RUNNING HEAD: Publishing a research paper

Writing and publishing a research paper in a peer-reviewed journal

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Abstract

Writing and publishing a research paper in a peer-reviewed journal is a complicated process. This paper tries to take some of the mystery out of that process by describing how a good research paper should be structured, and how the journal submission process works.

Writing and publishing a research paper in a peer-reviewed journal

This paper is based on a series of workshops that I have taught at the Association of Institutional Research annual conference; the workshops provide practitioners with advice on how to publish in scholarly journals. During my years as an administrator and as a manuscript reviewer for several journals, I realized there are two main reasons why many practitioners are not publishing in scholarly journals. First, they do not always understand how a manuscript should appear, and second, they are often unclear as to how the publication process typically works. The goal of this paper is to provide some background for practitioners who have never published in a peer-reviewed journal and wish to do so.

Although many practitioners have good research and writing skills, preparing a paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal requires a different approach than writing memos and research reports for a campus. Unfortunately, many of the papers I review read more like the latter. Unless a paper fulfills the expectations of the journal reviewers, it stands little chance of being accepted for publication, regardless of how good the research idea is.

Understanding the submission process is just as important as writing a good paper. From my conversations with staff at some of the top higher education journals, it is clear that many manuscripts are submitted and then receive a “revise and resubmit;” that is, the authors are requested to make some changes and resubmit the manuscript. But many authors never resubmit the manuscript. My contacts say these are generally from authors they have never heard of, which leads me to speculate that many of these people are practitioners who don’t realize that receiving an invitation to revise and resubmit a paper is actually a good outcome, rather than a bad outcome. Many of my workshop participants are surprised to hear that getting a research paper published may require extensive changes to and rewriting of the original manuscript, and

that the time from first submission to actual publication of the paper may take as long as three or four years. Stamina and a thick skin, and well as good research and writing skills, are essential to getting published.

Structure of a good research paper

Although the structure can vary, most journal articles in education have six parts: introduction, literature review, methodology, limitations, results, and discussion. This tends to be what reviewers expect to see, and it is a good structure to follow, especially if you are just starting out. A manuscript that wanders and does not have a clear structure makes for a difficult read. The use of subheadings is fine, but they should be used sparingly. The American Psychological Association style guide mentioned below provides some advice on subheadings.

The introduction is the most important part of your paper, because it tells the reader why they should bother reading your paper. Three points should be made. First, you should explain why the general topic of the paper is important. This may not be immediately obvious to the reader, and is one of the justifications for why the paper should be published. If the paper addresses a very narrow and arcane topic, then it may hold little appeal for the journal's readership. Second, you should be very clear why what you do in the paper is different from what other researchers have done. If there is nothing new in your research, then there is little reason for a journal to publish your paper. Third, you should explicitly state what your research question(s) is. Some scholars do this at the end of the introduction, and list each research question that the paper investigates.

The literature review is just what it says; it reviews previous research in the subject area of your paper. Some authors simply review ten or so papers in their research area, with a

paragraph for each one listing what data and methodological approach was used, what was found, etc. Often it is arranged chronologically, from earlier studies to later studies. This is exactly how a literature review should not be written.

Instead, the literature review should tell a story: here is what has and has not been done previously, and what I'm doing in my paper addresses what has not been done. Suppose, for example, you have conducted a retention study that analyzes a dataset not used by previous researchers, with a set of variables that are usually not used in retention models, and an advanced statistical technique that has not been used extensively in this area. Your literature review would be structured to first discuss datasets used by previous researchers, and the shortcomings associated with these datasets. Next, you would discuss the typical variables used in previous research, with an emphasis that they have neglected to include an important set of variables that could affect their findings. You would conclude by describing the problems with previous statistical approaches used in the literature. Rather than a simple summary of previous studies, this approach not only reviews previous research but does so in a way that illustrates the "holes" in the literature, holes that you will fill with your paper.

Papers can vary in how they review previous research. Besides a stand-alone section, sometimes the literature review is all, or partially, included in the methods section. Sometimes the theoretical or conceptual framework is combined with the literature review as a separate section of the paper.

One question I am always asked is how many references a paper should have. There is obviously no simple answer to this question. Occasionally I receive manuscripts to review that have only a half-dozen references. These are invariably rejected, because you cannot review the literature or make a case that your research is contributing to the literature with only a handful of

citations. My rule of thumb is you should have at least 20 or 30 different references (recent papers of mine have cited 60+ references). Having this many references makes sense for several reasons. First, it strengthens the paper and provides another reason why it should be published (it's not just good research but also provides a good review of the literature). Second, having read all of those articles, you can draw more connections between your research and previous research. Third, chances are you will often end up citing one or more of the people who are reviewing your paper, (reviewers are often assigned based on their knowledge of the subject area), ensuring a warm fuzzy feeling when they review your paper. But also bear in mind that research in a new area, or on a subject that has not been popular with researchers, may not yield many references for a literature review. In such a case, the literature review will by necessity be short, but the justification for the research in the introduction will probably be longer.

The methodology section describes how your research was conducted. It should contain some or all of the following sections: theoretical or conceptual framework (sometimes a separate section of the paper), data source(s), dependent and independent variables, and analytical approach (e.g., multiple regression, content analysis). The goal is to provide the reader with enough detail so that they could reasonably attempt to replicate your study, without at the same time overwhelming the reader with too much detail. For some first-time authors, it can be daunting trying to figure out exactly what information and how much information to include. Reading other articles can give you a good idea of what to include, but note that journals vary in what is considered "normal." Some prefer a lot of detail about methodology, while others do not. Understanding the journal you submit to is important, as will be described below.

Not every paper has an explicit limitations section, but it is generally a good idea to include one. The limitations section describes problems with the paper that could not be

addressed; for example, your study may only use data from one institution, thus limiting your ability to generalize, or perhaps a certain variable used by other scholars was not available in your datatset. Don't hesitate to be honest about the limitations of your paper. There is no such thing as a perfect research paper. Reviewers will likely point out problems with your paper, so you might as well admit them. If the limitation is not that limiting, explain why. If the limitation somehow affects your results, explain how. Also, bear in mind that just because you list a problem as a limitation, it doesn't mean that your paper can't be rejected because of the problem. Reviewers may decide that the problem is simply too severe and recommend a rejection. It is generally better to address limitations of your paper before the results and discussion sections, so that readers can keep the limitations in mind while you review your results. In addition, this allows you to focus your discussion on what you found, rather than on the problems with your research.

The results section describes the immediate results of your analysis, but without jumping too much into the wider implications of your findings. In this section you would discuss your model results, or the main themes that emerged from your interviews if doing a qualitative study. When faced with a complicated analysis, there may appear to be an overwhelming amount of detail to describe. It helps to think about your research question(s), and frame your discussion of results around them.

The last section of the paper is the discussion section. This is the second most important part of the paper, because this is where you answer the "So what?" question. In other words, you have told the reader why your topic is important, how what you've done is different from what other scholars have done, and exactly what you found. Now it is time to put your specific results in perspective, especially in relation to issues raised in the introduction. This section generally

starts with a summary paragraph or two, and then moves to a broader discussion of your results. You should discuss what you found, why it is important, and how your findings relate to previous research in this area. It is also useful to discuss how your findings have implications for other areas in higher education, as well as for practitioners. My experience is that many authors (myself included) often fail to adequately discuss the implications of their research. Such a discussion of "what-this-means-in-the-long-run" is essential, particularly for journals that are more focused towards practitioners. It is customary to offer suggestions for future research in this area.

Finally, I offer some advice on tables and graphs in terms of number, construction, and discusssion. For new writes, it can difficult to decide what tables should be included and what they should look like. Remember that the purpose of tables is to add to your manuscript, so they should not be redundant, and they should clarify, not obfuscate.

Both tables and graphs should be used sparingly in a manuscript. A review of articles in the main higher education journals shows that authors rarely include more than a half dozen tables in their manuscripts. Considering how much information can be packed into a single table, more than five or six tables risks overloading the reader with numbers and information. A general rule of thumb is to include a table of numbers when they are essential for your analysis, and when it would be too awkward to describe the information in the table with text. For example, results from four different regression models are best displayed in a table. However, a table that shows your sample makeup in terms of gender, race and age could also easily be described in one sentence in the text and probably does not merit a separate table.

As for constructing tables, your two best guides in this area are the Tufte book and the Nicol and Pexman books described below. Tufte does a great job explaining how to present

information using tables and graphs, a topic many new authors find difficult (new authors, for example, often construct a table so that every cell in a table is surrounded by a line; the resulting tables resembles a checkerboard more than anything else). Nicol and Pexman provide examples of typical tables for a variety of statistical output, such as ANOVA, regression and factor analysis. Their book can help take the guesswork out of deciding what parts of your SPSS output should appear in a table.

When discussing tables in the text of a manuscript, it is not necessary to review every number or finding in the table. Instead, focus on the main results as they relate to your research question. The key here is to highlight and interpret the table for readers, without being too redundant in terms of repeating what the table already shows. This can be difficult to learn. My recommendation is a careful reading of previously published work, not for what the articles say, but for how they say it.

Reflecting on manuscripts that I have reviewed, I have made a list of what I consider to be the common mistakes that authors make (in no particular order):

- Don't say why their paper is important
- Sparse literature review
- Too much detail about their analyses
- Sparse discussion with little or no implications
- Use of statistical technique they know instead of what is appropriate for the data
- Use of stepwise regression or using statistical significance to determine variables in a model
- Poorly constructed tables; they obscure rather than tell a story
- Writing style using passive instead of active voice

- Paper not written in American Psychological Association style
- Failure to proofread their paper (misspellings and citations that don't match the reference list)

Having provided a broad outline of what a research paper looks like, there is still no substitute for reading research articles in order to develop a sense of how a paper should be written (as explained below, this is also a good way to get a feel for what types of papers journals look for).

Understanding the submission process

The first step in getting your paper published is finding a journal for potential publication. Journals that may appear similar can actually be very different in terms of the papers they publish, so it is important that you submit to a journal that is appropriate for your paper. Many new authors make the mistake of blithely sending manuscripts to a journal without first developing a feel for what the editors and reviewers are seeking. (I have been told, for example, that *Research in Higher Education* sometimes receives research papers on primary and secondary schools. Clearly, these authors have not read the journal title, much less the contents of the journal.)

Journals in higher education tend to differ in terms of selectivity and substantive areas. The *Journal of Higher Education, Review of Higher Education, Research in Higher Education*, and *Journal of College Student Development* are widely considered to be the top journals in higher education. Only about 10%-20% of submissions are ultimately published by these journals. They also tend to publish research in a wide variety of substantive areas. Journals such as *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* and *Journal of College Student*

Retention are more narrowly focused, as their titles would suggest, and also tend to have higher acceptance rates.

You should never submit to a journal before reading several articles to get a feel for the types of research that it publishes; looking at the journal website can also be helpful. All journals will have a statement that describes what kind of papers they seek. Below are statements taken from Research in Higher Education (RHE) and Journal of College Student Development (JCSD):

> *Research in Higher Education* is directed to those concerned with the functioning of the post-secondary education, including two-year and four-year colleges, universities, and graduate and professional schools. It is of primary interest to institutional researchers and planners, faculty, college and university administrators, student personnel specialists and behavioral scientists. Generally, empirical studies are sought which contribute to an increased understanding of an institution or allow comparison between institutions, which aid faculty and administrators in making more informed decisions about current or future operations, and which improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the institution. Of particular interest are topics such as: administration and faculty; curriculum and instruction; student characteristics; alumni assessment; recruitment and admissions; prediction and student academic performance; campus climate; retention, attrition and transfer. Brief notes of a methodological nature will also be considered for publication.
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> The *Journal of College Student Development* is interested in manuscripts concerning student development, professional development, professional issues, administrative concerns, and creative programs to improve student services. Authors may focus on recent original research, replication of research, reviews of research, graduate education in student affairs, or essays on theoretical, organizational, and professional issues. Both quantitative and qualitative research manuscripts are considered.

As you can see, these two journals seek different types of manuscripts. RHE seeks empirical studies across a wide variety of subject areas, while JCSD seeks a wide variety of manuscript types (research, reviews, essays, etc.) in two subject areas, student development and student affairs.

In general, you are better off aiming high rather than low when submitting a paper; in other words, you should aim for a more prestigious (and selective) journal, even if you believe

the chances of acceptance are low. The selective journals are more widely read, providing you with more exposure as a scholar if your paper is accepted. You will probably get better comments from reviewers, because the top people in the field tend to be on the editorial boards of the top journals. Knowledgeable people also look at journal quality on vitas during job searches. However, given the length of the submission process (as explained below), this strategy can require many months, as you start out at the top journals and begin to submit to other journals if your paper gets rejected. Bear in mind that it may make more sense to submit to journal with a narrower focus if your research topic is closely aligned with the journal. A common reason for rejection from the more selective journals is that the topic is "too narrow" for the journals' broad readership.

Some journals also actively recruit possible articles, for example by looking at recent conference presentations. This article is one example of a paper that was solicited by a journal. While you should be encouraged if a journal contacts you and suggests that you submit a manuscript, this does not automatically mean that your paper will be accepted. It does mean, however, that the journal editor feels that the topic would be a good fit for the journal, so your chances of eventually getting the paper accepted should be high.

The cardinal rule of submission is to never submit the same paper to multiple journals at the same time. Almost all journals have a rule against this practice, because it is very time intensive to review manuscripts and editors do not wish to waste reviewers' time. Given the small size of our field, different editors are likely to send the same manuscript to the same person for review, so your chances of getting caught at this are high.

After you submit your manuscript to a journal, the editor evaluates the manuscript for appropriateness; if appropriate, the editor sends blind copies to two or three reviewers,

depending on the journal (most journals require “blind” copies of a manuscript for submission, or copies that do not have any information that can be used to identify the author). These reviewers send back written comments and recommendations, which the editor evaluates to make a decision for your manuscript. The editor will then send you a letter describing the decision, as well as blind copies of the reviewers’ comments (thus, the reviewers will not know who you are and you will not know who they are). Journals can vary in their editorial decisions, but usually you will receive one of four decisions: either an outright acceptance, a conditional acceptance, a request for revision and resubmission, or a rejection. The typical time period for this part of the process is three months; that is, you should hear from the editor within three months of submitting your paper.

With an acceptance, the editor is accepting the paper for publication and is not requiring any changes. This rarely occurs, especially with the top journals. With a conditional acceptance, the editor offers to publish the paper if you make changes as described in the editor’s letter; the revised paper will not be sent to reviewers again. This is also a less common outcome.

The most frequent outcomes of the review process are requests for revision and resubmission and rejections. With a revise and resubmit, the editor offers you the chance to revise the manuscript along the lines suggested by the reviewers. The new manuscript will be sent out again, usually to the same reviewers, who then make another set of recommendations to the editor. Depending on how the revision is handled, the revised paper may or may not be accepted for publication. In my experience, a revise and resubmit from a higher education journal is rarely followed by a second request for revisions and a third set of reviews; usually it is met with a rejection or a conditional acceptance.

New authors are often dismayed to receive a revise and resubmit, thinking that their paper should have simply been accepted. But with many journals, the majority of manuscripts are rejected outright, so a revise and resubmit should be viewed as a positive outcome. Be very sure to read the editor's letter carefully. If the editor is stressing how much work needs to be done in order to make the manuscript acceptable, you may need to think about going to another journal. But bear in mind that the probability of publication is usually much higher with a resubmission than if you submit anew to another journal, so your best bet is to try to revise your manuscript.

The best strategy for a revise and resubmit request is to try and do everything the reviewers request, even if you believe the changes are unnecessary. This not only provides reviewers with little ground for complaints during the second round of reviews, but the editor may also decide that you've responded to their comments so thoroughly that a second round of reviews is unnecessary. Ignore reviewers' suggestions only if they are incorrect (e.g., suggesting the wrong methodological approach) or if you can't make the suggested changes (such as adding a variable that is not available in your database).

Once the manuscript has been revised, resubmit it along with a cover letter to the editor and a detailed letter of revision (without identifying information) that specifies what you have changed and what you have not changed and why. This second letter will be sent along with the revised manuscript to the reviewers. I usually respond to each reviewer's point in the order that is in their review, detailing the changes I have made, the page number(s) in the revised manuscript where I made the changes, and I also copy the relevant paragraphs from the revised manuscript and paste them in the letter of revision. As a reviewer, there is nothing more frustrating than receiving a revised manuscript where the author declares that they have made all

the suggested changes, but they leave it to you as the reviewer to hunt through the manuscript to find the changes. Although it is not always possible, I try to write my letters of revision with enough detail so that the editor and reviewers rarely have to look at the revised manuscript.

Be sure to be very polite and use neutral language when describing why you disagree with a reviewer; remember, you want them to tell the editor to publish your paper. Bear in mind that written communications are often misunderstood, especially in terms of tone (think about emails), so it pays to have a colleague review your letter of revision.

Finally, your manuscript may be rejected. This is a very common outcome and should not discourage you from trying to publish. If the editor rejects the manuscript by refusing to send it out for review, you should realize that the editor has done you a favor. If the editor does not think it is appropriate for the journal, chances are reviewers will feel the same way and recommend rejection, so the editor has just saved you three months of waiting. If the paper was sent out for review and then rejected, look at the reviewers' comments and incorporate some of their suggestions before sending the paper to a new journal. You want to take advantage of the fact that (hopefully) two or three knowledgeable people in the field have commented on your paper. On the other hand, incorporating every single one of their comments will be too time-consuming (they may also offer contradictory advice, which unfortunately is not an uncommon occurrence).

Once you have made some changes, send the paper out to another journal. If you have sent it to one of the top journals and the reviewers say it is too narrow, consider a more specific journal that may look more favorably on your paper. Reviewers will often suggest other possible outlets. Also bear in mind journals in related fields, such as *Economics of Education Review* and *Sociology of Education*. Resending a paper to different journals as it gets rejected time and time

again can be a bruising process, but it does pay off. One of my articles was rejected by three journals before a fourth journal finally accepted it. It is not a pleasant process, as no one likes to be criticized, but I believe that discipline and persistence (rather than genius) explains why many scholars are able to publish so much. I once heard someone say that every paper has a home, meaning that if you try hard enough, you should eventually find a journal willing to publish your research paper.

Once a manuscript has been accepted for publication, there is still one final step in the submission process: copyediting. The amount of copyediting can vary by journal. Some editors take a hands-on approach and will contact you about proposed changes; others will simply allow the copy editor to make stylistic changes without contacting you. Knowing the track changes feature in Word can be helpful in exchanging versions of your manuscript with the copy editor. Common issues with manuscripts at this stage are tables or graphs that are not in printable condition, citations that do not match the reference list, and references that lack information, such as volume or page numbers. You will be contacted by the journal to resolve these issues before the article can be printed, and asked to send a final copy for printing. If you use bibliographic software such as Endnote, be sure to remove the field codes in the final version of your manuscript.

Tips for practitioners

At this point, many of you working full-time in a non-faculty position are probably wondering how you're going to be able to accomplish all this. Make no mistake: if you plan to publish on a fairly regular basis, then you will be making a substantial time commitment. Much of the work I published when working as an administrator was done in the evenings and on the

weekends, after I had finished with my regular job. However, there are some ways you can save time.

Office projects

It is my belief that the majority of office research projects are not publishable, at least in the major journals. They tend to be very narrowly focused, and often not sophisticated enough in terms of methodology (e.g., univariate rather than multivariate statistics). Alternatively, a project might be quite sophisticated and very useful for the institution, but adds nothing new to the literature (such as a Tinto retention model applied to a single institution).

The one advantage that office projects have is that the datasets created for them can be used for other related research projects. At a previous job the Provost asked me to determine what proportion of students interested in majoring in the sciences during Orientation ended up actually majoring in the sciences. Answering the request required merging several datatsets, including the CIRP First-Year Survey and data from the student registration databases. Once this was accomplished, I used the dataset to estimate multinomial model of college major choice, which was eventually published. The research took part on the weekends, but the creation of the dataset (which was quite time-consuming) took place during normal office hours. Another approach I have used is embedding survey methodology research experiments in student surveys. The survey is designed and conducted on office time, and after the survey is conducted, the dataset is ready and waiting for analysis.

Co-authoring

Writing papers with other people offers several advantages. First, you get a publication with less effort, because presumably some of the work is being done by your co-authors. Second, you may get access to normally inaccessible data by teaming up with someone who has

access to that data. Third, you can learn quite a bit by working with someone else, especially if they have previously published.

If you do decide to work with someone else, choose your co-authors carefully, and be very explicit about the division of labor. With my co-authors, we usually agree who will assemble the dataset, analyze it, construct the tables, and who will write each section of the paper. Al though it varies, the general rule of thumb is that the person doing the most work, and/or the person who developed the idea for the paper is listed as first author. (Depending on the academic field and institution, first authorship of an article can be very important for tenure and promotion).

Keep up to date with the literature

Admittedly, this can be quite difficult given the time constraints of the job. But it is absolutely essential. Reading other research is how you can generate research ideas, become familiar with the literature for your literature reviews, and begin to understand the journals and what kinds of material they seek.

Reading articles is difficult to do, because keeping up to date with the literature is never something that is “on fire;” that is, we all tend to work by accomplishing the most pressing tasks first, with the result that non-pressing items are rarely addressed. Make a commitment to read three or four articles at the same time every week, either during your lunch hour or a Friday afternoon. Many journals now allow anyone to sign up for a free table of contents to be sent to their email address. This can be quite helpful, because you can quickly scan the list of articles for items of interest without leaving your desk.

Use technology to handle the literature

I am a big believer in using technology to lighten work loads, and nowhere is this more valuable than in handling the vast number of research articles that are out there and that need to be reviewed. Rather than visiting the library, I use several electronic databases to search the literature. By far the most useful is Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com/), which uses the Google search algorithm on published and unpublished scholarly works. Not only does their search engine allow you to devise intricate searches, but Google searches across fields, which is important for an interdisciplinary field such as higher education. Google also includes chapters from a variety of the New Directions series. More importantly, if you are searching within your university domain, links to specific articles will open that article if your library is a subscriber.

JSTOR is a database of journal articles that many schools subscribe to, and it allows full-text searches of articles as well as searches of non-education journals. The downside is that it has a limited number of education journals, and a moving wall of three to five years (it only contains articles older than three to five years from the current date). The ISI Web of Science (http://isiknowledge.com) is an online citation database that allows searches of thousands of journals across disciplines. It only allows typical searches such as keyword or author, and you should limit searches to the Social Science database. However, it does allow one to see who has cited a particular article. So if you find an article from 1992 that directly addresses your topic, you can use the ISI database to create a list of articles that have cited this particular article since it was published.

Many higher education journals are now available electronically, and they can be searched online. The *Journal of Higher Education, Review of Higher Education,* and *Journal of College Student Development* are available through the Project Muse consortium, and Research in Higher Education can now be searcher online at the Springer website.

Finally, I use bibliographic software called Endnote to save time (there are similar programs available; I am only familiar with Endnote). After typing information about an article into the Endnote database, with the click of a mouse I can insert a citation anywhere in my Word document. Endnote automatically generates the bibliography in Word, and if I delete any particular citation, Endnote removes it from the reference list. Moreover, if you submit to a non-APA journal, the bibliography and citation style can instantly be reformatted. I find Endnote to be a huge time saver for me.

Keep research skills up to date

It can be daunting to try and publish because you may feel that your analytic (especially quantitative) skills are not good enough. When possible, use professional development opportunities to upgrade your skills and to learn specific techniques. The Association of Institutional Research offers a Statistics Institute in the summer, and many professional conferences such as the American Educational Research Association and the Association for Institutional Research offer half- and full-day workshops during their conferences.

Present at conferences

One of the best ways to be productive is to commit to present a research paper at a regional or national conference. If your paper proposal is accepted, you've given yourself a deadline that has to be met. This is how many faculty remain productive; without the conference deadline, it's very easy to keep pushing aside that research paper you've always wanted to work on. Conferences are also a good source for networking and finding other publication outlets. Many of the New Directions series use guest editors who in turn recruit authors for specific chapters. Becoming a familiar face at conferences is a good way to make contact with many of these people.

Additional resources

Below I have listed several books and articles that I believe are very useful resources for anyone trying to publish in a peer-reviewed journal.

Books

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

- Essential style guide for higher education journals – buy a copy if you don't have one.

Nicol, A.M. & Pexman, P.M. (1999). *Presenting your findings: A practical guide for creating tables*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Novices often have a hard time taking their computer output and creating tables of results. This book has lots of great examples.

Strunk, W. & White, E.B. (1979). *The elements of style* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- The classic book on writing style.

Tufte, E. (1992). The visual display of quantitative information. New Haven: Graphics Press

- The classic text on how to display information using tables and graphs.

Young, J.W. (2003). *A technique for producing ideas*. New York: McGraw Hill.

- This was written by an advertising executive in 1940 on how he generated ideas for ad campaigns; it is also the same way I get ideas for research papers. It's only 64 pages and is worth a read.

Articles

Feldman, D.C. (2004). "The devil is in the details: Converting good research into publishable articles." *Journal of Management*, 39(1):1-6.

- Although in a different field, a journal editor offers useful advice for those seeking to publish.

Smart, J.C. (2002). “Attributes of exemplary research manuscripts employing quantitative analyses.” *Research in Higher Education* 46(4):461-477.

- This is one of the best articles I’ve read on how to write a good research paper. Required reading for anyone wanting to publish in *Research in Higher Education*, as Smart is the editor.

Conclusion

Recent research reported in the *New York Times* claims that expert performers are made, not born. That is, those who are successful in their fields are generally successful because of long, hard work, not innate ability. I believe this also applies to scholarly publishing. Those who are successful have not only excellent research skills, but through experience they know how a research paper should be written and they also understand how the publication process works. For novices, I hope this paper has shed some light on how one goes about getting a research paper published in a peer-reviewed journal.