

## Publish or perish symposium

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## Decide what to write

- Empirical research findings – do you wait until you have completed all your studies or could you publish the findings of the first study?
- Literature review – have any reviews of this area been published recently? Could you point to key findings or new directions?
- Review of research methods – are you using novel methods or using methods in a novel way or with a different group of participants?
- Remember that peer reviewed journals have extended lead-in times to publication. To have some articles in press by the time you finish your PhD you will need to start in first year.



## Decide on a suitable journal

- Where are the articles you are citing published?
- Find information about the aims and scope of each.
- The story of two APA journals:
  - *The Psychological Bulletin*
  - *The Psychological Review*



## Psychological Review

- *Psychological Review* publishes articles that make important theoretical contributions to any area of scientific psychology. The journal gives preference to papers that advance theory, but systematic evaluation of alternative theories in a given domain are also considered for publication.
- Papers devoted to surveys of the literature, problems of method and design, or reports of empirical findings are not appropriate.



## Psychological Bulletin

- *Psychological Bulletin* publishes evaluative and integrative research reviews and interpretations of issues in scientific psychology. Primary research is reported only for illustrative purposes.
- Integrative reviews or research syntheses focus on empirical studies and seek to summarize past research by drawing overall conclusions from many separate investigations that address related or identical hypotheses.



## Choosing your journal

- Have a look at several recent issues of possible journals to decide which would be most appropriate.
  - How does your sample size compare to other published articles?
  - How do your statistics compare to other articles?
  - What is the style of writing?
  - How many references are typically included?
  - Is the journal international?
  - Is it ISI cited?



### Structure your material

- Make sure that you can summarise what you have to say in no more than 20 words. 'The purpose of this paper is to....'
- Put a lot of work and effort into your abstract – it will be the first thing that the editor/reviewer reads.
- Open with a statement that will get the reader's attention.
- Create a strong case for your articles –whether theoretical, methodological or empirical.



### Getting the style right (Race, 1999)

- Read your chosen journals carefully and regularly to be fully familiar with their tone.
- Use a positive rather than a negative tone.
- Use the active rather than the passive voice.
- Don't try to impress the reader with long obscure words.
- Vary your sentence length.
- Get other people to read your article.



### What guidance is offered to authors

- All journals offer guidance to authors on article length, formatting, etc.
- Other guidance may also be available from previous editorials:
  - *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*
  - *Psychological Bulletin*
- Search for editorials in PsychInfo using 'Scientific communication' in DE and the name of the journal.



### What do the editors say?



### Manuscript characteristics that cause immediate appeal (Noble, 1989)

- Professional appearance
- New/novel treatment of subject
- Very thorough
- Author guidelines followed
- Good writing clarity and style
- Relevance of subject
- Title of manuscript
- Seminal piece of research
- Controversial subject



### Manuscript characteristics that cause immediate rejection (Noble, 1989)

- Author guidelines not followed
- Not thorough
- Bad writing – clarity and style
- Subject no interest to readers
- Poor statistics/tables/figures
- Old subject/manuscript
- Unprofessional appearance
- Title of manuscript
- Too simple – 'reporting'
- Written at wrong level



### Most common problems with submitted manuscripts (Noble, 1989)

- Slight trivial or low quality work/research
- Inappropriate subject for journal
- Poor quality of writing
- Failure to follow author guidelines
- Presentation/appearance/format



### What editors suggest to improve manuscripts (Noble, 1989)

- Write clearly, logically and sequentially
- Study and follow the author guidelines
- Have manuscript critiqued before submission
- 'Think what readers want to know, not what you want to write'
- Be a stickler for detail.



### Dealing with rejection

- Check that you definitely have been rejected – if any opportunity to revise and resubmit is offered it may be worth taking.
- Don't be surprised – the rejection rate for many journals is extremely high. For top journals it will be around 80%.
- Don't be defensive – the reviewers may even have a few valid points.
- Use the reviewers' comments to improve the article for the next journal.
- Remember ALL academic authors have articles rejected.



'There are only two types of articles – those that are perfect and and never get published, and those that are good enough and do.'

(Race, 1999)



# Thank you

