

Getting Published: Strategies for Success

A/Professor Catherine McLoughlan

A/Professor McLoughlan is the Editor of the Australian Journal of Educational Technology and the Program Chair of the World Conference on Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia. She is also on the Editorial Board of eight national and international journals.

Overview

- **Key features of a well written article**
- **What publishers want**
- **Targetting journals**
- **Commonly used criteria**
- **The writing process**

Marks of Journal Excellence

- Blind review
- Unsolicited articles
- Low acceptance rate
- High levels of scholarship
- Published by national organizations

Selecting a Journal

- Which journal is the source of most of the articles you refer to?
- Does the journal publish work similar to yours?
- Who are the members of the editorial board and do you cite their work?
- Will the editors be receptive to your theoretical perspective and the methods you employ?

Analysing Journal Style

- Does the journal favour quantitative over qualitative methods?
- Does it adopt an international, comparative approach?
- Read instructions to authors to find the scope of the journal
- Would your work appeal to their readership?

Watch your writing style!

- Be clear about your contribution
- Anticipate the needs of your audience
- Work within expected form and conventions
- Produce a carefully referenced manuscript
- Meet editor's expectations

Your Contribution

- What are you adding to the conversation?
- Expand, clarify, synthesise

A Good Article or Paper

- Creates a sense of purpose
- Has a clear goal
- Presents a focused literature review
- Has 'signposts' for the reader
- Has a clear structure (Methodology, results, discussion)
- Goes beyond the immediate context

The Title

- Catchy-topical
- Must have a clear meaning and appeal
- Not too long
- Avoid jargon

Abstract: 1st point of contact

- Presents a brief summary
- States area under investigation
- Poses main questions
- Outlines method, findings, conclusions

Literature Review

- Helps define the area of study
- Establish what has already been asked and what needs to be investigated
- Look at similar and related investigations
- Look for theoretical models to help define area of interest
- Concludes with a statement about purpose of the research or set of research questions

References

- Be selective
- Ensure that they support your points
- Choose the most recent
- Use correct formatting
- Do not try to impress by over-referencing

Overall

- Connect the article together
- Relate questions to findings

- Report results clearly
- Sequence findings to match questions
- Write a good discussion section-apply findings
- Implications for other studies

Things to Avoid

- Sloppy referencing
- Bad grammar/incomplete sentences
- Dated references
- Cramming too many ideas into one article
- Writing about ‘what we did at my university’
- Exceeding the word limit

Where to Begin

- Read widely in related literature
- Find a friendly critic with standards
- Send your draft article and a copy of the target publication to your critic
- Request specific feedback

The Review Process

- Work is received by the editor and skimmed for reasonable fit
- Work is sent to reviewers – usually 2
- Work is judged:
 - Accept
 - Accept subject to revisions
 - Reconsider after revisions
 - Reject

Example Review Form from one of the Leading International Journals

1. Suitability of the Paper

Does it come under any of the proposed topics for the journal?

Is it of interest to researchers in your area?

2. Significance of the Paper

How important is the problem being studied?

Does the paper stimulate discussion of important issues or alternative points of view?

3. Originality of the Paper

Are the problems and approaches new?

Does the paper point out difference from related research?

Does it address a new problem or one that has not been studied in depth?

Does it introduce an interesting research paradigm?

4. Technical Quality

Is the paper technically sound?

Does it carefully evaluate the strengths and limitations of its contributions?

Are its claims backed up?

Does the paper offer a new form of evidence in support of or against a well-known technique?

Does the paper back up a theoretical idea already in the literature with experimental evidence?

5. Readability of the Paper

Is the paper clear, explicit, and well organized?

Is the length appropriate to the content?

Are there any gaps or redundancies?

Are the title and abstract informative?

Is the English good (this one is important)?