Interactive Symposium: “Getting that Paper out the Door: Pearls & Pitfalls for Publishing”
October 6, 2015 | 8:30- 10 AM | 2024 E. Monument (2-1002 [2nd floor auditorium])

- Dave Yousem, MD, MBA Professor, Neuroradiology, Assoc. Dean for Professional Development; Director of Neuroradiology; Vice Chairman of Program Development
- Kim Skarupski, PhD, MPH Associate Dean for Faculty Development (Office of Faculty Development); Associate Professor (Geriatric Medicine & Gerontology)
- Richard Edden, MSc, PhD Associate Professor, Radiology and Rad. Science

Do you struggle with getting those papers done? Have you been scooped by other investigators because you were late getting your paper published? Do you stare at the computer screen not knowing how to complete that manuscript? It’s time to address those issues and learn how to get those papers out the door! Panelists who specialize in clinical, basic science, translational research, and outcomes research will offer ways to overcome your writing hurdles. Before the session, participants who have RSVP’d will be asked to identify their most significant barrier to writing productivity. The panelists will structure their presentations and activities around the most significant writing barriers that the attendees themselves have identified. Participants will leave the session having identified several strategies for increasing writing productivity….on their way to academic success. Come, learn, and write!
Getting that Paper Out the Door: Pearls & Pitfalls for Publishing

School of Medicine:
Office of Faculty Development
Professional Development Office

October 6, 2015
Office of Faculty Development (OFD)

- Janice Clements, PhD  
  *Vice Dean for Faculty*

- Estelle Gauda, MD  
  *Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Dev.*

- Dave Yousem, MD, MBA  
  *Assoc. Dean for Professional Dev.*

- Michael Barone, MD, MPH  
  *Associate Dean for Educational Development*

- Kim Skarupski, PhD, MPH  
  *Associate Dean for Faculty Development*

- Linda Dillon Jones, PhD  
  *Senior Faculty Development Consultant*

- **Vacant! Know someone?**  
  *Program Coordinator*
Objectives

• Identify common barriers of writing

• Learn tools to increase your writing practice

• Identify 3 new practices that you will implement over the next 4 weeks; write them down; state them publicly
Survey responses: Please indicate your barriers to writing. (Select all that apply) N= 32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have trouble getting started</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My perfectionism prevents me from finishing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I have too many clinical commitments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I have too many teaching commitments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I have too many administrative commitments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I have too many personal/family commitments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I have difficulty with time management</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I have too many meetings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I'm too busy writing grant applications</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I have difficulty prioritizing</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I don't have adequate statistical/data analytic support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I don't have anyone (mentors) to give me feedback and encourage me</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I am not very interested in my topic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I don't know what to write about</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>English is not my first language</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>My writing skills are poor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Writing is not as rewarding as other things</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Other, please specify:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Today’s plan: Your Top 3 Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have difficulty prioritizing (Kim)</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have trouble getting started (Richard)</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My perfectionism prevents me from finishing (Dave)</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I CAN TEACH YOU TO MANAGE YOUR TIME MORE EFFICIENTLY.

PUT ALL OF YOUR HIGH PRIORITIES ON ONE LIST AND YOUR LOW PRIORITIES ON ANOTHER.

THEN DO EVERYTHING ON BOTH LISTS EVEN IF IT KILLS YOU, OTHERWISE YOU’RE A FREAKIN’ LOSER.

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Group Activity

• Form groups of 5 with your seat neighbors…QUICKLY!
• Introduce yourselves: state your name, dept., expertise…in <10 seconds
• When done, 1 person in each group, raise your hand
• Count off by 6s
Task

• Discuss how one:
  – Groups 1: Gets married
  – Groups 2: Gets fit
  – Groups 3: Cleans the house
  – Groups 4: Attends to 50 patients in the ED
  – Groups 5: Gets their 4 kids to their various Saturday activities
  – Groups 6: Performs a surgery

3 minutes - GO!
Common Theme?

A plan!
Prioritization Tips

• **Pause & reflect**: “What’s my mission?”

• Make a PLAN!
  – Rank order
  – Attach (realistic) deadlines
  – Post your list prominently/to-do list in Outlook

• Schedule your priorities – don’t prioritize your schedule

• Focus (avoid distractions)
• Schedule breaks & fun
• Set course corrections (tasks, deadlines)
• Ask the people you know who tend to “get things done” how THEY do it!
• Others?
CAUTION! DANGER! AVOID!

- Tyranny of the urgent
- Conspiracy of Interruption
Franklin Covey’s Time Management Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Urgent</th>
<th>Not Urgent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th></th>
<th>Quadrant of Waste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(AVOID)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trivia, busywork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Junk mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some phone messages/email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time wasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Escape activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quadrant I: Important and Urgent
Quadrant II: Important but Not Urgent
Quadrant III: Not Important but Urgent
Quadrant IV: Not Important and Not Urgent (AVOID)
Franklin Covey’s Time Management Matrix

- Quadrant I: Important and Urgent
  - (AVOID)
    - Interruptions, some calls
    - Some mail & reports
    - Some meetings
    - Many “pressing” matters
    - Many popular activities

- Quadrant II: Important but Not Urgent
- Quadrant III: Not Important but Urgent
- Quadrant IV: Not Important and Not Urgent

Quadrant of Deception
Franklin Covey’s Time Management Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Urgent</th>
<th>Not Urgent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MANAGE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Crisis</td>
<td>• Medical emergencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pressing problems</td>
<td>• Deadline-driven projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Last-minute preparations for scheduled activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadrant of Necessity</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Franklin Covey’s Time Management Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Urgent</th>
<th>Not Urgent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quadrant of Necessity</td>
<td>I (MANAGE)</td>
<td>II (FOCUS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Crisis</td>
<td>- Preparation/planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Medical emergencies</td>
<td>- Prevention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pressing problems</td>
<td>- Values clarification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Deadline-driven projects</td>
<td>- Exercise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Last-minute preparations for scheduled activities</td>
<td>- Relationship-building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quadrant of Necessity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>III (AVOID)</td>
<td>IV (AVOID)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interruptions, some calls</td>
<td>- Trivia, busywork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Some mail &amp; reports</td>
<td>- Junk mail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Some meetings</td>
<td>- Some phone messages/email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Many “pressing” matters</td>
<td>- Time wasters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Many popular activities</td>
<td>- Escape activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quadrant of Deception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quadrant of Waste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE
How many of you ever...

• Played a sport
• Played a musical instrument
• Created art – dancing, painting/drawing, poetry, singing, etc.
• Changed diapers
• Cleaned a house
• Detailed a car

• PRACTICE!
  Repetition
  Habit
  Routine
  Muscle memory
  Mechanical
  Automaticity
The Habit Loop

Behavior

Cue

Reward
Today’s session = Pearls & Pitfalls

- Schedule your priorities, DON’T prioritize your schedule (i.e. be proactive, not reactive; you have the power!)

- STOP multi-tasking – it kills your focus!

- Delegate!

  “If something can be done 80% as well by someone else, delegate!”  John C. Maxwell, author
“You have absolutely no idea how busy I am… I haven’t gone to the bathroom all day!”

{a former boss’s regular lament; I volunteered to hold our meetings in the restroom}
Today’s session = Pearls & Pitfalls

• Don’t psyche yourself out (self-fulfilling prophecy)
  – re-frame your thoughts or at least “fake it ‘til you make it”
  – Watch your thoughts, they become your words, words become your actions, actions become your habits, your habits define your character, your character becomes your destiny.

• Do a 1-week time & motion analysis on yourself!
  – Where does your time go really? Logs & journals work for dieters, exercisers, AND writers!
Adopt a mantra/motto

• Writing is my job; I will do my job every day!
  – Adopt a new habit! Make your scholarly writing automatic, mechanical, routine, and mundane.

• There is nothing magical or mysterious about writing; writing is a skill and I can learn it.
Write or Write Not. There is no try.

-Yoda & WAGS
### Frequency

**How often do you write?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Almost every day</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Twice a month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How often do you wish you would write?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Almost every day</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Twice a month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Writing productively is about actions that you aren’t doing but could easily do: making a schedule, setting clear goals, keeping track of your work, rewarding yourself, and building good habits.”
What is the duration of your typical writing session?

What duration do you wish you would write?
Writing Accountability Groups (WAGs)

Facilitator:
Kim Skarupski, PhD, MPH
Assistant Dean, Office of Faculty Dev.

• A WAG is an active writing group that meets weekly for a 10-week block
• Peer-facilitated
• Follows a strict agenda:
  – 15 minutes of updates
  – 30 minutes of individual writing
  – 15 minutes of reporting and wrap-up
• Participants must commit to at least 7 of the 10 sessions
• Limited to 8 members
• Bonus: Participants receive the “How to Write a Lot” book
• Bonus: Cathy DeAngelis has volunteered to edit WAG participants’ manuscripts

Like WAGs on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/HopkinsWAGS
Adopt some WAG rules!

• **Writing is your job. Do your job every day.**
  – Expand your definition of writing
  – Prioritize writing
  – Schedule your writing (<10 mins/day)
  – Do NOT engage in **unplanned** binge writing
  – Start writing as soon as you have the idea
  – Robotize your writing tasks (e.g., goals v. **SMART** objectives)
Tips to reduce stress and improve productivity (Mayo Clinic)

- Plan each day
- Prioritize your tasks
- Say no to nonessential tasks
- Delegate
- Take the time you need to do a quality job
- Break large, time-consuming tasks into smaller tasks

- Practice the 10-minute rule
- Evaluate how you’re spending your time
- Limit distractions
- Get plenty of sleep, eat a healthy diet, and exercise regularly
- Take a time mgt. course
- Take a break when needed

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/time-management/WL00048
Other Tips

• Join a writing accountability group (WAG)! email Kim

• Book: How to Write a Lot
  *Paul J. Silvia* (you’ll get this book for free when you join a WAG!)

• Article: 10 Tips on How to Write Less Badly
  *Chronicle of Higher Ed.*

• Are you hard core?
  Check out “Dr. Wicked’s Write or Die”

Motto: “putting the prod in productivity”
References/Recommended Reading

- Advice for New Faculty Members, by Robert Boice (2000)
- How to Write a Lot, by Paul Silvia (2007)
- On Writing Well, by William Zinsser (2001)
Writing & Time Mgt. Apps/Programs; Websites

Writing Apps & Programs
Scrivener
writeordie.com
Academicladder.com

Time Mgt. Apps & Programs
Basecamp
Focus Booster
FocusTime
MyLifeOrganized (MLO)
Pomodoro
Remember the Milk
Rescue Time
Timeful (Intelligent Time Assistance)
Toggl

WAGs Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/HopkinsWAGs

OFD Website
http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/fac_development

Blogs
http://getalifephd.blogspot.com/
http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/
Getting that Paper out the Door

Getting Started

Richard A. E. Edden, PhD
Associate Professor, Division of Neuroradiology
raee2@jhu.edu
Problems Getting Started

1. I don’t know what to write
2. I don’t know where to start
3. I don’t have time to write
4. I don’t like writing
5. I don’t feel like writing
6. I can’t find my keyboard
Sticking Points

1. Deciding what to write a paper about
2. Choosing a journal
3. Writing the introduction
4. Producing the figures
5. Language
6. Getting comments back from co-authors
7. Submitting online
8. Responding to reviewers
9. Resubmitting
Sticking Points

1. Language
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9. Resubmitting
Keep things moving forward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Preparation</th>
<th>Under Review</th>
<th>In Press</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Site</td>
<td>Nick MEE</td>
<td>Mahone CMS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Petrowitch Behavioral</td>
<td>Feckau I</td>
<td>Newcastle J Neurosci</td>
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<td>ASD-GABA (ADOS/SPM)</td>
<td>Pospo</td>
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<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>Kin GSH</td>
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<td>Ashley reviews</td>
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<td>Allison</td>
<td>Jaap</td>
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<td>PPCON</td>
<td>Castellano</td>
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</table>
Getting Started

1. Book off 30 minutes of time
2. Open a new Word Document
3. Write down a title of your paper
   – Not “THE” title
4. Spend 28 minutes feeling smug, or writing the methods
Defining the title / core message

Six questions:
1. What do I have to say?
2. Is the paper worth writing?
3. Have I already published such a paper?
4. What is the right format?
5. Who are the audience for this message?
6. What is the right journal for the paper?

Adapted from Huth, 2nd ed. 1990
1. What do I have to say?

- Start with your message = your main result
- Everything flows from your message
- Don’t make the reviewer or reader figure it out.
- What is the focus (beware of a convoluted Intro)
- Your question or hypothesis is answered by result, finding, conclusion
- State clearly, succinctly “What’s New Here?”
Message

- The answer to your research question/hypothesis
- You are writing a story
- You know how it ends
- Always keep your story in mind
- Focus on “What is this ______ about?”
Do you know the title of your paper?

• Express in one sentence what this paper is going to be about

• Have you done the work yet?
  • If NO, decide the theme of the paper and do the work.
  • Start writing while you do things (Methods)
  • If YES, identify the publishable result(s) in the work and write!

• If you don’t know what this paper is going to be about, reorganize your work flow
Deciding what to write a paper about

1. Are you doing science?
   - The doing shouldn’t be divorced from the writing
   - Writing papers is (an integral part of) the process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode 1</th>
<th>Mode 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Do some science</td>
<td>Step 1: Do a publishable unit of science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Decide to write a paper</td>
<td>Step 2: Write a paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Review the science you did</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4: Write a paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deciding what to write a paper about

1. Are you doing science?
   - The doing shouldn’t be divorced from the writing
   - Writing papers is (an integral part of) the process

2. Process optimization
   • Define your aims:
     a. Total number of papers
     b. Number of first-author papers
     c. Number of successful trainees
     d. Empire
     e. Continued employment
   • Targeted response:
     a. Publon approach, lower-tier journals, rapid turn-around
     b. Collaborate sparingly, suppress your juniors
     c. Collaborate widely, advance your juniors
     d. Papers are the currency of everything
Targeted and Non-targeted papers

• I want to write papers
  • Numbers game (mean 30 Associate, 68 Full)
  • Any topic will do
• I want to have written a paper about….
  • Fill gaps in (your) literature
  • Define (and claim ownership of) your scientific niche
  • Go-to response to frequent reviewer comments
  • Support for grants
Papers are science

• Papers are usually the only proof that you’ve done anything

• Papers breed:
  • Citations
  • Visibility
  • Grants
  • Ideas
  • Career Advancement

• Hopkins is a very numbers-oriented institution
  • Quantity/quality balance swung to quantity
  • Quantity breeds quality
    • Practice at the art
    • Outliers in a Gaussian distribution
    • Profile
2. Is this publishable?

• Does it add to the field?
• “So What?”
3. Have I already published it?

Multiple papers from one set of experiments or studies *may* be necessary

- e.g. if the message cannot be presented in one normal-length paper
- or if there are truly multiple messages in the story
- but don’t slice the salami too thin.
4. What is the right format?

- New findings: improved design, different population, model, system
  - Incremental findings: Case report, validation or disagreement with previous
5. Who are the right Audience?

- Who will use it, who will read it?
- Who *needs* the answer to your Question
Who is our audience?

• Editors and reviewers!
• Our peers, experts in our field – will read carefully
• Scientists in other fields – will skim
• Students and fellows
• Funding agency staff and grant reviewers
• Potential sponsors / employers
• The lay press and through it, the public
6. What is the right journal?

• What do you and your peers read?

• Consider the journal of your ‘home’ professional society

• One word journals: for such major advances that they are of interest to the general reader

• Carefully read the instructions to authors, and to reviewers if available

http://mulford.utoledo.edu/instr/
Journal Data

• Impact factor: #Citations/#of articles published in a 2-year period

• Immediacy Index: How often cited in same year

http://scientific.thomson.com/products/jcr/
http://scientific.thomson.com/free/essays/journalcitationreports/im pactfactor/

• How to interpret – it can be manipulated (compare apples to apples)

• Access through Welch Library http://welch.jhmi.edu/welchone/
  -> Resources/Popular Resources/Journal Citation Reports-ISI
  Journal citation reports (jcr) now up to year 2013, include 8474 journals
Once you have a journal in mind...

- Check the editorial board for familiar names
  - Is the topic of my paper within its scope?
  - Is the topic presented in it frequently or only rarely?
  - Would it offer the best match of audience with my topic?
  - What formats does it accept?

- Look at time to publication if that is important

- Are there limitations that are a problem for you?

- Querying the editor
Don’t write in order

• Methods
  – Literal report, mental copy-and-paste
  – Defines extent of the paper
• Figures
  – Capture the essence of the paper
• Results
  – Match the methods in layout and content
• Discussion
  – Thought involved
• Introduction
  – Hardest part?
• References
  – Mindless/irritating/good end-of-day work
• Abstract
Process Optimization: Get a draft out

- Sticking point: Review of manuscript by senior authors/co-authors
- Aim: publish as soon as possible
- Solution: Get the paper to them as soon as possible
  - Get on the pile
  - Details can be flagged to add in later (parameters, references, etc)
Methods

• Complete report of the work performed
  – What did you do?
  – Sufficient for someone else to repeat it *
• Lean on previous papers (by you or your group)
• Use sub-headings
  – Help you write it
  – Help the reader read it
• Don’t get stuck on the numbers.
  – MPRAGE images were acquire with TR/TE/TI 800/30/120 ms
  – Write, highlight, fill in the gaps later
Overcoming the Need for Perfectionism

ALICE, DO YOU HAVE ANY VALUABLE CAREER ADVICE?

WORK SO HARD THAT IT DESTROYS YOUR HEALTH AND CROWDS OUT ANY CHANCE OF HAVING A PERSONAL LIFE.

WOULDN’T THAT MAKE ME... UNHAPPY?

YOU DIDN’T ASK FOR HAPPINESS ADVICE.

David M Yousem MD, MBA
Famous Sayings About Perfectionism

“The enemy of good is better”

“If I was perfect, I’d run for God”
Corporal Klinger

“If you look for perfection, you'll never be content
Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

“I am careful not to confuse excellence with perfection. Excellence, I can reach for; perfection is God's business.” Michael J Fox
On Writing

• “Don’t get it right….get it written”  
  – A. Everette James

• “Write. Rewrite. When not writing or rewriting, read. I know of no shortcuts”  
  – Larry King

"Of course I can't do anything right. I'm a perfectionist."
First Activity

• Turn to your nearest neighbor, introduce yourself, and confess how many drafts of your latest successful paper did you have

• Crown the winner!
• “The quest for the perfect first draft is misguided”…. “Perfectionism is paralyzing” (p.73)

• “Let the id unleash a discursive screed, and then let the superego evaluate it for correctness and appropriateness”…later
Tip #1 (Anti-Perfectionism)

• Get the first draft down without spending a lot of time perseverating over wording, etc
When am I done?

• “Your manuscript is done when it’s clear, well-written, and as perfect as possible” Paul Silvia p.90.

• NOT PERFECT

• Consult mentor/co-author/senior author

• “Is it done?”
Are YOU in Control?

- Open discussion: do you have decision about what to write and when to submit?
- Mentor versus mentee?
- Differing goals between mentor/mentee, senior/junior faculty
Units of Writing

- Publishable Unit
- Publishable Moment
- Editable
Publishable Unit

- Do you have something new to say or something to affirm what someone else has said?
- Are you on the right track?
  - Preliminary Note
  - Proof of concept
  - Reproductibility
Publishable Unit (P.U.)

- Confirm with Mentor
- Consider authorship
  - First / Senior with mentee
- Write it
  - Convert to meeting abstract if necessary
P.U: Data For Paper
(Rough Diamond)
P.U. Analogy of the Diamond Cutter

Century White Diamond vs Multiple small diamonds

- One 10 carat diamond vs 20 single carat diamonds

MAKE SURE THEY ARE DIAMONDS!
Stand UP

• Are you a lumper?
• Are you a splittter?
• Do you do both?
Tip #2: Anti-Perfectionsim

- Determine when you have a publishable unit and seize the moment
- AND……...
- Maintain capacity for the Hope Diamond!
Publishable Moment (P.M.)

- The story has a good beginning, middle and end
- The reason for the study makes sense
- The data is solid
- The conclusions are supportable
- The discussion is relevant
Publishable Moment (P.M.)

- “There is this article in Latvian that I haven’t gotten translated yet”
- “I want to run it by the thesaurus one more time”
- “Do you think we should add another figure that shows the same finding”
- “I’m not sure I quoted all of the editors’ publications on the topic”
Publishable Moment (P.M.)

- Consult with mentors
- "One last read"
- Discuss with your neighbor the longest time you have spent waiting for co-authors revisions
Tip #3: Anti-Perfectionism

• Always, always, always set a time limit for submission
  – “We will be sending this out to the journal on Friday. I’d like your feedback by Thursday at noon”
• I have never written a paper that was sent back without corrections
• I have never written a paper that was not extensively copy-edited
• I have never written a paper without “proofs” having several questions
Editorable

- Allow job security for the editors
- You don’t have to have every sentence sculpted like Charles Dicken
- Is the message well supported and well-expressed?
- Do a final read without setting it aside thereafter. Submit it after that read.
Final Comments

• If you ever celebrate the one year birthday of a manuscript in preparation something is wrong

• Collect feedback until deadline then revise rather than allow multiple drafts with multiple dates back & forth
  – Start work on the next manuscript while you collect feedback from co-authors
"I realize you like to take time to polish your article before submission, but don't you think four years is a little excessive?"

“Honey, don’t you think you’ve polished that article long enough?”

http://EzineArticles.com/
Activity #2

• Turn to another neighbor, introduce yourself, and admit how old was your “oldest” manuscript before publication.

• Admit how old is the one you are working on NOW.
Final Comments

• Turn accepted with revisions / rejected manuscripts around quickly
• Address relevant issues with mentor, but do not let it sit more than a week unattended
  – It’s like an errant child
• Learn from each submission
If you had not been such a perfectionist....

• Stand up if you think you could have published an additional:
  – 1-2 articles
  – 3-4 articles
  – 5-6 articles
  – > 6 articles

• = OPPORTUNITY COST
It may seem odd that I would actually extol the virtues of creating imperfect articles. But think about it — why do people want to read your articles? Is it for the amazing grammatical prowess it demonstrates? Is it for the great meter and rhythm of the words? No.

IT’S FOR THE CONTENT!

• What do you think? Are you guilty of being a perfectionist too? What has that cost you in terms of lost exposure and lost opportunities?
Final Comments

• OK, there were errors on every single slide, 
  
• AND

• Wasn’t it still a good talk???
  
• Perfectionsim be dammed.
Objectives

• Identify common barriers of writing

• Learn tools to increase your writing practice

• Identify 3 new practices that you will implement over the next 4 weeks; write them down; state them publicly
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