Writing Journal Articles: Strategies for your Success

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Write about...
- Research findings
  - Large and small studies
- Teaching innovations
  - Teaching strategies, courses...
- Quality improvement studies
- Unit-based initiatives, projects
- Clinical practice updates

Ideas
- Record ideas
  - Notebook or computer
  - Hard to remember if you don’t write down
- Select topic
  - Something you care about
  - Narrow enough to be manageable
  - New or different slant

Process
- Identify purpose of manuscript

Write purpose of manuscript in 1 sentence to confirm it is clear and focused

Purpose: Example
The purpose of this study was to design and test research instruments to measure nurses' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward patients in ICU who are obese. Our study involved Implicit Association Tests, the Anti-fat Attitude questionnaire, an explicit bias scale, assessment of behavioral intentions based on vignettes, and demographic questions. Data supported face validity and convergent and discriminant validity within and between implicit and explicit attitudes and stereotypes.

Purpose: Example
The purpose of this article is to describe the impact of an evidence-based alarm management protocol on patient safety. This protocol reduced alarms up to 30% and saved $136,500 and 841 hours of RN time per year. Evaluation of patients on continuous cardiac monitoring showed a 3.5% decrease in census.
Purpose: Example
Clickers can provide a means of assessment during class, increase interaction, create a fun atmosphere, and add a media-enriched environment that today's students’ desire. This article offers a pedagogical basis for clicker use and describes best practices.

Process
- Identify readers
  Who is your audience? Who will be interested in reading your manuscript?

Process
- Based on purpose of manuscript and readers
  Write manuscript to fit journal

Directories of Nursing and Other Journals
Directory of Nursing Journals
http://nursingeditors.com/journals-directory/
Journal/Author Name Estimator (JANE)
http://jane.biosemantics.org/
PubMed: search journals database

http://nursingeditors.com/journals-directory/
Selecting Journal

- Match to your purpose and audience
- Peer reviewed and indexed
  - PubMed, CINAHL, others
- Turnaround time for reviews
- Acceptance rates

Get it published
Journal Impact Factors

- Web of Science database
  - Indexes >18,000 journals in sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities
  - Tracks cited references and times cited
- Those citations used to calculate impact factor
  - Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate Analytics)
  - Some use as measure of journal quality

Impact factors
- Based on number of times articles in a specific journal were cited in other journals in the prior 2 years
- Citations to a journal, not to a specific article in it

Example: AJN

Cites in 2017 to articles published in: Number of articles published in:
2015 = 77 2015 = 57
2016 = 55 2016 = 50
132 107

Citations to articles 132 = 1.234
Number of articles 107

Query Email

- Contents:
  - What paper is about
  - Why appropriate for journal
- Can send multiple queries (can only submit manuscript to 1 journal at a time)
  SHORT.
Sample Query Email

I am interested in submitting a manuscript to [journal name]. The manuscript describes a service learning course to prepare students to care for patients at end of life. Are you interested in reviewing this manuscript? Thank you for your consideration.

Information for Authors

- Essential information about
  - Types and formats of articles in journal
  - Specifics on manuscript preparation
  - Reporting guidelines to use
- For specific types of manuscripts: CONSORT, SQUIRE, PRISMA

Read & Follow

Information for Authors (at Journal Website): Example

Manuscript Parts and Order

1. Title page
   - Acknowledgement
2. Abstract (key words)
3. Text
4. Tables
5. Figures

Example Structured Abstract

Purpose: To explore the outcomes at 1 year of a residency for new graduates...
Design and Methods: A survey was used to assess self-confidence, clinical competencies, ...
Findings: Scores on self-confidence increased from...
Conclusions: This study adds to the literature on the positive outcomes of residency programs and benefits of sustained mentoring on the unit.
Example Unstructured

Clinical practice experiences for nursing students may be scheduled as 1 long day, 2 shorter days, and many other variations. This study compared competency achievement of students (n = 146) randomly assigned to 1 long clinical day (12 hours) with those in 2 shorter days (7-8 hours each). Study results found no difference in learning outcomes between the 2 groups.

Writing about Research

**IMRAD format**

- **Introduction**
- **Methods**
- **Results and**
- **Discussion**

**IMRAD: Methods**

- **Design**
- **Setting and sample, how selected**
- **Interventions (if any)**
- **Instruments and other measurements**
- **Procedure**
- **Data analysis**

Writing Reviews

- **Systematic, integrative, & literature**
- **Scoping, umbrella (synthesis of existing reviews)**
- **Key**: use accepted method, eg,
  - PRISMA
  - Joanna Briggs Institute
  - *JBI Database of Systematic Reviews and Implementation Reports* publishes systematic reports (if done with JBI methodology)

Writing Reviews

- **Background for review and questions addressed**
- **Review methods**
  - Criteria for studies in review
  - Search strategy
  - Study selection
  - Data extraction (forms used)
  - Evaluation of quality of individual studies
  - How results were combined, eg, narrative
Writing Reviews

- Review results
  - Study characteristics
  - Citations for each study in review
  - Findings of individual studies
  - Synthesized findings across studies
- Discussion and implications

http://www.prisma-statement.org/

Writing about Quality Improvement Projects

- Introduction
  - Background
  - Local problem
  - Intended improvement
  - Study question


Writing about Quality Improvement Projects

- Methods
  - Setting
  - Intervention
  - Evaluation methods
- Results
  - Outcomes
- Discussion and implications

http://www.squire-statement.org/
Other Types of Manuscripts

- **Introduction**
  - Need for innovation, project, change in practice...
  - Why important
  - Purpose of paper, overview of topics in it
- **Format depends on target journal**

References and Tables/figures

- **Numbered citations (AMA)**
- **Name-year (APA)**
- **Tables/figures**
  - Ready to “go to press”
  - Typically 3 allowed (1 per p)

Outline

- **Develop broad outline**
  - Essential content covered in page limit (15-18 pp)
- **Divide topics into sections**
  - With due dates – helps move along
  - Ideas for headings

Write 1st Draft

- Write fast
- Do not worry about grammar, etc.
- Revise content

Revise Draft

- Edit **FINAL** draft for grammar, spelling, punctuation, style
- Use reference format of journal
  - Tip: Keep all reference information (may need later)
- Check each reference (reference management software formatting)
**Sample Statement for Cover Letter**

The manuscript is submitted for exclusive use by [journal name]. It has not been previously published, accepted for publication, or under consideration elsewhere. All authors participated in the study and manuscript preparation, and all authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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**Authorship**

- Who can be listed as author?
- Contribute substantially to:
  1. Conception and design of study or to analysis of data, **AND**
  2. Drafting manuscript or revising it, **AND**
  3. Approving final version, **AND**
  4. Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work

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**Authorship cont**

Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals


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**Acknowledgement**

- Contributed to project but do not qualify for authorship
  
  The authors acknowledge the assistance of Sally Smith in interviewing students.

- List all financial and other support
  
  This study was funded by a grant from the American Nurses Foundation.

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**Permissions**

- To state name of individual or institution (after accepted)
- To publish project completed for work
- For anything already published

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**Copyright**

- Transfer of copyright to publisher
- After publication you cannot reproduce any text, figure, or table from article

**You no longer hold copyright...**
Copyright: This is what it says...

To reproduce any text, figures, tables, or illustrations from this Work in future works of their own, the author must obtain written permission from Publisher ...

Peer Review Process

- 2-3 reviewers
- Usually double blinded
- Quality of paper
- Relevance for journal

Criteria for Acceptance

- Relevance of paper for journal
- Importance to readers
- New content?
- Scientific validity of evidence
- Usefulness to journal in publishing range of topics
- Backlog of manuscripts already accepted
- Quality of writing

Editorial Decisions

- Types of decisions
  - Accept without revisions
  - Accept with revisions
  - Revise and resubmit (don’t wait to do)
  - Reject with comments
  - ✓ list of possible journals, author guidelines
  - Submit to another journal
Summary of Revisions Letter
1. In the literature review the absence of research is mentioned at least 5 times. The lack of research is now mentioned only on p. 1 line 5 (introduction) and p 4 line 7 (summary sentence of background for transition into Method section).
2. In opening paragraph, use language other than "fast track." Meaning is not universally understood. Revised (see para 1, line 4)
3. Not necessary to mention growth of residency programs in US as readers know this (p 2, top). Omitted

Open Access
• Copyright policies under which authors make their articles publicly available on Internet
• Articles still covered by copyright law but open access (OA) allows sharing and reuse

Open Access cont
• Predominant model
  ▪ Authors charged fee to publish paper in journal (article processing charge)
    ▪ $200 to over $5000
  ▪ Reputable journals
    ▪ Peer review, indexed, ethical publishing practices

Predatory Publishers
• How they operate
  ▪ Authors charged fee on acceptance
  ▪ Use spam emails to solicit papers (journals, conferences)
  ▪ In 2011: 18 predatory journals; 2017: 1294 + 42 more
    https://beallslist.weebly.com/
  ▪ February 2016: 140 predatory nursing journals + 11 more
    *as of September 2018

Red Flags
• Journal not indexed in bibliographic databases (e.g., PubMed, CINAHL)
  ▪ But claim they are
  ▪ No doi on articles
  ▪ No archiving (journal stops publishing, article no longer available at journal website)
  ▪ Poor, if any, peer review...

Dissemination by Group
• Plan when developing project
• Decide:
  1. Authorship and order of names
  2. Responsibilities of each coauthor
  3. Due dates and actions if work not completed on time
Personal Strategies

- Use outline
  - Identify realistic due dates considering your time
- Identify your prime time for writing
  - Write 1-2 hours/day or set days
- Avoid distractions

A Few More Tips

- Write manuscript then speech or poster
- Update course: write manuscript about new content
- New forms, initiatives, projects: plan manuscripts before beginning work