

Academic Writing and Publishing

University of Tsukuba
Summer Institute 2015

Overview

Understanding the academic publication
process

Knowing about some key technical
aspects of writing

What do you know about academic publication?

Consider these questions:

- Why publish?
- What types of publication are there?
- How do you get published?

Why Publish?

- Communicate findings of research
- Influence policy and practice
- Enhance your career
- Survive – keep your job
- Earn \$\$\$ for your department/ self
- To be famous
- Others???

Types of publication & processes

Books:

- Types (eg. Scholarly; student text; trade)
- The market
- Proposals and readers

Types of publication & processes

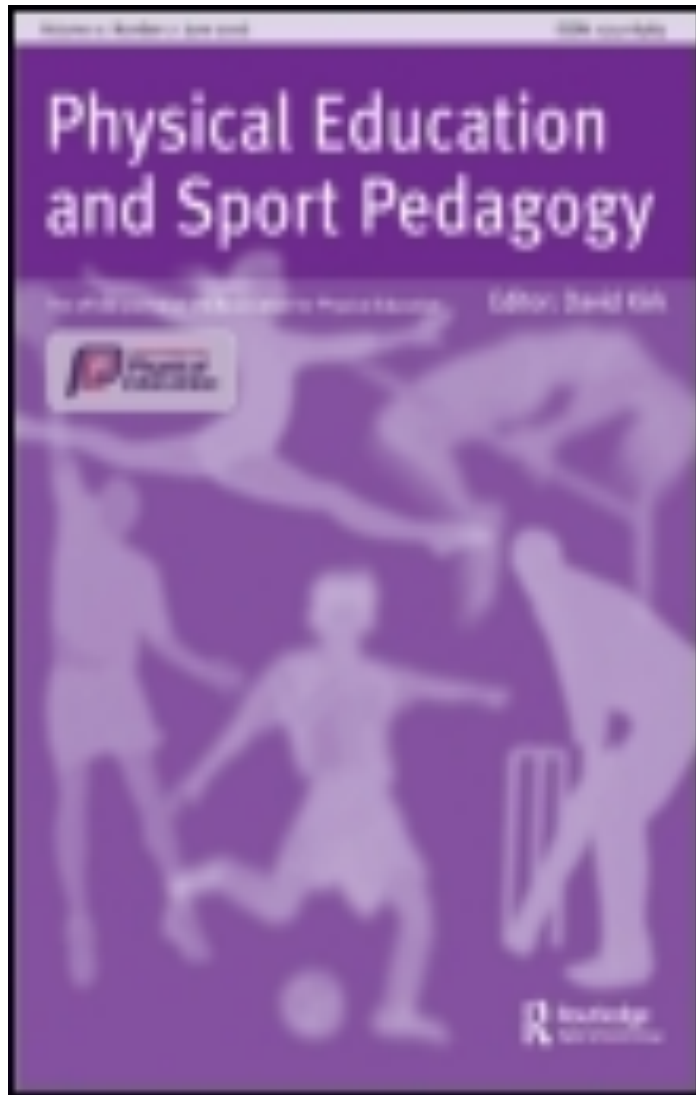
Conference presentations:

- Types (eg. Scholarly; professional)
- Submission
- An opportunity to share your work and receive feedback
- A step towards a journal article

Types of publication & processes

Papers:

- Types (eg. Blind peer-reviewed; professional)



The life of a journal article

The journey of a manuscript from submission to publication

Choosing the right journal

(Preparing the manuscript)

Submitting the manuscript

The Editor's first decision

The review process

The Editor's second decision

Receiving feedback, revising and resubmitting

The Editor's third (final?) decision

Choosing the right journal

- An important first step
- Identify a number of potential journals appropriate to your work
- Read the Aims & Scope statement
- Read back issues (up to 5 years)
- In your introduction, locate your work within related studies published in this (and other) journals

Preparing the manuscript

- This work, writing the paper, comes after you have chosen the journal – why?
- Read the Instructions to Contributors carefully and follow all of the requirements for style, referencing, word length, anonymise the text and so on
- We return to deal in detail with the technical issues in writing for publication in a moment

Submitting the manuscript

- Whether in the paper version or online, follow the instructions carefully (!!!)

The Editor's first decision

- Appropriate to the journal (discipline, field, topic)
- News – hot topic
- Coherence – structure, readability
- Quality of scholarship
- Enter into the review process or reject prior to review?

The review process

- Selection of two reviewers
- Six weeks to return the review
- Provide advice to the Editor and advice to the author
- Accept, Accept with minor revisions, Major Revisions, Reject and Resubmit, Reject

The Editor's second decision

- Consider the advice of the reviewers
- Read the paper if necessary
- Decide whether to accept, revise or reject the manuscript
- Write to the author summarising the key points made by the reviewers, particularly if the decision is major revisions or reject

Receiving feedback, revising and resubmitting

- If a revision is invited, read the editor's and reviewers' feedback carefully
- Be positive while revising and address each major point
- Do not accept abusive or rude reviews
- Dealing with rejection – learn from the experience

How to deal with feedback

- Cooling off period
- Does the editor provide guidance?
- What do the reviewers agree on?
- Identify specific issues from individual reviewers
- Which reviewer points do you disagree with? And which will you contest?
- If you disagree with a reviewer's comment, say so to the editor and provide a reasoned argument – perhaps consult the editor

The Editor's third (final) decision

- The paper is returned to the same reviewers
- Advice is provided by them to the Editor
- Usually the third decision is to accept or reject, though a further revision may be permitted

Preparing the manuscript

- Drafting and re-drafting, using technology
- Sentence construction and language – can I say it more clearly?
- Headers and sub-headers – creating a conceptual map
- Paragraphs and sections
- Linking paragraphs and sections
- When to write the conclusion and what to say – exiting
- When to write the introduction and what to say – entering
- Blogging

Drafting and redrafting

- A first draft of a text will rarely if ever be the best and final draft
- If writing is part of the process of inquiry itself, then it is often the case that new insights are gained as we write
- Share your writing with a trusted colleague or friend and invite constructive feedback, be prepared to act on good advice to improve your writing

Sentence construction and language

- Consider the length of sentences
- Long sentences with many clauses are often tough to read - it is also easy as a writer to lose your train of thought in a long sentence.
- Break long sentences up
- If used carefully, varying the length of sentences can give the text an interesting rhythm
- Ask yourself whether you could say something more clearly, particularly if you are explaining a complex process or an abstract idea

Headers and subheaders

- Headings and subheadings well deployed in a text can make your writing much more reader friendly than large chunks of undifferentiated material
- They also provide a kind of conceptual map for your writing
- A reader should be able to grasp the topic and some of the main ideas or arguments from reading the headings and subheadings alone

Paragraphs and sections

- Beginners to research writing often do not know when to create a new paragraph or a new section in a text
- Sometimes it will depend on the intended audience
- As a rough rule of thumb, a new paragraph signals a new idea or a significant development of an idea
- The first sentence of the paragraph should state what that idea is
- The rest of the paragraph is then an elaboration of the idea, perhaps providing some examples or some arguments for and against
- Sections can be built applying the same principle

Linking paragraphs and sections

- Maintaining continuity in writing is important so that you move logically from one idea to another
- Avoid making conceptual leaps that may seem obvious to you (the writer) but that leave the reader floundering
- It is sometimes helpful to think of the first sentence in a paragraph and first paragraph in a section as the entry to each respectively
- The final sentence or paragraph correspondingly can be thought of as an exit, as a means of propelling the reader to the next main idea or topic

When to write the conclusion and what to say - exiting

- Just as we can think of entering and exiting from paragraphs and sections, we can also think of the introduction and conclusion of a piece of writing as an entrance and exit respectively
- An inexperienced writer, when asked ‘When do you write the conclusion?’ might say that it is the last thing that is written
- This in most circumstances may be the wrong answer. Often, it is the second to last thing to write

When to write the introduction and what to say - entering

- In most cases is that the introduction is written last. Why?
- If writing is part of the inquiry process, then we often literally don't know what we have to say about something until we have written it
- Some experienced and artful writers know exactly what they plan to say. The rest of us don't and discover as we write.
- If the conclusion is an exit that propels the reader into future investigation, then the introduction draws the reader in.
- It commands their attention, introduces the topic and establishes its importance, before providing an overview of what the reader can expect to encounter

In/conclusion

- ‘In/conclusion’ because writing for journal publication is a continuous process of seeking improvement
- Give yourself time to write
- Share your work with trusted colleagues and accept advice
- Be positive, even in the face of rejection