

Eastern Illinois University

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Getting Published: Inquiring Minds Want to Know

Mildred M. Pearson, Dr., *Eastern Illinois University*
Beverly Cruse, *Eastern Illinois University*



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Overviews

With something as career-significant as your scholarly plan, you would probably feel more certain if you received advice from more than one source—albeit the Co-Oracles of Richmond. To satisfy your desire for corroboration (a necessary disposition for a scholar-researcher), we've gathered sage comments from colleagues from hither and yon concerning approaches to becoming a publishing scholar. You'll note that their comments often overlap—and that's a positive thing since such repetition affirms the strategy's validity and helps you learn it. Our colleagues come from a variety of disciplines and positions—some are administrators and some reside outside the purely academic zone—but all have successfully published, many outside their discipline.

Devour what they bring to the table, and don't be afraid to take seconds.

Getting Published: Inquiring Minds Want to Know

Have you ever heard that it is “publish or perish” for those seeking to obtain tenure or promotion in the ivory towers? Has the question come to mind, how do I get published? The truth is, inquiring minds of young professors entering the academy want to know? The constant fear or anxiety of “to publish or perish” for many new faculty members as they navigate in the academy is a reality. Entering a place of the “unknown,” with “no guidance,” “no mentoring,” and “no support,” many become frustrated and some even leave without accomplishing this milestone.

In a climate in which faculty accountability is ever more dependent on research and scholarship, especially as rewarded by promotion and tenure, improvement in the quality of teaching is an increasing concern (Pearson & Thomas, 2009). It is important to note, research informs our teaching practices and that institutions should provide the necessary support for such an endeavor. As Jacobs (1998) asserts, “institutional culture can be a vehicle for improving satisfaction and productivity.” This tip will provide a

roadmap for a successful publishing experience and a compass by which one may utilize when seeking support or mentoring through this process.

Process: Where to Begin?

Becoming a proficient, efficient, and effective writer requires discipline. It requires management of both yourself and your time. It requires focus on the topic or discipline studied. It is necessary to revisit your thesis/dissertation in order to extract or to expand relevant research areas. Liken the publishing experience to a relationship. After a disagreement, you may have a desire to remove yourself from the writing piece all together (*your committee*), never returning to write on the topic again. Similarly, you may liken the experience to childbearing. You birth the child and endure the pain and agony of the event. Next, you have the desire to make all the right decisions and choices necessary for the child's success, only to discover your child requires more work. Later, after reflecting on the hard work, time, resources, and passion, you return to find ways to enhance, advance, and nurture it to the next place called "success." So where to begin? Begin by exploring journals you visited while developing your thesis/dissertation. Identify areas that peak your interest and capture the theme of the journal. Follow the guidelines provided by the journal's editorial staff and you will be well on your way to publishing.

Drive: How To Gain Momentum?

Network with other scholars to converse and mutually exchange ideas and share experiences. Faculty development is an effective way to foster the spirit of collegiality and community. Zahorski (2002) purports, "The synergistic approach helps create an environment of hope and opportunity, the kind of environment in which scholarship has the best chance of thriving. Like the dynamic space Elwin Ransom discovers while journeying to Malacandra, it can be a living nurturing environment, that lifts the spirits, engenders hope, encourages and supports risk-taking and innovation, and inculcates a spirit of cooperation and collaboration" (p.37).

Assess your research for any emerging themes to explore from multiple perspectives. Collect additional supportive evidence and identify a mentor who may share your same research interest. Your colleagues may be your best resource for where to submit your research. Keeping in mind faculty mentors have various talents, it is important, as Boyer (1990) asserts, to support the various kinds of scholarship in order to enhance the academic learning community. Mentoring is necessary! Members of the professoriate experience periods of stability and periods of change. But for faculty, such ebbs and flows are profoundly influenced and complicated by imposed barriers and politics in higher education. Therefore, having a mentor to provide a listening ear and psychosocial support as a form of relational learning can be extremely valuable (Pearson, 2007).

Passion: How To Deal With Revise & Resubmit?

Thanks for that INVALUABLE info about how revise/resubmit requests are not rejections. I recently had a 15 page manuscript ACCEPTED to The History Teacher. The revise/resubmit emails seemed so "cold" that I would have interpreted it as rejection had I not known this "reading between the lines" secret. THANK YOU!!! (A new faculty).

Do not view a revise and resubmit as a rejection. Take a step back from the document for a few days. Review your writing style, address any feedback, and identify areas for improvement in your writing. If necessary, send your manuscript to other colleagues to serve as editors. Consider hiring an editor who has strong technical writing skills. Keep your passion alive and remember, no pain, no gain! You will gain from a journal that will serve as a vehicle for disseminating new knowledge. You will gain as a contributing member to your discipline, and you will gain from the public recognition and the respect of your peers in academia. At this point, you are ready to resubmit.

Perseverance: How To Deal With Rejection?

Learn to accept rejection and allow yourself to heal from the disappointing news that your manuscript was not accepted. Be prepared to resubmit to a less prestigious journal and have the ability to reply to criticism rationally. Brainstorm about ideas to add to the literature. Reevaluate the research, the methodology section, and look for gaps. Write for clarity and a broad audience. Examine the depth and breath of the research. Make connections between current research, theory and practice, lived experiences, and teaching pedagogy. Remember you are not the victim, but the victor of publishing your research and scholarly work.

Conclusion

In conclusion, successful writers must understand that writing is a process. In order to get published, you must develop the drive, fuel your passion, and stay your course to persevere. It is important to realize that writing is a way to self-educate and increase your personal knowledge base, as well as providing more knowledge to your audience. Inquiring minds may want to know how to get published, but the truth of the matter is, you possess all the necessary skills to accomplish and answer your own question.

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Beverly Cruse
Eastern Illinois University

The Not-So-Obvious Strategies to Become A Publishing Research Scholar

The following strategies were developed over time and have been beneficial in developing as a publishing research scholar. An essential component to this development is embracing the act and procedure of publishing. If one can accomplish this process, then with each research project the entire process becomes easier from question development to dissemination. Seeking out research opportunities, making connections, knowing your audience, and openness to writer's block are just a few techniques that when utilized can increase your ability and skills as a publishing research scholar.

Perhaps the simplest strategy is taking advantage of opportunities at your disposal. For example, most if not all institutions and organizations have newsletters or other publication materials seeking manuscripts. These types of publications will help develop writing to a specific audience, writing in a concise fashion, working with editors, and following submission guidelines. In most cases, these publications have a faster turnaround rate to receive feedback and improve skill. Moreover, many institutions have faculty development programs that provide guidance to developing researchers. Participating in these programs can introduce novice researchers to more experienced faculty and begin mentoring or other research partnerships.

Making connections is another helpful technique. Schedule a meeting with your institution's human subjects review board to fully understand the process for submitting research proposals. Missing a human subjects review board submission deadline can possibly delay your research months. Knowing the kind of review (for example, exempt,