%/64% adaptive learning to personalise education
- 44%/56% technology increases interactions amongst students
- 33%/32% competency based education
- 27%/23% free or open courses
- 8%/5% MOOCs
Faculty members optimistic about future especially in STEM

Most humanities faculties pessimistic about the future of higher education

The leading platform.
Open2Study attracted 100,000 enrolments during the period April – October; 53% from overseas students.

Babson Survey Research Group in January 2014 found that the survey reveals doubts about MOOCs continuing to rise.

Too early to tell as universities and researchers are all learning the value add of MOOCs.
Japanese MOOC provider

Received funding in July 2013

≈130 courses with 40,000 users

Professionals in theirs 20s and 30s
Steps Towards Open Scholarship

- Know where and how to share research still an issue
- Upload *preprint* before submission is technically very easy to do. arXiv.org. Preprints have a clear citation advantage
- Check Sherpa/RoMEO to see which journals not accept articles that have been posted online
Steps Towards Open Scholarship

- *Postprints* a little trickier. Check with publishers and also Sherpa/RoMEO on which journals allow this.

- Some institutions mandate to deposit their fulltext articles.

- Zenodo: Recommended service by most academics as compared to Academia.edu or ResearchGate.
- Initiative by Engineers without Borders Institute (EWB)
- No cost to author or to the reader
- Journal of Humanitarian Engineering (JHE) launched as a pilot project
- Open access including multi-language access, developing country access and disability-accessible content
Launched in 2006

Peer reviewed

New initiative: All articles accompanied by video

Authors submit manuscript and they film video
WEEK One

Designing Your Plan
Keys to Positive Writing Experiences

- Successful Academic Writers
  - **Write:** No matter how busy one’s life is make a plan to write; do not procrastinate
  - **Make Writing Social:** Make writing more public, more social. Eg start a writing group, take writing classes, convince another student to cowrite
  - **Persist Despite Rejection:** Work rejected by one journal may be accepted by another
  - **Pursue their Passion:** Focus on what interest you
Common Myths

- **Articles that are**

  - Heavy on theory with sweeping implications: Most articles accepted are narrow in claims and context

  - Loads of interesting ideas: Can be detrimental; accepted articles are carefully organised around a single significant idea

  - Entirely original: Almost all published articles are not the first on the subject.
What Gets Published and Why

- Approaches new evidence in an old way: typical students article which can be published. Eg incidences of driving offences in NT (2006 - 2010) It demonstrates how new patterns of law enforcement, set in train by an ‘Emergency Intervention’ in 2007, ostensibly to tackle child sexual abuse and family violence, led to a dramatic increase in the criminalisation of Indigenous people for driving-related offending.

- Approached old evidence in a new way: More experienced writes. Here the author develops a new way of explaining or approaching old data. Eg comparison of how governments respond to human atrocities perpetrated by previous governments.
Pairs old evidence with old approaches in a new way: Another typical student type publishable article. Weigh in on a debate. Ask yourself; do you think that existing approaches explain the existing evidence well. Eg Murder of Meredith Kercher. Experts in language and story have gleaned valuable insight into how social media shapes narratives today by analysing Wikipedia editing archives of this case, including portrayals of villains and victims of the crime. Thanks to Wikipedia articles’ open-ended structure and multiple contributors, less dominant narratives are more likely to be told. This article lifts the lid on Wikipedia’s potential as a resource for narrative scholars.
Handling Writer’s Block

Symptoms

- Boredom
- Distraction
- Lack of confidence
- Too many words
- Heavy Workload

Cure

- Take a constructive break eg walking or check your emails
- Exercise, drink water
- Take a short break, revisit article, discuss
- Look at sample articles
- Have a timetable, what/how works best, creating life balance
What’s Gets Published – Editor’s Perspective

- Provides insight into an important issue
- Insight is important for research development
- Insight is used for development of a theory
- Insight stimulates the mind for more questions
- Methodology were applied thoroughly and applied correctly to arrive at the conclusion
- Reference to prior work
- Well written and easy to understand
Abstract as a Tool for Success

Don’t Just Introduce your Topic

Don’t have an abstract that reads like a plan; do not include statements like we hope to prove or this article tries to analyse

Don’t give a barrage of data without any argument or conclusion

Don’t include footnotes/citations (some journals allow this)

Don’t include quotations; paraphrase instead

Don’t include abbreviations, symbols or acronyms
Ergonomic Design and Evaluation of a Pilot Oxygen Mask

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Abstract

The present study developed a virtual fit assessment (VFA) method to design an oxygen mask which fits the Korean Air Force (KAF) pilots. The VFA method used 3D face scan data of 336 KAF pilots to find the most proper shape of an oxygen mask for KAF pilots. The oxygen mask design revised in the study showed a 27% design improvement effect on average in terms of fit evaluated by the VFA method. Additionally, the present study evaluated the revised oxygen mask prototypes with 88 KAF pilots to experimentally verify the design improvement effect in terms of discomfort, pressure, and suitability for military equipment (slippage and stability in flight-like situations). The discomfort of the revised mask was 33 – 56% lower on average than the existing oxygen mask. In terms of the pressure, the revised mask showed 11 ~ 33% of improvement on average compared to the existing mask. Furthermore, on high gravity situation, the slippage distance of the revised mask was 24% shorter on average than the existing mask. The proposed VFA method can be applied to the design and evaluation of wearable products that require an ergonomically better fit for a target population.

State why you embarked on the project (often because of a gap or debate or persistent social problem)

State what your project/study is about

State how you did the project; your methodology

State your findings

State what you conclude from these findings; your arguments

Optional - Recommendations
WEEK Two

Getting Started
Getting Started

Day 1: Hammering Out Your Topic: Describe, Summarise and Write

Day 2: Rereading your paper: reread hard copy first without touching it; then with a pen in hand to make a list of revision

Day 3: Drafting Your Abstract: Draft, share

Day 4: Reading a Model Article: Search online for recently published articles and pick a model. Then study this model article to see its presentation; look at the first paragraph and make notes

Day 5: Revising Your Abstract
First Impressions Do Count: Clear, precise with accurate hypotheses

Patience:

Certainty: Editors wants assurances that it is not submitted elsewhere

Clarify: Sound Structure and selling your ideas

Attention to Details:
Common Reasons Why Articles are Rejected

- Too narrow or Too broad
- Not Relevant
- Not scholarly
- Too defensive
- Not really original
- Poor Structure
- Insignificant
- Theoretically/Methodologically Flawed
- Too many spelling and grammatical errors
- Lack of constructive arguments
WEEK Four

Selecting Journal
Importance of Selecting the Right Journal

- Relevance
- Research: Importance to the Community
- Reputation of journal and its editors
- Research the references
- Rejection Rate
Writing to Query Letter to Editors

Email to editors of your 3 top choices for journals

Questions to Ask:

- How many submissions a year does your journal received?
- What is your journal’s turnaround time?
- What is your journal backlog?
Elements of a Query Letter

- Address the editor by name
- Mention any human connection (recommendation to write)
- State briefly why the editor and journal readers should be interested in your article
- Display a knowledge of the journal
- Give the title of your article/abstract
- Follow the journal specifications
- State that you have not published nor submitted to another journal
- Name grants/awards received for the research
- Always include a question that will tease out your articles chances of rejection
- Thank the editor
WEEK Five

Reviewing the Related Literature
Common Mistakes in Citing References

- Cite one source too much
- Cite irrelevant literature
- Overcite definitions
- Misattribute: if you attribute general beliefs or entire systems of thought to one person, peer reviewers can dismiss your article as not scholarly
- Cite the citation
- Cite asides
- Cite the derivatives
- Quote too much
- Omit citations
Identifying Your Relationship to the Related Literature

What’s Your Entry Point? Viz your way to get into the ongoing scholarly argument on a specific topic eg specialists in communication have called for additional research into traditionally accepted rhetorical strategies
– addressing a gap in previous research
– extending previous research eg this paper examines the impact of the financial sector crisis on the financial management of small and medium sized enterprises in Malaysia
– correcting previous research viz misconceptions; offer contrasting or alternative opinions rather than an outright rebuttal

What’s a Related Literature Review?
– most difficult part to write; not always easy to summarise and evaluate others
– best way is to imagine telling a colleague about a debate you overheard; you report who did or did not participated in the debate, who took what side, who was convincing etc.,
WEEK Six

Strengthening Your Structure
Structuring Your Article

Section 1: pyramid structure, general to specific

1. Introduction – general subject of investigation  
2. Review of the literature – lacks and gaps  
3. Statement of the hypothesis – your arguments

Section 2: description of study, all information needed to replicate study

1. Methods,  
2. Procedures,  
3. Materials & Instruments,  
4. Experiment,  
5. Context & Setting  
6. Population

Section 3: inverse pyramid structure, specific to general

1. Results  
2. Discussion – comment on validity of methods/findings  
3. Conclusions

Works Cited
Revising Your Structure

- Day 1: Reading the Article
- Day 2: Outlining a Model Article eg return to the model article in Week 1
- Day 3: Outlining Your Article viz follow model article, then read through it
- Day 4 and 5: Restructuring Your Article
WEEK Seven

Presenting Your Evidence
How could I improve my methods section?

- Identify your methodology
- Describe your sample/sampling procedure
- Describe your measurement instrument
- Describe your research context
- Describe your variables
- Write in the Past Tense
- Match methods’ subheads to results subhead

Don’t give statistics tutorial
- Don’t mix in your results
- Watch repetition
- Check your journal for instructions
- Watch passive voice and dangling phrases
- Keep in short

How could I improve my methods section?
Writing Up Evidence – Social Science: Results

- Be choosy
- Use tables and graphs
- Design tables and graphs properly
- Title tables properly
- Identify respondents
- Write in the past tense

- Don’t repeat the tables
- Don’t organise your results by discovery
- Organise your results around your argument
- Don’t mix in your methods
- Keep it short
How could I improve our discussion section?

State whether you have confirmed your hypothesis
Link results
Relate results to previous research
List some implications

Claim significance
Question the findings
Note the limitations
Suggest future research
Discuss the results, don’t repeat them
Focus

How could I improve my discussion section?
Revising Your Opening & Conclusion

- **Revising Title**  viz avoid broad titles or vague terms but embed your title with searchable keywords eg Original *Tradition and the Spread of AIDS in India*; Revision *Risky Traditional Practices Associated with the Spread of HIV/AIDS Amongst Men in the rural areas of South India*

- **Revising Introduction** strengthen introduction by starting with telling anecdote, striking depiction of your subject or solid claim about the significance of your topic

- **Revising Abstract, Related Literature Review** good abstract is crucial for getting into publication and citation

- **Revising Conclusion**  viz good conclusion summarises your argument and its significance in a powerful way and must state the article’s relevant to the scholarly literature and debate
WEEK NINE

Giving, Getting, & Using Others’ Feedback
Suggestions when getting feedback

- Give specific instructions on kind of feedback you need

- Separate delivery from message be positive and ignore emotions or criticism delivered in a hostile manner

- Listen, don’t talk be silent and take careful notes; then decide if criticism is useful or not

- Take advantage see every criticism as an opportunity for you to explain your ideas more clearly

YOU ARE THE FINAL AUTHORITY ON YOUR OWN WRITING
WEEKS AHEAD

Final Points/Advice
Be confident and exercise some level of humility

Editors acknowledges quality regardless of whether it is from a postgraduate or an experienced professor

Whatever the outcome of our article do thank the editor

Celebrate success of first article and work towards the next and next and next......
SAGE Way

Things You May Want to Know
Maximising the impact of your article
Additional resources

SAGE Journal Author Gateway

http://www.uk.sagepub.com/journalgateway

‘Publishing Journal Articles’

http://www.uk.sagepub.com/books/Book236083/title
Supporting Materials - Videos

- Part one – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klRWIlrdpcg&feature=youtu.be
Twitter Workflow for Academics

Using Curated Content

Can you read it in < 2 minutes?

Yes

Is it relevant, interesting, or useful?

Yes

Twitter

No

Is it relevant, interesting, or useful?

Yes

Buffer

No

Tweriod

The Key Tools

NewsRack (or any RSS reader)

Buffer (in a league of its own, really)

Pocket (or any read it later app)

Tweriod (or any tweeting time calculator)
'At SAGE we feel a responsibility to acknowledge the debt we owe the disciplines we have published over the decades'
– Ziyad Marar, SAGE Global Publishing Director
Famous Quotes on Research

Research is to see what everybody else has seen and to think what nobody else has thought.

Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.

The way to do research is to attack the facts at the point of greatest astonishment.
SAGE Methods Case Study

SAGE is looking to commission 500 original case studies in research methods.

• Are you an academic, post-doc or doctoral student involved in research?
• Do you want to drive up the usage and discoverability of the published outputs from your research and raise the profile and impact of your research?
• Do you have, or can you write, a case study around your research project(s) or about a particular method used in the course of your research?

What is SAGE Methods Case Study?

SAGE Methods Case Study will comprise of a unique collection of over 500 case studies for use in the teaching of research methods. We want the cases to be drawn from around the world, from established academics, from post-docs and from PhD students, working across a wide spectrum of academic disciplines and working with the widest range of different research methods. The goal of the collection is to provide students and faculty with short usable examples of methods in action and research in action drawn from real research projects that can support teaching and learning in research methods.
Types of Cases

1. ‘Research Project’ cases will take the form of a narrative summary of a whole research project, roughly from start to finish, that focuses predominantly on the methods used to carry out the research project. It should take the topic of the research as the backdrop, and provide summary overviews of the topic’s background and the project’s findings, but centre stage should be given to unpacking the research project’s narrative, from question formation, research design through to data gathering, fieldwork, analysis and research outputs. Particular attention should be paid to any methodological problems or points of interest generated in the carrying out of the study and how these were dealt with or raised questions of research practice. The goal of ‘research project’ cases is to give students an overview of the realities and exigencies of a research project from start to finish.

2. ‘Methods in action’ cases will take as their focus the deployment of a particular method, or element of methodological theory or research practice, in a specific research project context. For example, the focus in ‘methods in action’ cases might be how structural equation modelling, say, or grounded theory, was deployed to answer a particular data analytic need in your research project. The goal of a ‘methods in action’ case is to focus on the particular deployment (for good or ill) of a particular method or theory in the service of the larger research project, so that students can see the strengths and weaknesses and realities of deploying a particular method in a real research context.