Writing for International Refereed Journals

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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Reasons for Learning Writing Techniques[1]

One of the big revelations in my adult life was that I needed to learn how to write. I thought *I* had learned to do that as a child and that I was pretty good. However, a course in *technical writing* I took with my friend, Carolyn Mullins (who died in 2006), convinced me that I had much to learn and bad habits to break. I have since learned that writing is not just about being creative, doing good research, and using fun words. Doing good writing is a skill that can be taught and learned.

Learning some of the tricks of such technical *writing* has been a great relief. I no longer need to worry so much about being brilliant. I can write my work up more quickly, and use a series of technical writing techniques to make my initial draft a lot better. As I revise, my writing gets better and makes it appear as if I am smarter. For example, compare the paper that I published in *Sociological theory* (Wellman 1983) with the clearer version - using the techniques I teach here - that leads off my first book, *Structural Analysis* (Wellman 1988).You are here because you have realized - or someone has told you - that you need to know more about how to do a specialized kind of technical writing: for international refereed journals, This is quite different than writing reports or writing for local journals edited by your friends. In international refereed journals, your article is evaluated anonymously by external referees and you never know who these referees are. It is a much different process - and requires much different writing - than submitting something to your colleagues or your boss.

This guide is the product of twenty-five years of teaching writing workshops to faculty and doctoral students. It shows how to produce readable prose with less effort. This is a different matter than the "creative writing" smart students learn how to do in high school. Technical writing can still have stylish turns of phrases, but above all, it aims to communicate information both for quantitative and qualitative research.

The guide has three parts:

(1) Know Who You are Writing For - And Why

(2) The Parts of a Paper - And What Goes into Them

(3) How to Write - And Re-Write

This guide also tries to address the special needs of those outside of the Anglo-American orbit who want to write for "international journals"- which in practice mostly means AngloAmerican journals (and edited books). English, especially American English, has become an internal norm. Not only do ESL (English as a second language) writers have to worry about grammar and spelling (prepositions seem to be especially troublesome), they also have to use foreign norms for constructing paper/chapters. For example, American English tends to be more linear than has been the norm in Mediterranean and postmodern British discourse.

[1] "Be regular and orderly in your life so that you may be violent and original in your work." (Flaubert, as quoted by Mary McGarry Morris, *New York Times, #).*

Whether this is cultural imperialism must wait for another discussion. For this workshop, we just accept it as something to be dealt with.

Given that everyone "knows" how to writhe a paper by the time they get to graduate school, why teach it? It turns out that most people do it by habit and not learned technique. They are confused about why they are writing, what they are writing, and how they are writing.

Why bother? To write better, you enhance creativity and clarity of expression. Even though many of the "rules" for writing seem mechanical, you liberate creativity by systematizing work, focussing work, and using tricks to do maximum output with minimum effort. You get to see - and highlight - the connections among your ideas rather than having scattered around your paper. When you do scholarly writing, you are writing prose and not poetry. ***The first most important mindset is to communicate with others rather than to impress yourself with your own cleverness.*** Communication, not masturbation, is the goal![2]

The second most important mindset is that you want to tell a story, and not just get down the facts. You need to have a clear storyline, like a novel or a movie. The storyline can be simple or complex, depending on your ambition, theory, methods and findings. Your storyline should be consistent from your title through your references.

How do you get there? You try to order the evidence and the analysis so that they will be meaningful and comprehensible. Just as in the CSI forensic science TV shows, you want to turn the raw data into information by showing the pattern behind the data. In this way, the information you present leads to your reader gaining knowledge. In some sense, your paper is an art form as well as scholarship. This is true for good art as well: the Impressionist painter (Gauguin "taught that the impression of nature must be combined with an aesthetic sense that selects orders, simplifies and synthesizes." (Verkade, 1995).

The story you tell is done as much by the organization of your writing as it is by your analysis. This means not only the structure of what you do, but the linkage, dominance and subordination of different parts, and of paragraphs within those parts. The goal is "to make the invisible visible through reality" Even though it was painter Max Beckman who said that (Chipp 1968: 188-89), it is exactly what we scholars are up to.

Having a smart, clear, coherent storyline is vital for survival and to make efficient use of your time, because *most submissions to journals do not fail because of boring results, but because of writing and organizational problems:*

1. *Poor focus:* The authors do not have a dear idea of what they are writing about or who their audience is.

2. *Poor organization:* Parts of the article are out of order, or the same ideas get repeated in different places.

3. *Gap between claims and evidence:* Inconsistencies between grand theoretical claims and more limited evidence.

4. *Incomplete scholarship:* There is little use of up-to-date writings/thoughts/methods in the field.

When you organize your paper, remember that as Nobel prize winning biologist Sir Peter Medawar said, all scientific papers are a fraud" (Duran 1988). This does not mean that you are lying or cheating but rather that your paper (like all others) presents a formal and highly idealized account of research, written according to a set of standard conventions. Papers do not tell

[2] Sociologist Manuel Castells has written similar thoughts (2001): "After having investigated social and technological change throughout the world for fifteen years, when the time came to communicate my findings, I decided to do so in terms that could connect with a wide, educated readership... It is a matter of writing in ways in which tthe academic style... could be adapted for freer expression, taking some literary liberties, as long as I could maintain a clear distinction between what the data say and my elaborations on these observations."

about all (or any) of the false trails, bad ideas, missed-up analyses. This is as it should be. Your job is not to provide a blow-by-blow account of how you actually did the research; it is to summarize what you actually have accomplished. The result is a cleaned-up account, but it is not a lie.

The third most important thing is to write quickly, but edit repeatedly. Do not aim for perfection on the first draft. A doctoral student once asked me, "Professor Wellman, how do you write so easily?" My honest answer was, "1 work very hard at making my writhing look easy." Writing clearly is deceptively hard work; yet, the lonely hard work to produce clear writing should not be visible to the reader.

One pitfall of writing is that others think it is easy: you are just sitting at a computer rather than digging ditches or trading stocks. The second is that a writer basically needs solitude, especially at start-up phases, and is not a pleasant person when grasping for an idea or – even worse – being interrupted while grasping for an idea As science fiction writer/editor Judith Merrill told me in 1995, "I'm difficult when 1 don't write, and I'm difficult when I do write. But at least when 1 write there is a reason" Nevertheless, we do it at universities for the same reasons we are at the university: because it is what we ***want*** to do; because ii is what we ***must*** do to keep our jobs or get promoted; because it *impresses* our friends.

The solution is not to wait for inspirational genius to descend but to keep writing anyway. Usually you will write serviceable prose, and often you will discover your inspiration as you write or as you edit. I often say that I think with my fingers - that is thoughts come to me as I get into the flow of writing.

The fourth most important thing is that there are techniques available that will help any reasonable competent person to write better and, in the long run, more easily. Fortunately, things are not as bad as when nineteenth-century writer Mark Twain said, "genius is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration". He wrote before systems of writing techniques were developed. My techniques aim to raise the percentage of inspiration to 30% by reducing the perspiration.

Anglo-American and UnAmerican Writing[3]

Many unAmerican scholars are used to writing (a) reports to governments and NGOs, and (b) articles that appear in small journals published in their own country that are often edited by their friends and are, at best, only lightly refereed. The styles used in these reports and articles often will not be successful for submission to international refereed journals. There are several inappropriate styles.

Report Writers: Report writing tends to be the style of choice for many scholars in less developed countries who are used to getting paid to write for governments and NGOs. Yet writing for international journals is different,

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[3] To prepare this section, I asked about ten experienced editors and referees of international journals to differentiate between Anglo-American and un-American journal submissions. Although the final product is mine, I am especially grateful for the advice of Vicente Espinoza (Canadian-trained Chilean), Nicholas .Jankowski (American-trained Dutch resident) and Ilan Talmud (American-trained Israeli).

I oversimplify greatly in this section. For one thing, not all Americans write in the style appropriate for Anglo-American journals. For another thing, many scholars from outside Anglo-America do write in the international journal style, especially those in northern Europe empirical tardyons.

The term "unAmerican" is used somewhat ironically: it was the name of a notorious American congressional committee in the 1950s and 1960s that went on witch-hunts looking for hidden (Communist) subversives: The "House Un-American Activities Committee'.

Note that I am violating a rule of international journal writing here: they discourage long footnotes (or endnotes) that are filled with textual digressions.

1. Reports basically focus on providing the facts, along with a summary and conclusion. They rarely do theory testing. Yet, almost ail international journals want every article to address theory on the basis of research evidence.

2. Reports tend to be comprehensive and even-handed: every data point is given equal weight. This often makes them too big and boring. Even worse, by being even-handed, reports often obscure the key storyline of what makes your research interesting.

Replicators: I've refereed a number of articles in which the authors take an Anglo-American article as a model, plug in their own country's data, and then write it up, concluding that Phenomenon X in Country Y is —or is not – like the model article found in the United States. (I'm guessing, but I believe that this style is especially likely in East Asia and South Asia,)These articles tend lo be unimaginative and uninteresting because they largely ignore the social context of Country Y. At worst, such articles conclude just by saying that Phenomenon X functions the same as - or differently than - it does in The United States, but they don't say why.

Essayists: This style is especially found in two places: Mediterranean countries and post-modernists - especially British and French post-modernists. II is the hardest style to criticize for two reasons. (1) Some of the people who write in this style tend to be very smart; (2) The style is often maddeningly difficult to read. Here is how one of my advisors put it:

This style works well for publishing in some local journals but is inappropriate for international journals. European journals tend to position their papers' theoretical formulation in a wider scope, not always pertinent to the "cleanly stated" theoretical argument. Similarly, even within mainstream European journals, there is a higher tendency of ritualized citation of their local theoretical heroes.

What I have noticed is a grand theoretical statement at the beginning followed by a discursive essay. The essay often has smart writing, but the points are made in such a meandering way that it is difficult to (a) figure out the key research questions and (b) evaluate to extent to which the authors' research addresses the evidence. The writing often doubles back on itself and takes side-trips. I think of it as "spiral writing", and it is sharp contrast to the linear Anglo-American writing that international journals in the social sciences usually want.

Illustrators: Some articles present illustrations rather than evidence, (It is a trap that 1 have fallen into myself) What's the difference? Evidence is provide that helps the researcher and her readers to use systematically collected information to weigh alternative hypotheses (see Wellman & Wortley, 1990 for an evaluation of six hypotheses). By contrast, illustrators make assertions and then provide examples. Even if we accept that the examples are accurate, we don't know how general they are and whether alternative situations (and examples) exist.

Jargonists: The tendency to use jargon known only to initiates is especially prevalent in England, but it is prevalent throughout Europe and to a lesser extent, in North America. The situation of spiral writing in essays is compounded when the essayists succumb to the postmodernist seduction of using impenetrable jargon. This is a problem when authors are used to writing only for a few other people, They need to understand that just because they and their friends can understand their jargon, readers of more mainstream international journals will not.

Genuflection: When I was a young scholar, all East European articles began with citing and quoting Marx and Lenin, and all Chinese papers began with Mao. We learned to ignore these ritual, politically correct, prayers and go on to the meat of the article. The same thing often happens now, except that deep thinkers such as Bourdieu and Habermas are the ones genuflected to as legitimators, even if they are only lightly linked lo the research that the writer is

reporting about. For example, some German Rational Choice scholars cite Alfred Schutz or Niklas Lehmann, even though the article's analysis of bounded rationality can be made without such genuflections to elders. The danger is that if you genuflect, referees (and readers) will not take your main points seriously.

Am I advocating *positivism*, which has become a sneer word, among some? No, if by positivism, you mean just presenting a great many facts quantitatively. In actually, this kind of positivism rarely exists, except as a put-down caricature by ill-informed people. We all know that how we gather and analyse data - qualitative as well as quantitative - is informed by our socially constructed values and perceptions.

What the kind of journals I talk about want is the interplay between theory, method and research - theoretically informed empirical research that leads to advances in substantive knowledge and theoretical development. A good way to remember this is:

T - D = ***BS (Theory without Data = Bull Shit)***

KNOW WHO YOU ARE WRITING FOR - AND WHY

Key Questions to Ask Yourself

• Will you be read, or will the article linger in obscurity?

• Who will read you? Is it the audience you want to reach?

• Is the purpose to build your vitae, enhance your reputation, get a job, influence others, convey the truth as you have discovered it, or make your mother/girlfriend proud? These are all valid choices, but they affect where you publish.

Places to Publish

Scholarly Journals: These are the first places that people think of publishing. They vary in how widely they are read, how broad is their scope, and their acceptance rates.

The two most widely read and broadest scope journals are the elite *American .Journal of Sociology* and *American Sociological Review.* They also have a very low acceptance rate of 10% - 15%. They see it as their mission not just to publish solid articles, but to publish paradigmatic articles. So they are not the place for most of your research although you might try with dynamite findings from your dissertation or a major study. You should also be aware that not only are they highly likely to reject your article, they are the most likely to ask for the most revisions, so that it might take two years from submission to find out if they will publish your article; one year for them to get your ms. refereed by 3 to 5 knowledgeable scholars, for you to make the changes, for the referees (a mixture of original and new ones) to accept your changes, and for the editor to accept the article,

There are core-periphery problems here. Many people in isolated universities (especially outside of North America) are not well aware of other publication possibilities - or of the norms of successful submissions. They waste their time, energy and prayers submitting to these elite journals rather than to more appropriate venues.

A related issue is that isolated scholars often do not get useful collegial feedback to improve their initial drafts. As the editor of *Sociology of Education* wrote: "Papers from outside

the United States and outside… top-25 institutions (in the U.S.)… are subject to high levels of 'in house' rejection" – the editor doesn't even bother sending them out for reviewing.

In short, there is what Robert Merton calls "the Matthew effect": those who have initially, will garner more. It pays to be trained at a top university, it pays to have well-trained colleagues. But what if you don't? The solution is to go to meetings and develop relationships with people who can give you useful advice, to be active on list-serves, and use all these things to make friendships and alliances.

If not the *AJS,* then where should you send your papers? Usually, a good solution is to send them to a focussed substantive journal, a high quality one if possible. These tend to have clearly identifiable names such as *City & Community* or *Sociology of Education.* These usually have higher acceptance rates than the *AJS:* 25% - 40%. Before you despair at that, remain that probably 25% of ail papers submitted to any journal are garbage **(**I speak from weary experience 0f forty years of refereeing), so that your good paper has about a 50% chance of being eventually accepted. Check for the journal's Impact score; use *Google Scholar* or the *Web of Science* to see where people in your area are publishing.

A second solution is to submit to a regional sociological journal, such as *Sociological Perspectives* or *Sociological Inquiry.* Despite their links lo regional sociological societies, they tend to accept papers from around North America and to have similar acceptance rates of 25% - 40%. (As exception is *Social Forces,* which aspires to *ASR-AJS* level and tends to have lower acceptance rates than the other regional journals.) One good trick is to pick up gossip at sociology conferences as to which journals are having trouble getting good submissions and would therefore provide you with higher probabilities of success.

A third solution is to find journals that are so desperate that they will accept almost anything. You will be in print, you can distribute the paper; you will impress your boyfriend, and it will be on your vitae. However, your article may not be read, and it may not impress knowledgeable hiring or tenure committees.

Edited Books and Special (Thematic) Journal Issues

Advantages: Edited books come about because someone (usually a scholar) has an idea for a unified book and is able to "sell" it to an editor at a book publisher or a journal editor. One nice advantage is that your writing can often be more discursive and playful than it would be for international refereed journals.

Many edited books are of high quality. You can often tell the quality level by who the publisher and the editor are. Major publishers will promote such books so they will get read. At time, special journal issues will be turned into a book, either with the same text or with revisions and perhaps additional articles.

Major publishers can be from university presses (Chicago, California, Harvard have good general lists; others are specialized) or commercial (Blackwell, Routledge, Sage, Paradigm come to mind), Not all university presses or commercial houses are major. The key is whether they advertise your book through journals and mailings, or at least display it a booth at major scholarly meetings. Because it is topic-specific, a good edited book can become a must-read in the field and get as many as 5,000 attentive viewers - more than any other journal besides the *AJS* and the *ASR.*

A real advantage of an edited book is that there is a reasonable probability that you will be read by an interested audience. Moreover, even if the book is refereed, there is a higher probability of acceptance, especially if you are invited by the editor to contribute. A1thoug all serious editors reserve the right to reject you if you submit a poor or off-topic article, the probability of final publication is much higher than for most good journals. However, unless the editor is ruthless, the book may be slow in coming out because you are at the mercy of the slowest author and editor.

One nice situation is if the editor of an edited book wants to reprint your already-published journal article, perhaps with a little editing. This gets your article out to a new audience and adds a line on your vita. If you are really ambitious, you can change the article a bit and give it a new title to make it seem to be a new publication on your vita. The only cost is that you will have to ask the publisher of the journal for permission to have the article republished: they hold copyright. Many will do it for free; others will charge a small amount; a few commercial publishers will charge a larger fee.

Traps: Some books, like journals are dose to being vanity jobs, produced by presses that do little advertising. They will not be edited much, and no one will read them. Find out if the publisher sets up an exhibit at major scholarly conferences. The only advantages of publishing in such places are that you will have a pretty article to photocopy or put on your website, and that you can add the publication listing to your vita.

Some European and American publishers charge extraordinary high prices so that only libraries normally can afford to buy them. If you publish in books with such high prices, few people will read your work. Check the publishers'' prices on *Amazon.* I have noticed that Kluwer and Springer in Europe and Idea in America charge high prices.

Be cautious if the editor does not have a firm contract. In this case, the editor is doing it on speculation. When s/he gathers enough commitments to articles, s/he will try to convince a publisher to take on the book. On the one hand, famous scholars can often get several publishers to agree. On the other hand, the gambit can be risky, because many publishers do not like edited books, believing that they will not sell. Here is an example of an invitation that raised a yellow caution flag for me:

> *We would like to invite you to share your ideas/research in Information and Communication Technologies by submitting a paper to the proceedings volume…*

The invitation is a vague fishing expedition about the kinds of papers wanted, no publisher is mentioned, few people ever read proceedings volumes, few libraries ever purchase proceedings volumes from obscure conferences, the editor is not someone known in my field (or on scholar google), and it is unlikely that an invitation issued in March 2006 could yield good quality papers by July 2006. At best, this is a probably-young entrepreneurial editor seeking to make a name for herself. Publication here might add a line to your vita, but at a large cost in time. At worst, this might even be a scam, because since about 2004, I have heard of obscure conferences (and promised subsequent proceedings) that seek to extract sizeable registration fees from participants. They typically accept all papers and have vague scope criteria.

Who is Your Target Audience?

You need to know whom you are writing for. This affects how much jargon you can use and how much you need to explain.

1. **Within your specially area***:* For example, in social network analysis, I do not have to explain the commonly-used technical terms of "blockmodelling" or "clustering". On the other hand, if you want people outside of the speciality area lo read it, the less jargon the better.

2. **Within your discipline: (or sub-discipline):** Jargon can be a useful shorthand. Here, I would have to explain blockmodeling, but not such generally-known jargon as "socioeconomic status". I would also assume that my readers would know about a random sample or a significance test. They would get bored or angry if I wasted time explaining, Common knowledge can change over time.[4] For example, in 1999, Kenneth Frank and I explained hierarchical linear modelling (FILM) in some detail. Now, we just can reference that paper and we can also assume that readers have gotten more used to HLM.

3. **Across disciplines***:* When writing for interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary audiences, you want to minimize jargon and explain whatever jargon you must use. You probably will have to go to some pains to describe why you are addressing important questions, and you may want to spell out your methods. This is not dumbing down but adapting to a broader audience who wants to know what you found out.
4. **For intelligent readers in the general public:** Assume you are writing for *Harpers, Le Monde, or Le Monde.* First, you have to avoid jargon even more and explain more thoroughly the jargon that you cannot avoid using. Second, you must write in an interesting way with many stories. You want to minimize your methods section and explain your research questions clearly. Here too, this is not dumbing down, but adapting to a broader audience who wants to know what you found out.

I have done some general writing: see my article for Vodafone's magazine *Revolver* (2005) on my website and the coauthored Pew Internet report (January, 2006), *The Strength of Ties* (www.pewintemet.org). The trouble is, many of us don't recognize jargon when we write. This really hit home in December 2005, when after I had tried my best, the Pew folks edited me thoroughly, Pew also went to a great deal of trouble to make our report readable, producing a one page press release (which is all that many commentators [especially bloggers and news media] appear to have read); a nine page summary, and the long report itself.

[4] Avoid citing *SPSS:* a sure sign of being a newbie.

THE PARTS OF A PAPER- AND WHAT GOES INTO THEM

The normal length of a submission to a journal should be about 15-30 single-spaced pages, including references, tables and figures, Submitting longer articles hurts your chances, as journals have page budgets. Submitting shorter articles won't make the article look serious - the only exceptions are explicitly brief research notes that concentrate only on findings.

Title

Write a title early to help you focus on contents of your paper, but feel free to change it often. Use it both to tell the reader (and you) what the paper is about and to sell your paper to journal reviewers and to prospective readers. I'm convinced that few readers read every article in a journal. You want them lo read - and remember - yours.

One good solution is to use a two part title. The first part should be short and snappy, with a colon *(:)* at the end, while the second part (after the colon) should be more fully descriptive. Three of my favourites from our *NetLab* are:

> Net Surfers Don't Ride Alone: Virtual Communities as Communities
> Different Strokes from different Folks: Community Ties and Social Support
> America Online and Offline: How the Internet Affects Social Networks [Jeffrey Boase's dissertation]

Abstract

Write the abstract at the end, even though it will be read at the beginning. Use it to convey your findings. This way your readers will know the highlights before they start to read your paper – don't make your paper a mystery novel. This may be obvious, but too many abstracts say "we investigated if X affected Y," without telling you what they found out about the relationship of X and Y.

Do a first draft by copying key phrases from your text, especially from your introduction and summary. Avoid using empty words and phrases, for example: "This paper reports that sex leads to happiness." Get right to the point: "Sex leads to happiness. The more, the better. Ninety percentage of the 1,000 people we interviewed agreed; the other 10% were English tourists."

Intellectual Question -- Why This is an Important Thing to Write About (1-2 pages)

This is where the scene is set; where the grand considerations are dealt with. At the extreme, this is Czech-Canadian novelist, Joseph Skvorecky's contention:

The very first sentence should contain in essence the atmosphere, the emotional content oft he story and its final effect, (1911: 68).

Literature Review -- Who's Done What on the Subject (5-8 pages)

Note, from here on, I am assuming you are writing a research paper in which you report on findings, whether they be quantitative, qualitative, visual, etc. Different proportions obviously apply to literature reviews and theoretical treatises,

The nature of a literature review is one of main differences between a professional paper (which is what this guide is about) and what you did earlier in your education. In a professional paper, you are not trying to show that you know everything about a subject or that you are smart:

It is assumed – and you write as if it is assumed – that you are a competent professional. (By contrast, for your earlier student papers, you needed to convince your teacher/professor that you do know the subject comprehensively - although even then, it shouldn't have meant throwing in the kitchen sink.)

In a professional paper your literature review is trying to set the terms of the intellectual debate about which your research (reported on below) is contributing. You are reporting on the

current state of knowledge which, of course, your findings will advance. Hence, work carefully to sharpen the terms of the debate but don't get preoccupied with irrelevant details. Many people might work most profitably by only sketching out the literature review section when they start to write the paper and then develop it after they have written up their research findings.

Finding the Literature: In the social sciences, you have a head start: look at the references at the end of already-published papers. Even better, see if you can obtain good papers that haven't yet come out in journals, but are circulating as "in press," "forthcoming" or "conference papers". As Charles Tilly once told me, appearance in a journal should be old news to those active in a field.

Snowball out from those references. First, use the *Web of Science, Google Scholar* and *Google Print* to find out who is citing the key scholars. But also do key word searches to discover who is hot in the field and what their recent work is. Work backwards in time. Recent papers will tell you about older classics. There are other sources, such as: *Current Contents, Dissertation Abstracts Online, ProQuest Digital Dissertations* (at one time called *University Microfilms,),* periodical indices, microfilm catalogues of older dissertations and newspapers, and *JSTORE's* archive of older journals.

How do you keep current in your field? Some major journal publishers have automatic notifications that will email you the table of contents of selected journals together with a web link to the article itself. One example is *Science Direct.* At present, only the commercial publishers are doing this, such as Blackwell, Elsevier, Routledge (Taylor & Francis). If you click on the weblink, you can always get to the title and abstract If your library has a subscription to that journal, you can connect to the electronic version of the article itself. You can check for current articles by putting this year's date as a search term. For example, "2006" and "Barry Wellman" could be a search request from *Google Scholar.*

If you are working in a field with breaking news, then computerized alerts can be valuable. *Yahoo Alerts* and *Google Alerts* are two examples. I have *Google Alerts* set up to tell me when an article mentions my name. This is more than vanity, for there is a high probability that the author is discussing something of interest to me.

There are other uses for such alerts, For example, the *MySpace* social networkíng system is hot as I write (June, 2006). If I were interested in studying it, I could enter that as au alert.

Taking Notes

Paper Based: Some traditional libraries forbid using computers or cameras. To take notes on paper, use index cards. In the upper left corner, write the main topic and subtopic to which it tentatively fits. In the upper right comer, write the author's name and the date of publication. Take notes only on one side, se you can see everything at a glance. Use continuation cards if need be, stapled together.

It is much better to paraphrase than to quote. Not only is your writing, shorter and tighter, paraphrasing makes others' ideas work for you. But if you do quote, you must give page numbers and use exact quotation, although ellipsis … are 0K as are [explanatory] ideas.

Use the keywords written in the upper left hand comer to make piles and sub-piles of your notes. Spread out one sub-pile at a time on your worktable.

ComputerBased Use *Word, Endnote* (see below) and possibly *Procite* as note takers. If you use *Word,* put your subtopic as the very first word and keep in one paragraph. Then you can sort by paragraph and get all of your kindred notes together. The Ctrl-F find/search facility is another way

The bibliography program, *Endnote,* provides a notes field. It also lets you do Boolean searches on keywords, titles, authors, etc., with AND and 0R. *Endnote*'s main purpose is as a reference textbase, so you will associate author, title, etc. with your note (see below for more details).

Organize your literature review by intellectual idea and not by author. There are four phases to doing your review: 1. Summarize other authors. 2. Synthesize their ideas to find common

principles. 3. Analyze the merit of their positions. 4. Contribute new views to the discussion (Kaufer 1987).

Try hard to avoid paragraphs such as "Habermas said...," etc. It's much better to have debates, comparisons of competing ideas which your research will address. Don't worry about stealing: you are *using* it. As the great modem dance choreographer Martha Graham once explained:

We all steal. It's who we steal from and what we do with it that's important.

Note that I've just stolen this from her. It is frustrating that her web shows multiple variations of this quote. Try to track down the original of all quotations, as Web quotation information is unreliable about who said what when and where.

As you take notes, don't just copy and let the note sit there. Evaluate what people have said. Synthesize ideas to find common principles, analyze the merit of their positions, and contribute your views to the discussion (Kaufer, Giesler and Neuwirth 1987).

Consider using the View/Outline option in *Word to* take notes and then to interrelate them. Outlining fosters a good mixture of structured and intuitive thinking. It lets you sketch out main ideas and then add details later, while still getting a sense of dominant and subordinate ideas. It makes it easy to move ideas around, which is not the same thing as merely moving sentences around. And as you build up your outline, it makes it easy to flesh out topic sentences into paragraphs.

Another alternative is to use a textbase program such as Nota Bene's *Scholars'Workstation* program. It's used more by humanists, but has lots of nice features such as Boolean searches and easy multilingualism.

Hypotheses or Focused Questions (2 pages)

In contrast to your broad intellectual question in the beginning, the hypotheses present what you are really going to look at. They should be set up by your literature review: Your review should lead up to them in a seamless web se that it appears to the reader that is only logical and "natural' that you're doing the actual research in the way that you are doing it. In fact, you may want to rewrite your literature review after you've written your hypotheses so that this is the case. (And you probably will want to rewrite your literature review again after you've done your analysis.)

Try to avoid misplaced "scientism". In many cases, you may not need or want formally specified hypotheses. For example, you may be evaluating competing arguments (such as asking if community is "lost," "saved" or "liberated"; Wellman, 1979).

Hypotheses and their justifications are important for grant or dissertation proposals because you don't have the results to justify' your hypotheses and methods, In writing such proposals, you may need to use more space lo support thoroughly the soundness and reasonableness of what you want to do. For example, here are the assessment criteria given to reviewers of Canadian National Health Research grants:

1. Are the objectives oft he proposal clear?
2. Will answers to the questions posed, or attainment oft he stated objectives, contribute to new knowledge or understanding of the subject? How?
3. Has this work been done before? If so, does it need lo be done again? Why?
4. Has the proposal left out key studies -- past or present -- which may have some bearing on the importance of this proposal?
5. Are the methods adequate to meet the objectives of this proposal?

Don't just list hypotheses. Spend at least one paragraph backing each one up (either befóre or after the hypothesis itself), and showing how they link with other hypotheses. Make your actual hypothesis stand out typographic. Each hypothesis should be its own paragraph (even if one sentence) and perhaps indented or italicized. For example, here are two hypotheses from Haythornthwaite and Wellman (1998: 1103).

Hypothesis I: Frequency/Multiplexity: The more frequent the interaction, the more kinds of relationships and the more types of media used in that tie. In other words, the more kinds of interactions that people have, the more frequently they will be in contact; the more types of media they use, the more frequently they will be in contact. While this "the more, the more" hypothesis may seem obvious, it is not necessarily true. For example, Wellman and Wortley (1990) found that those community members who were socially close intimates were not those physically close neighbours and workmates who were in the most frequent contact.

Hypothesis 2: Frequency/Media: Frequent email communications will be less frequent face-to-face communicators. Etc.

What we don't say in the paper, but I will reveal to you now is that we added the hypotheses late in the revisions when our anonymous reviewers insisted that we had to make our intellectual questions (and answers) clearer for readers.

Research Design/Methods (2-5 pages)

All good theorists rely on data, either their own or other's. Otherwise, they are writing fiction. The research design (or methods)[5] is where you discuss how you accomplished your research and provide other background information.

Background: Remember your paper is telling a story. And a good story starts by providing the background context on the setting: what kind of place, situation you studied. This is like setting the scene iii a novel, TV show or movie,

The length of this background subsection varies depending on the kind of research and whether you are writing an article or a dissertation/book. It may be just one paragraph for a description of a national survey research, if you are writing for a journal in your own country. It will be at least several paragraphs if you are writing for an international journal, and it may be several pages (broken out into a separate section) for field work.

The length of the background subsection can also vary, depending on the exoticness of the setting or how knowledgeable you assume your readers to be. Unusual places may have to be described more (and defended more as being good places from which to generalize) by contrast to places about which you can assume your readers to know about. For example, you have to tell non-Canadians more about Canada: the area of East York (which we study) and the Canadian Health system are not known abroad.

Another unfortunate omission is when non-North Americans submit articles to journals about their own countries. They often do fascinating research but neglect to place it in the context of their own social system. I recall refereeing an article about Turkish university students that replicated an American study, without once telling the reader how the Turkish social context, university experience (and student body) was different.

Many American studies have the same failing. They often leave out details of place. Even worse, they implicitly assume that they can generalize to the entire world from samples of American university undergraduates. Psychologists are the worst at this, and be careful of economic modellers who don't even bother with real data - what they call (without shame) "stylized fictions'. Given cultural imperialism, they get away with it more.

Here is a somewhat more positive example: a slightly edited version of how Anabel Quan-Haase and I (2006) set the scene. Our concern was not to describe the city or American society, but to describe the nature of the high-tech American corporation we were studying. Note how we make a claim for the general usefulness of a particular case study:

> *KME is an eighty-employee high-tech corporation located in a major North American city. KME was founded in 1997 and expanded during the technology boom. Its involvement:*

[5] Too many writers mistakenly use the word "methodology" here instead of "methods", Methodology is the study of methods: that's a specialized discipline that few of us do. We are the *users* of methods.

in knowledge-intensive activity and its high reliance on computer mediated communication make it a good place to study collaborative community in a networked organization

KME is a post-industrial firm that offers knowledge-based services and software to clients. A principal business is the hosting and facilitation of online communities.…Within KME the exchange of information and the creation of knowledge are, essential....

Design: Justify your design. Why did you do a sample survey or ethnography? What are the strengths of what you did and the pitfalls (but please do the latter succinctly: we all have problems).

Tell readers enough so that they can understand watt you did: What kind of sample, how large, whether or not random, where and when collected, what kind of data collection method, any special analysis methods used. Don't try to sneak by any quirks/deficiencies. Instead, discuss in common sense terms the extent to which you can generalize from your sample to the outer world. Don't be embarrassed or defensive: all research has deficiencies. ICs nice if you can provide statistics (e.g., census data) or other material (briefly) to back up your claim that your sample or case study are representative of the larger population or society about which you are trying to generalize.

Justify the research approach that you used? Only mediocrities, the ill-educated and the closed-minded avoid on principle either quantitative or qualitative research. Consider mixing the two (or more) types: the sum may be greater than the parts. Tell how your tools are appropriate for your hypotheses in terms of inferring generalizations and describing subtle dynamics.

Methods: Avoid spending much time on the obvious, i.e., what a fellow professional would be routinely expected lo know - for example, random samples. *SPSS,* significance tests. These should be mentioned briefly, e.g., 'We interviewed a random sample of 845 adult residents of the Toronto borough of East York"

Material such as significance tests might be in a very terse note to a table or in a parenthetical statement the first time dealt with in text (in report of research findings section). This may vary by audience. For example, only specialized audiences may have heard of multidimensional scaling.

For a student paper being submitted to a course (Including a doctoral dissertation), you probably should spend more time documenting you know what you're doing. Before you are "certified" with a doctorate, your professor cannot take for granted that you have achieved routine professional competence.

After you have been certified as a professional, you can often get away with citing your dissertation or a previously published paper (for example, "see Wellman, 1990 for more details') or writing a technical report (published through your university) which provides the tedious but necessary details. There are two opposing traps to avoid: On the one hand, too much documentation of the obvious may make it appear that you are incompetent – or at least, insecure. On the other hand, people without reputations submitting papers from less-known universities may need to spend relatively more time on documentation.

Proposals: In contrast to submitting articles to journals, when you submit research grant proposals, you have to spell out a good deal of your hypotheses and your methods. The referees want lo evaluate how sound you and your proposal are, and you cannot provide the research findings yet lo help them evaluate it.

One way to save time is that when you write several papers (or proposals) on the same subject, you can legitimately copy and paste much of it from previous articles. Much of the Research Design is standard stuff' and can be pulled in from a previous file and customized as need be.

Note that this is where a research proposal ends. For a doctoral dissertation proposal, you should go one step further, and show how items in your questionnaire, interview schedule, field guide, etc, will address your hypotheses.

Of course, no one expects you to stick strictly to your hypotheses by the time you are done. We all do what Strauss and Glaser (19#) called "grounded theory" one way or another, modifying things as we go along. You could go back at the end lo modify your hypotheses so they exactly fit your findings, but it is very suspicious when all hypotheses are exactly confirmed. Life, and research, isn't so neat. But some rethinking and rewriting is fine, so that you have a consistent storyline from title to conclusions.

Report of Research (10-15 pp)

Basic Organizational Rules: This is the key to your paper: where you tell what you have actually found out. Indeed, a warning that a paper is weak is when the authors spend fifteen pages setting up their "theory", and only five pages on their findings. Few of us are good theorists; most of us have collected reasonable data. The uniqueness, validity and interestingness of your findings are the key to a successful paper.

Avoid recapitulating your voyage of discovery. Readers want to learn what you found out, not how you got there, what mistakes you made, and what you didn't find out. It may be that your most recent finding comes first.

Be straightforward. This isn't a mystery tour. For example, don't be coy by showing something in the first subsection, and then in the next subsection saying things are more complicated than they originally seemed. Instead, say right away in one-half a sentence, something like:

> *While at first glance there seems to be a close association between the prevalence of storks and she prevalence of babies (table I), three-way analysis (table 2) shows that the true relationship is between living in rural areas and having lots of babies.*

Work from the simple to the complex in your description: e.g., bivariate to multivariate, interactive relationships.

Organize either in terms of independent variables or dependent variables (decide where the more interesting comparisons are). I am proud that I once co-authored two published articles with the same variables, but organized in opposite ways:

1. Organized by *dependent variable*, we showed which kinds of relational and network phenomena affected different kinds of social support (Wellman and Wortley 1989).
2. Organized by *independent variable*, we evaluated the relative importance of relational and network phenomena for social support (Wellman and Wortley 1990).

Structure your writing in order to structure your readers' reading. Use many subheads and perhaps sub-subheads. I routinely use three levels of headings (including in this guide). At times, I have used four. However, the use of subheads varies by fields. It is routine in the sciences and the social sciences, but almost forbidden in the humanities where historians, English literature folks, etc. like flowing essays. (I think they are wrong: you *can* have flow with structure.)

When you describe your findings, assume a competent, but somewhat lazy, reader. People are not going to take the same time to read your stuff that you took to do the work and write it. For example, never bury a key idea in the middle of a paragraph. Start the paragraph off with it, loud and proud. If you really want to emphasize the idea, put it in *italics* as I did at the start of this paragraph, or even in ***bold italics.***

Writing Up Findings: Put ideas into your research description. The most boring things in the world are mere summaries of tables or field notes. It is 0K lo have carnal intercourse in the findings section between your findings, other people's findings, and various theories. For example, you could say, "Unlike Wellman and Hogan (2004), I find that...." Do this to a limited extent for

specific points because you don't want to interrupt the flow of your description and you'll be able to do more of this in the Conclusions section.

Be consistent in your adjectives. Be careful of how you use loaded terms: "a few, slightly, some, moderately, many, most, almost all, all, as much as, as little as'. Remember the Zen question: "Is the glass half-full or half-empty?"

Note that it's 0K in sociology to use "I", if you are a single author, as in "I argue that ...". It's a common mistake, but pretentious, to use "we" if you're only a single author. However, this "I/we" distinction varies by discipline. Here, as in most things, read some leading articles - not for content but for structure and style.

Tables: The text should tell the story without the tables. It is not necessary to tell everything about a table in the text. Summarize the highlights and make pertinent comparisons. It may not be necessary to repeat numbers from tables in the text unless you are using the precise numbers themselves to make a point. "Numbers are not the point. Numbers are used to help make a point,' Beverly Wellman told me (personal communication, 1988).

Usually use (parentheses) to refer to the table in the text the first time it is used "(Table 1)" and every time it is used thereafter when you have already switched lo another table "(see Table above)". Emphasize the finding, and not the table. Therefore, instead of writing "Table 1 shows that gentlemen prefer blondes", write "Gentlemen prefer blondes (Table 1)". The former focuses attention on the word Table; the latter focuses attention on the finding (which is in fact true in America (at least): see the great movie starting Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell 195#).

Tables should be interpretable in their own light without reading the text, Have clear, succinct table headings, usually expressing relationships, such as: "The Effect of Network Characteristics on Social Support".

Use English-language names for your variable labels in the text and the table itself; avoid *SPSS* or *SAS* eight-letter abbreviations that you've grown familiar with while running data because these short names will confuse others. Don't just reproduce a table from a statistics package as is: work on packing information from many tables into one table: For example, a social support table may have been compiled from 4 separate cross tabulations, each done for a separate type of support.

Avoiding clutter increases readability, although you must give readers enough information lo assess the accuracy and validity of the table:

- Yes/no tables (or any dichotomous table) can be reduced in size to j ust "Percent/number saying yes", etc.
- Correlation matrices need only be triangular, not rectangular, with perhaps the partial correlation coefficient in the other triangle.
- Delete leading zeroes in correlations, regressions.
- How many decimal points do you really need? Rarely more than one in crosstabulations (I usually don't use any unless less than 10%) or two in correlations, regressions, etc. However, you may need to use some decimal place just to convince journal reviewers you really are 'scientific".
- You usually just need percentages in one direction (comparing across categories of independent variable). The omitted row and ceil percentages can be reconstructed from the total sample size (N) and marginal percentages.
- You probably can omit percent signs (%) from the body of a table, if it is clear from the heading that you are providing percentages.
- Use footnotes to tables sparingly, labelled 'a, etc.

Consider using graphs instead of tables. They show comparisons more carefully, and they emphasize highlights rather than petty details, Current statistical packages and *Excel* have eased the production of graphs. However, don't cheat - as newspapers and politicians often do - by cutting off the bottom of bar and line graphs to exaggerate differences (Tufte 19# has an excellent discussion of visual displays).

Two Part Discussion 3-6 pages.

Summary (1-2pp.): Here is where you recapitulate the main findings for the reader (and for yourself). Don't necessarily keep to the order in which you originally presented the findings. You want to weave your findings into a coherent whole, highlighting the main points. You want lo emphasize your storyline.

Stick fairly closely to your data in this first part of your discussion. Link back explicitly to your hypotheses, comparisons. I generally use point-paragraph form here, either explicitly numbering the paragraphs or implicitly numbering them in my head as I write.

Conclusions (2-4pp.): Where the Summary links back to your hypotheses, the Conclusion links back to your broad intellectual questions and your literature review. Here is where you discuss what are the implications of your findings for major scholarly debates and perhaps for major policy debates. You might discussion the implications of your study for future research, although people do this more than they should. Avoid empty phrases such as "More research is now needed" - of course it is - unless you can say with some specificity what research do your findings evoke.

This is also your chance to play intellectually: to write a bit more loosely and evocatively about what you have discovered and thought about.

References

This is a list of references you have used and cited in your paper and not a comprehensive bibliography. (Encyclopedia entries are exceptions: here you give guides to key works in the area you have covered.)

Each reference is linked lo a citation in the paper. II is tedious, but necessasy lo check when you are done that every citation has a reference (and vice-versa), that you have the publication years right (and consistent with The citation), and that you have the proper volume and page numbers, This gets harder with very recent writing, which can be "forthcoming" and "in press" when you first start, and later be actually published (or with page numbers supplied in advance by the editor). You should write to authors to find out what anticipated page numbers are, and check the journal's website for anticipated volume number.

Use the standard format of the journal, which you get either by looking at the references in the journal or going to the journal's website and seeing if they have a guide for prospective authors, Sociologists can't go wrong using either the *American Sociological Review* format or the slightly different *American Journal of Sociology* format. Many social science disciplines use APA-style, promulgated by the American Psychological Association. It has spread to Communication Science, Information Science, etc.

In the long run, it is a waste of effort to put your references directly into the text of the paper. You would be wise to immediately start entering all of your references into specialized bibliographic software, such as *Endnote* or *Procite.* Then all you have to do is select the ones you need for this paper and choose the proper reference formal (from a menu) to fit the style of the place you're submitting to. (They will even try to do the selection for you, although I have never been happy with the results of this.) This means you are entering a reference only once for life, and you can easily change formats for different publications. Technically speaking, the output view changes, but the bibliographic entry stays the same,

The great advantage is that as you go through your career, your *Endnote* bibliography will cumulate. I am probably an extreme because I am old, have research assistants and am transdisciplinary: I have 15,000 entries, gathered over 39 years. (I am writing about *Endnote* because 1 have never used *Procite*, but I believe it is quite similar.) You can even tell *Endnote* to search online bibliographic sources (such as abstracting services) and download the ones you want. Moreover if you want to find the books, articles, etc. on specific subjects - or by specific authors - it is easy to do a complex Boolean search for them within *Endnote* as long as you have entered keywords (or even abstracts) when you created the entry. Finally, as noted earlier, the *Endnote's* Notes field can be used for notetaking, and all of its fields can be customized. For example, I have modified my entire file to give me a reminder of where I have stored each item.

HOW TO WRITE - AND RE-WRITE[6]

Writing is a Lonely, Social Business

Good writing is habit forming. That means (a) trying to write every day, and (b) figuring out where you do your best thinking, especially when getting started on a paper or a section of a paper. For example, I have found that I do my best thinking during my daily morning shower, and I keep a pad and near-by to write down key ideas and phrases when I get out. By contrast, the romantic English poet, Lord Byron, said he did his best writing getting in and out of bed - and he didn't mean napping - while Erik Erickson reports in *Young Man Luther* that the great Protestant pioneer did his thinking sitting on the toilet. Find your place, wherever it is.

Writing seems to go easier if you develop a specific time and place lo do ii, perhaps even a favourite chair, clothes and radio station.

> Hemingway presided over a [Cuban] hilltop estate called Finca Vigia [for nearly 20 years], where hummingbirds flitted along the mango trees. He rose early and spent mornings at work, standing as hits typewriter wearing a favorite pair of oversized moccasins." Stephen Kinzer, "Sharing a Friendship with Hemingway and Keeping His Secrets." *New York Times, .Jan 29, 2002: B1, B3.*

Try to write in the morning. You will have slept on good ideas. You won't have time to get nervous, and you can spend the rest of the day resting on your laurels and mulling over ideas for the next day - or perhaps even writing more later in the day. I've watched my friend, the play-wright/screenwriter Donald Freed, religiously sit down with pen and pad in hand at 0800 and stop at 1300. Even if he doesn't get much accomplished, he at least has tried, and tomorrow will be another day. Here are some similar thoughts that I have found:

> It seems to me, as it must have seemed to {D.H. Lawrence,} reasonable lo sit down every morning and fulfil a minimal quota of 1,000 words." [Anthony Burgess, {author *of A Clockwork Orange}, in Flame into Being: the Life and Work of DH. Lawrence.* Ar-bor House, 1985].

> Creative writing has to be done in the morning... I still go to bed late and wake up late, but it's the creativity that's shifted.... It doesn't matter how awful the rest of the day is, if I got my words done, then it's a good day." *Generation X* and *Microserfs* author Douglas Coupland, in an interview with Tabassum Siddiqui, *The Varsity* (University of Toronto stu-dent newspaper), January 24, 2005:16)

It is really helpful to find paper and human role models. Analyze already-published journal articles for form (not content), and ask for advice from veteran, already-published colleagues whom you admire.

Hermits rarely write good papers. It pays to develop your artistic community, hopefully one filled with a combination of infectious enthusiasm and helpful commentators. ("It's wonderful" is as useless as "It's awful".) I am jealous of the merry band of artists in *La Boheme.* Talk with appropriate others about your ideas. "Artists are nourished by each other more than by fame or by the public." (Samuels 1975: 169). Similarly, a biographer of Pablo Picasso points out that "it is important for artists to be surrounded by others who are driven and motivated." (Sullivan, 1997: 53). Picasso himself agreed, saying "[I] never avoided the influence of others" (quoted in Sullivan 1997: 52).

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[6] The best book I have found is Howard Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists.* For more general advice to social scientists, see his *Tricks of the Trade.*

> "Writing is such a lonely business that it almost doesn't matter whether the response is positive or negative. You need to be with other people who have shared that solitude' (Philiip Lopate, as quoted by Linda Bamber, *NY Times Book Review*, 13 Dec 86, p. 40).

Your scholarly community should help you lo spot holes, give you new ideas, and provide and fresh ideas to new sources. With attachments to email, you don't even have to have them near-by, although I find that the best conversations still happen through physical presence. When people are face-to-face, body language helps communication, and your commentators can point to the problem areas.

> Perhaps the ultimate were the Brönte sisters, who had the dual advantage of brilliance and living together: "Once or twice a week, each read to the others watt she had written, and heard what they had to say about it...The readings were of great and stirring interest to all, taking them out of the gnawing pressure of daily recurring cares, and setting them in a free place. It was on one of these occasions that Charlotte determined to make her heroine in Wuthering Heights] plain, small, and unattractive, in defiance of the accepted canon" [Elizabeth Gaskell, as quoted by Linda Bamber, *New York Times Book Review*, 13 Dec 86, p. 40].

There is a trap in consulting with others. Every person will tell you something else to do. They may even get possessive about it. You need to decide who to listen to - and who not to listen to. At the end, it is *your* paper, with your name on it.

Basic Tips for Writing

Screen Stuff: Always work on computer single-spaced. This allows you to see more lines for editing; you can always change spacing at the end to meet the specifications of the journal.

Use 10 to 12 point serif font (such as "Times Roman'). This is 12 point serif. It provides **better readability than sans serif (although sans serif is better for PowerPoint bullets).**

Turn off *Word's* spell checker and grammar checking to the very end. You want to write without inhibitions or distractions.

Consider using a sans serif font (Arial, bold, but in same point size) for **Heads and Sub-Heads.** This makes the heads stand out. Capitalize only the important words.

Centered, Bold First Level Head (main ideas):

Second Level Head Left Flush and Bold - on its own line.

Third level head: Italic, Bold: not on its own line, starts a paragraph

Good Writing is Re-Writing. Learn to think in terms of at least three multiple drafts: roughing it, organizational shaping, and final polishing. Immodestly, my model is Michelangelo making the *David.*

Know from the beginning where you're taking your readers and give them some sign-posts. This is neither a mystery story nor a tale of someone lost in the woods. Knowing where you are going also helps you to handle the "forest/trees" problem where you are so immersed in detail you can't keep track of the overall shape and flow of your paper.

There is no real need to write a paper linearly from beginning to end. Put interesting ideas that belong elsewhere [into brackets] so you won't lose them. Write whichever sections you're comfortable with - in whole or part - knowing you'll come back and expand or polish later.

> "When I complete the [first] draft, I review it and index my bracket notes since they may contain the summaries of several additional novels that occurred to me along the way. [A word processor's search, copy/paste functions are great fix this.] A good novel is far too precious to waste; it must be caught the moment it flashes into mental view, or it will escape to the brain of some other writer who really doesn't deserve it … My creative notions don't

have to wait their turn; they are always welcome." [Science-fiction writer, Piers Anthony, Pp. 311-12 in "Author's Note to *On a Pale Horse."* New York: Del Rey Ballantine, 1983.

Get in the habit of writing a little daily, rather than trying to do a big burst at the end. As the English poet, W.H. Auden put it: "Unless I write something, anything, good, indifferent or trashy, every day, I feel ill." quoted in "Learning to Love One's Neighbour, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, *NY Times,* February 15, 1996.] I always have to remind my doctoral students the 5 pages a day x 60 days is 300 pages - the length of a good-sized dissertation.

You want to work hard so that the reader will follow your argument easily. If you are smart, you don't want to impress your reader with how many big or obscure words you know. You want him lo be able to follow the subtlety of you argument. Here is a nice anecdote about S.J. Perelman, who wrote 21 books.

> His "writing flows so effortlessly that it comes as a surprise to learn it was a painful, laborious process for him, and he agonized over every word. A friend recalls telephoning him once and Perelman said, 'I'm in the middle of a sentence, I'll call you back when I finish.' He returned the cal1 next day, and said, 'I've just finished the sentence.' He maintained that he customarily wrote 37 drafts of each article." [Dorothy Herrmann, *Toronto Globe and Mail,* August 2, 1986].

Use "gradual writing." Outline your paper first, but not in traditional grammar-school way. Sketch out your heads and subheads, and write a few key phrases, sentences or paragraphs for each. You may throw most out, but it gives you a running head start to write that section, and better still, by being quick and dirty, moves you lo write the lead-ins for each part in terms of the whole (you're less likely to wander off into side issues).

Always carry a small notepad (or PDA or laptop) with you. When you start writing, you will suddenly see many things are germane lo your paper. Use your notepad to jot them down, and start a notes file on your computer. You can figure out later if - and where - to dump them in.

The Three Stages of Writing and Re-Writing (Editing)

Roughing: The first and most important rule is not to have any style, organizational rules when you write. Get it down any way you can, and then post-edit.

> You can't have good ideas unless you have a lot of ideas." Linus Pauling (on the *Phil Donahue Show,* December 23, 1986).

> First, don't write poetry; second ditto; third ditto.... You may be surprised to hear me say so, but there is no particular need of poetic expression. We are utilitarian, and the current cannot be stopped" American poet Walt Whitman, more than a century ago in an interview for ***The*** *Signal,* New Jersey Normal School, February 1888].

Write as quickly as you can. Where would you rather be in two days because you want to keep the flow of your story going, Do not stop to look up small points, such as the dates of citations or the precise wording of quotes. I just put in a place holder, such as 19#. And later on in the polishing phase, I search on # and clean things up. Which would you rather have accomplished in two days? (a) Having written 5 pages with ail citations, references, quotations and numbers; (b) Having written 10 days with some of those things to be filled in later.

Use a bookmark to tell yourself where you have stopped. *Word's* bookmark option is awkward lo use. I just use put a @ and search for that when I start again.

Hlave an audience in mind, either real or precisely imagined. Don't write to impress yourself. It's great if you can have some concrete sense of what persons are your audience. You want to have some initial sense of what tone to take, and how much detail to put in.

> The American hippie poet Allen Ginsburg (as quoted by Linda Bamber, *NY Times Book Review,* 13 Dec 86, p. 40): "[Jack Kerouac] is my listening angel. Still, Even though he's dead. [But he's not the only one.] Whenever I write something witty, I think of [William]

> Burroughs dry laconic intelligence. Whenever I write something romantic I think of Orlovsky's great heart. When I turn a funny phrase I think of Gregory Corso."

Shaping: Here is the stage where you edit for organization. But there is no point in worrying at this stage about well-written sentences, nice grammar or spelling at this stage).

It is best to go onto this stage if you can set the paper aside for a week - or even a day - so you can minimize pride of authorship. Look at it with a fresh eye. Is the stage where you should thoroughly assimilate the organization of the paper -- like the Borg in *Star Trek: Voyager.*

One key technique in the shaping stage is to outline the paper by writing key words in the left margin of each paragraph. This lets you find inconsistencies and redundancies. It gives you a sense of whether the flow of the paper makes sense, and if you've given the right proportionate emphases to each part (in terms of page Length). I find that I often have repeated myself in several places: I catch it in the outline and bring all the parts together and integrate them into one place.

> Be more critical of your own work than anyone else could be. But don't force yourself to be unduly critical while you're actually in the act of writing. Wait until you've cooled off and gone into edit mode. Train yourself to be able to read what you've written as if someone else had written it. [hints from poet David McFadden].
>
> "Whatever you do, learn condensation." [Walt Whitman interview with *The Signal* [student newspaper], 1888]
>
> Write with your heart, revise with your head." *[London Times,* 27 April 1988]

Try to find a trusted assessor: someone who knows subject, and a good enough friend to tell you when you have problems. Only cowards, enemies, lazy people, or prospective lovers will tell you that your first draft is wonderful.

Listen to advice: it is better for a friend to tell you if there are problems, than to be rejected or publish a silly paper and have many people think you're stupid. This is where authors in the periphery often get into trouble, because they are less likely to have mentors or friends experienced in publishing in international journals. It is important to spell check (and grammar check) your paper before giving it to an assessor. Otherwise, she will be distracted by the mistakes and perhaps think less of you that you gave it to her in such poor shape.

When your friends are giving advice, always remember that it is your paper - not theirs. Only you know what you want to do, and it is your name - not theirs - that goes on the final product. This is tricky, because some people you consult will become insistent on their advice.

Polishing: This is where you do your final edits for style. In addition lo Howard Becker's books, I have found a good guide to be: Carolyn Mullins, *The Complete Manuscript Preparation Style Guide; A Guide to Writing and Publishing in the Social and Behavioural Sciences.* It is out of print, but available through Amazon.

Here are some sample badly-written sentences (from an American professor!). Let´s see how lo fix them:

> That is, if a social structure and/or idea structure essentially mimics the pattern that is the most likely outcome of the pursuit of affective maximization, that is, if it has a form of hierarchical differentiation, then individuals pursuing affective maximization re predisposed to shape their worlds by marking them in part with such structures.
>
> In addition, given our instinctual poverty, and complex cognitive tools, both of which give us a far greater ability to shape our worlds than any other species has ever had, is it not possible that certain social structures could be created that actually increase in one way or another the likelihood of such affective arousal actually occurring?

Basic Rules for Polishing

A helpful way to approach polishing is to use grammar checkers on Tools menus of word processors. They implement the rules I present below. However, there are traps with *Word's* style checker: It often wrongly identifies good sentences as problems, but it is better at finding problems than in the solutions it provides. In short, you have to be a good enough writer of English to know when to avoid it and when to take it seriously. This is especially hard for writers who have English as a second language,

Some partial solutions to deal with these traps

(1) Set the options on the grammar checker to fit the kind of writing you do. Don't accept the defaults.

(2) Find a copy of *Word Perfect.* It has a much better style/grammar checker. Export a *copy* of your paper to *Word Perfect* and run the grammar checker. However, do not edit in *Word Perfect* because you probably will have to submit your paper in *Word* and going back and forth between the two programs can create ugly formatting problems. So let *Word Perfect* identify your problems but make the edits directly in *Word.*

(3) Possibly use the *Style Writer* program, although I haven't checked it out. It's an independent, separate purchase.

Rule 1: Minimize words greater than 2 syllables. Avoid "creative obfuscation': big, impressive sounding words to replace small ones with clear meanings. For example, "use" means the same thing as "utilize" but is two syllables shorter. [Note that 'creative obfuscation" is an example of itself.] Use a thesaurus to find shorter synonyms for long words.

Rule 2: Make all sentences, without exception, three typed lines or less. Break the big ones up, by converting compound and complex clauses into short ones.

Rule 3: *Avoid* ***using the passive voice.*** Passive voice sentences - where something was done to something - are all over journals, but are boring to read. Even worse, as the examples below show, the passive voice hides obscure key phenomena.

A good - but not perfect - way to locate the passive voice is to hunt for -ed phrases ("I found" vs. "It was found"). Actually, it's better to skip both of these phrases and get right lo your findings.

Here are some examples of how passive voice avoids issues:

> "His fall should have been broken by an elasticated bungee rope, but it became detached from the box and fell with him." ***[****Manchester Guardian,* 1987, on the death of a volunteer stuntman on a **BBC TV** show.] (The passive voice avoids the key question of who tied the rope badly.)
>
> "They have not been told of this diagnosis, for it is felt that as long as the man feels well, is happy at home and at work and his physical condition remains good, nothing should be done."[Dr Kenneth Smith, MD, an employee of the Johns-Manville Corp. telling the company why **he** and the company decided not to tell workers they had fatal asbestosis or to do anything about helping them. From Paul Brodeur, *Outrageous Misconduct,* Random House.]

Rule 4: Put subject and object close to each other, without long qualifying clauses intervening. Here's a mistake I made in March 2006. I originally wrote: "I will go in June to Portugal to teach a writing workshop". This should have been: "In June, I will go to teach a writing workshop in Portugal".

Rule 5: Don't use many commas in a sentence. They interrupt the flow of the reader'sthought. Compare the readability of' the following two sentences:

1. It was found, however, that social support, especially emotional support is affected by gender.

2. Gender affects social support, especially emotional support.

And if the flow of your writing needs a "However" this would be 0K;

3. However, gender affects social support, especially emotional support.

Rule 6: Try to have at most two major thoughts in a sentence. If you have more, break up the sentence. Otherwise, readers will get confused.

Additional Polishing Hints: Toronto poet and essayist David McFadden once suggested these to me:

1. Do not use a metaphor unless it is necessary, interesting, beautiful or amazingly funny.

2. Rid yourself of phrases such as: very, totally, absolutely, completely, I do a Find search (Ctrl-F) at the end of my polishing. Tighter is punchier.

You are editing yourself, and "editors … are, before anything else, taker-outers, lighteners of the over-packed sentence...," [Adam Gopnick, "The Voice of Small-Town America" {about legendary editors of the *New Yorker* magazine), *New York Times, Sunday Book Review,* December 3, 2000: 44.

Doing this kind of polishing opens up your text for further editing: It's no longer a sacred, untouchable script. You'll soon start think of other ways lo tighten it up and make it more exciting to read. The payoff is that if you get these mechanics down, not only will your work be easier, but your thinking will be clearer, you'll see more connections, and your writing wílI be better lo read.

Sample to Analyze and Edit: Here's a sample paragraph (an abstract) to edit from a doctoral student' s term paper:

Before: "Traditionally research on organizational learning has focused on learning from success, however, failure also plays an important role in learning. But, in order to learn from failure the influence of internal features in an organization such as its size, tasks that it performs and its age on the probability of occurrence or failures must firs be analyzed and understood. This paper examines the interactions between organization size and structure, size and the occurrence of routine task related errors and between size and age and their influence on the probability of occurrence of accidents. The implications for organization learning as a result of these influences are then discussed."

Marked-Up: Traditionally research on organizational learning has focused on learning from success, however, failure also plays an important role in learning. *[Traditionally" out of tight order. "However" should start a new sentence]*

But, in order to learn from failure the influence of internal features in an organization such as its size, tasks that it performs and its age on the probability of occurrence or failures must firs be analyzed and understood. *[Confusing word order. Separation of subject and object.]*

This paper examines the interactions between organization size and structure, size and the occurrence of routine task related errors and between size and age and their influence on the probability of occurrence of accidents. *[Confusing. Readers will get lost in the list. Doesn't tel findings.]*

The implications for organization learning as a result of these influences are then discussed." *[Delete: Empty sentence doesn't tell reader anything new. Everyone discusses implications. At least, say what they are: These findings suggest …"]*

Edited: Although most research focuses on learning from organizational success, we can also learn from failure. For example, internal features of organizations affect the amount and kind of accidents in them. I examine the impact on accidents of such organizational features as their age, size, structure and tasks. [*Note: As the paper doesn't actuality have findings, we can't do the more useful job in the abstract of saying what age, etc, does.]*

Testing Your Readability When You Think You are Done Polishing: Calculate a readability index, To see how well you have done In *Word*, it's called "readability statistics" and you can find it under Tools/Spelling and Grammar/Options. The old-fashioned way is to take 10 sentences from front, middle and back of paper. Count all words greater than 2 syllables. Take the square root and add 3. This yields the approximate grade level of what you have written. Aim at grade 12 (high school graduate): Aiming at this level actually makes it more readable even for more advanced people.

Of course, the next step is to go back and re-polish to lower your readability index while keeping your ideas. This is best done with shorter words and shorter sentences.

When You Really Think You are Done: For final polishing – when you think you are done - print out the paper (double spaced so you can mark it up). Curl up with a pen in hand while you read it. This way, you will see the whole page. You will discover new things about it, especially flow, because you are looking at it differently.

[British writer Patrick Leigh Fermor's] published works suggest a writer of unyielding fluency, never lost for words, and one tends to commit the basic error, when faced with such Mozartean ease of presuming that creativity is no sweat. In fact the typewritten sheet that lay before him was overlaid with blue-black runic rethinks and cobwebs of illegible addenda, strong between the lines and spun to the brink of the page. [Anthony Lane, "An Englishman Abroad," *New Yorker,* My 22, 2006, p. 67. By contrast, Lane's first sentence above is quite awkward.]

Re-edit it until satisfied.

Then, run a final spelling and grammar check. This is important for even native English speakers because if you get your spelling and grammar wrong, people won't trust the accuracy of your research. *It is especially important for people who have English as a second language* and are more prone lo making spelling and grammar mistakes. Although in principle, reviewers and editors will ignore such mistakes in the great humanitarian tradition, in practice, they will subconsciously condescend to your work. You will be taken less seriously. It isn't fair, but it is a reality.

Finally, you're ready to send your paper off to a journal, where some anonymous strangers will look at it keenly.

Dealing with Journal Reviews

Usually, the journal editor (usually alone, but sometimes with an editorial board) picks two to four persons to review an article anonymously. They won't be from your own university, and most editors avoid sending manuscripts to the students or mentors of the submitting author, Your article should be anonymized, so that only the editor knows for certain whom you are.

My estimate is that few articles are accepted directly by international journals in the social sciences. I'd guess that 10% are accepted without revision and that 20% are rejected without requesting revision. The norm is to be asked to "revise and resubmit" (the standard phrase) according to the editor's and referees comments. My guess is that this happens about 70% of the time.

Often the editor will write a summary letter telling you which referees' comments to take more seriously. Sometimes, revise and resubmits (or R&Rs) will be at two levels: an encouraging R&R, witch implicitly (but not explicitly) promises that if you make these revisions, your revised manuscript will be published, and a neutral R&R will makes no promises.

You only get to see one part of each referee's comments: the comments that he is willing to share with the authors as well as the editor. These comments may range from one paragraph to five pages. I typically divide mine into (a) a brief summary of the article, to make it clear te the author/editor that 1 understand what ii is about – or not - and whether I like it; (b) general comments about structure, organization, content; (c) specific comments tied to page numbers, which could range from typos to false statements to bad analyses. (It would be easier if journals required submitting authors to provide line numbers - an option in *Word* and *Word Perfect)*

You don't get to see the reviewer's confidential comments to the editor. I rarely make such comments, but almost all journals ask you to rate an article according to some qualitative scale. Some differentiate between the quality of the writing, the data analysis, the organization, and the general interest of the manuscript.

Here is one overall rating scale I found at www.journaltech.com

Rating	***Description***
Very Strong	Outstanding, absolutely first rate. Ready for publication in current form, with only minor (if any) revisions
Good	Good solid paper, but not outstanding. Needs some revisions
Average	Average, needs more development. May be acceptable with major revisions
Weak	Weak, serious problems throughout. Needs a lot of work
Very Weak	Not acceptable

If you are lucky, you'll get a clear, sensible and supportive Revise and Resubmit. If you think one reviewer was silly, write the editor to say that and give your reasons. But first, wait a while to calm down about how the reviewers insulted your hard work and your wonderful manuscript. Often you will find that what they ask you to do, is in fact doable. So do it - including the frequent request to reduce the manuscript - or some section of it - by 25 or 30 percent. Send it back, hope it will be accepted, but be prepared for being asked to do another round of R&R. If you are still rejected, even after taking this workshop - then decide if you made a mistake with the paper or if you made a mistake in sending it to the wrong journal. Then, revise if you must and try again.

Thank You! - Barry Wellman, June 2006

EPILOGUE

From the Preface to E.W. Howe, *the Story of a Country Town* (Canadian novel, 1884).

> "I do not think a line of it was written while the sun was shining, but in almost every chapter there are recollections of the midnight bell. No one can possibly find more fault with it than I have found myself. A hundred times I have been on the point of burning the manuscript [and never attempting it again; for I was always tired while working at it, and always dissatisfied after concluding a evening's work. I offer this as a general apology for its many defects, and can only hope it will meet with the charity it deserves.
>
> I have changed it so often, and worried about it so much, that at its conclusion I have no idea whether it is very bad, or only indifferent … I am so tired now that I am incapable of exercising my judgement with reference to it. If it prove a success or a failure I shall not be surprised, for I have no opinion of my own on the subject"

[also reprinted in the front of my dissertation]

EXTRAS

Notes on Writing with a Co-Author

This is a difficult relationship. Like learning to drive, it is often best to avoid doing it with your spouse or lover. Whoever you co-author with, remember to start any discussion of his work with the following phrase: 'It is very interesting, but …" When you start discussions, be very polite, but firm. However, give a little bit when necessary: (make believe) you see your co-author's point.

There are two basic ways to divide up the work. If each of you specializes in a different area, then divide up the parts. For example, she may be a better methodologist. Then, we are each are done with your own parts, exchange them and work towards a coherent whole.

The other model is a relay race in which each author alternates writing drafts. For example, both authors might outline the paper, one author might write a draft, and then the second author might revise it.

No matter which model you use (or an approach that mixes both models), always do a spell check of what you pass on to a co-author. Misspellings are distractions and rude. (One exception is a senior author passing an unpolished manuscript onto a junior author with a request to clean it up.

If you co-author, you probably will write more drafts as you go back and forth and edit each other. There are some techniques you can use to organize the process:

1. Using *Track Changes* and *Document Compare* to see where the changes are. A similar trick we use is to use colored highlighting to show problem areas. I am yellow; she is green
2. Date all drafts and show the date and the name of the draft's author in the file name and the header of every page.
3. Number every page se it is easy for you to email each other, about problems. You might even turn on line numbering as I have done here. (It is on File/Page Setup in *Word.*)
4. Every draft should get a version number or a letter. Put it in the text of the file, and also put the reviser's initials in the filename. *write-portugal-bw-4a*. I use numbers for major version, and letters for minor changes, e.g. "4a".
5. Decide who - if anyone - has the last word in disagreements. Usually, but not always, this will be same as who will be the first author - but this should be clear too. However, experienced senior professors often have the last word even if they are not the first author.
6. You also need to decide the order of authorship. (I have actually seen two colleagues never send a paper for publication because they could not decide whose name should go first.) There are different norms, but not strict rules, for authorship:

   a. The one who does the most work goes first.

   b The senior author goes first because the junior author is being honoured with a coauthorship instead of being thanked in the Acknowledgements as a research assistant.

   c. The junior author goes first, because she is in greater need of a job or tenure.

   d. Alphabetical ordering, in which case I almost always lose.[7] I've also seen reverse alphabetical and random orders.

[7] Although you can always have a note in the acknowledgements saying the order of authorship is alphabetical.

Tips for Dealing with Reporters[8]

Keep control of the interview. You don't have to answer any questions. Be careful of acquiescence set. Keep focusing the interview on what *you* want lo say - and not what the reporter wants you to say. Be aware of the trap question: "Don't you think that …": the reporter is trying to put words in your mouth. At the end, summarize succinctly what you think are the important points - you want to help the reporter to reflect your thoughts accurately.

Emphasize caveats: for example, if you say "Eighty percent of women give emotional support, but only 50% of men" (one of our findings), the reporter can dangerously write: "Women give emotional support, but men do not" You can address this problem at the end by saying, "Remember, lots of men give emotional support too." A good idea is to ask the reporter to repeat back what she has gleaned from the interview. It's impolite to ask to read the reporter's story because it verges on censorship. On the other hand, you can also ask the reporter if you could check it for accuracy. I have caught major mistakes this way.

Know whom you are dealing with: the reporter and the publication. Generally speaking, the more famous publications actually do have better reporters - although sometimes hopeful non-staff members will try to give you the impression they are on staff when what they are trying to do is to pitch an article to a publication. You can search for a reporter's name - as well as a publication - on *Google.*

Don't expect reporters to know about your work. Treasure those who do. If you think the reporter is really foolish, tell him to read your stuff first (point out which ones), before you resume the interview.

Avoid jargon. The reporter won't understand it, the editor won't like it, and your ideas either won't be published or will be confused.

Avoid going off the record (saying things that you wouldn't want to be published), unless you know and trust the reporter. Most reporters and articles genuinely want to report what you say, but they may have a different sense than you of what is important. Be careful of sensationalism. A few want to trap you - see for example what *Nature.com* did to Duncan Watts in January 2006.

Respect the reporter's deadline. Often, she has to get a story in by 5PM today. So you need lo return her call or email promptly if you want to be in the news,

Television can be frustrating. TV news shows are rarely deep. Typically you spend an hour to produce a sound bite that will have you saying the obvious. And TV reporters and camera people often are self-important.

If you have a hot finding, work with your university's public relations department to put out a 1 to 2 page press release about it - no longer. You may have to help them write it, using all the tricks you learned in Roughing It, Shaping It and Polishing It!

The Special Cases of Conference Papers and Invited Lectures (including Job Talks)

Typically, you have 20 minutes to present at a sociology conference and 50 minutes lo present at an invited lecture. The audience is there to hear your findings. The first rule is to cut down on everything except for your scene-setting opening (often a broad intellectual question), hypotheses (or specific research questions), findings and conclusions. This means that you should cut back on your literature review drastically (however, do mention the major controversy you are addressing) and reduce your methods section to one or two paragraphs, unless you have done something snazzy.

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[8] My thanks to Shawn Neidorf who posted useful guidelines on dealing with reporters on the Socnet (social networks) listserve, January 20, 2006.

Practice ahead of time, not only to have a smooth delivery but to balance the proportions of your paper ahead of time. I have seen to many speakers being surprised to learn they have only three minutes to conclude when they are just getting started to report their findings.

The norm in sociology is to speak from an outline rather than read from a text. This is a good norm, as it is almost impossible for non-actors to avoid droning on when reading from a written text.

Use visual aids, which usually means using PowerPoint. This breaks up the monotony and provides concrete details. Do not read everything from your PowerPoint slides. One of your earliest slides should give the outline of your talk. Unlike written papers, audiences cannot look ahead to see its structure.

The most important thing is for the audience to really see your slides. Avoid clutter. Use large print 24 point upwards is preferable. (No audience can read standard 12-point text font.) Avoid clutter by writing telegraphically. Vary font sizes, *italics* and **bold** systematically to highlight important items. Use about a 40-point header. Simplify your tables, and if you cannot, then consider distributing photocopied handouts. Light type (white, yellow) on a dark background is most readable: I use yellow on dark blue. To protect yourself, check ahead with your host for the availability of a computer and projector.

1. Some tricks to point out what you are talking about in your presentation.

2. If you are able to, go in Windows XP to Settings/Control Panel/Mouse/Pointers. Select in Scheme “Very Large Black”. This will give you a more visible pointer in PowerPoint.

3. Use the setting on the laptop that allows you to have the PowerPoint visible *both* on the projector screen and the laptop you are speaking from. This means you can face the audience when you talk. I have seen too many people turn their backsides to the audience and talk to the screen. This is neither attractive nor communicative.

4. However, consider using a laser pointer to highlight really important points.

5. For more ideas on presentations, see the *Bum Raps* handout

Commenting on a Presentation

Another role in presentations is being a discussant of papers at the end of a session. Taiwanese colleagues make great discussants. The choreography was interesting at the Taiwanbased International Social Capital Conference, Taichung, 2005:

1. Express great honour in being asked lo comment on the work of such distinguished scholars in their rnidst.
2. Apologize in fine English for their poor English and their lack of intellectual worthiness.
3. Announce that despite the great wisdom of the scholars, they would modestly suggest some ways to make already-superb papers even better.

The payoff, of course, is:

4. 10 minutes of extraordinarily perceptive and constructive commenting.
5. Thank the speakers and hope that they had contributed a little bit. “I hold Professor X in the highest esteem. I hope he may find my little contribution useful to improve his masterful work even more.

And Tank You Again for Your Participation! - Barry Wellman, June 2006

Writing and Publishing for an International Journal

Barry Wellman

Professor of Sociology *NetLab* Director
University of Toronto, Canada

Focus on How to Do It

- But *Not* Why Do It
- *Not* Which Method to Use

The Three Parts of the Workshop

- Know Who You are Writing For – And Why
- The Parts of a Paper –
  - And What Goes into Them
- How to Write – And Re-Write
- *With Special Reference to ESL Situations*

Where to Publish: Key Questions

- Will you be read?
  - or will the article linger in obscurity?
- Who will read you?
  - Is it the audience you want to reach?
  - In your own language/society; or in English
- Is the purpose to:
  - Build your vita
  - Enhance your reputation
  - Make your mother or boy/girl friend proud & happy?
  - Get a job or tenure
  - Convey the truth as you have discovered it
  - Influence others

Key Mindsets

- Aim to communicate with others rather than impressing yourself
- Tell a story and not just report the facts
- Write quickly, but edit repeatedly
- Techniques are available to do this more easily

Why Journal Submissions (Usually) Fail

- Poor Focus
  - Too Long More Common than Too Short
- Poor Organization
- Gap Between Theoretical Claims and Evidence

  T – D = BS *(Theory without Data = Hot Air)*

  D – T = A *(Data without Theory = Anecdote)*
- Lazy or Ignorant Scholarship
- Poor Writing

What are NOT Journal Styles

- Reports (*may be useful in own right)*
- Replications
- Essays (*may be useful in own right)*
- Illustrations (Anecdotal Accounts
- Jargonism
- Genuflections

How to Write – and Rewrite

- Writing is a Lonely, but Social, Business
- Good Writing is Rewriting *(Editing)*
- Get in the (Daily) Habit
- The Three Stages of Writing
  - *Roughing It*
  - *Shaping It*
  - *Polishing It – including some basic rules*
- *Getting Reviewed – and Dealing With It*

Writing in Context

- Best to Have a Local Peer Group
  - Build Up Areas of Strength – *NetLab*
  - Can be Diverse Fellow *Professionals*
- Circulate Drafts, Spread News, Salons
- Internet List-Serves / Email Overcome Isolation
- Go to *Serious* Conferences
  Large (Am Soc Assoc);
  Small Focused -- Better
  - Hallway Chat as Important as Papers Themselves
- Don't Get Discouraged:
  - Experience → Confidence

The Writer's Lament

- "I do not think a line of it was written while the sun was shining, but in almost every chapter there are recollections of the midnight bell. *No one can possibly find more fault with it than I have found myself. A hundred times I have been on the point of burning the manuscript* [and never attempting it again; for I was always tired while working at it, and *always dissatisfied after concluding an evening's work.* I offer this as a general apology for its many defects, and can only hope it will meet with the charity it deserves.

- ". . . *I have changed it so often,* and worried about it so much, that at its conclusion *I have no idea whether it is very bad, or only indifferent.* . . . *I am so tired now that I am incapable of exercising my judgement* with reference to it. If it proves a success or a failure I shall not be surprised, for I have no opinion of my own on the subject."
- From the Preface to E.W. Howe, *The Story of a Country Town* (Canadian novel, 1884).

Connected Lives

Thank You – from *Barry Wellman*

www.chass.utoronto.ca/~wellman