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Tips on Writing and Publishing for Doctoral Students

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A Quick 30 Writing Tips for the Start of an Academic Career

1. Edit your papers a lot (but, in truth, better to be a Combiner than a Mozartian or Beethovenian).
2. Get feedback.
3. Stay current.
4. Be part explorer.
5. Be part bumblebee in gathering ideas from different places (and later part butterfly, moth, or bird).
6. Be a voracious reader (and ponderer).
7. Persist like an ant.
8. Be creative in your figures, models, frameworks, charts, and graphs!
9. Try to publish the paper or as a chapter before presenting at a conference (but after your conference proposal is sent in and accepted--i.e., do not scramble to write your conference paper at the last minute).
10. Maintain a list and network of potential research and writing collaborators.
11. Share your publication efforts.
12. Find emerging areas to research that you are passionate about or at least interested in.
13. Think ahead about the publishing potential of each project.
14. Treat graduate students as colleagues.
15. Find international and national colleagues to work with.
16. Schedule time for writing.
17. Have a plan or direction for the next few years and beyond--Goals are critical.
18. Read a paper on how to create a writing plan.
19. Organization.
20. Use presentations as starter material.
21. Get paid to write and research.
22. Find professional balance.
23. Find personal balance.
24. Do not design too many new courses.
25. Find a niche or direction for your research and drill down.
26. Write all the time.
27. Avoid high quality journal fixations.
28. Quantity matters as well as quality (sometimes more so).
29. Prioritize.
30. You are just a grasshopper, so get a mentor and use him/her.



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More Tips on Writing and Publishing for Doctoral Students

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Another Quick 20 Writing and Publishing Tips

1. Find good people to work with...life is short—avoid egomaniacs and people who lie.
2. Form research questions: Record gaps in research, find creative opening, keep tweaking,
3. Mark days in your planner when you will be writing. Find or create chunks of time.
4. Find, save, and use starter text where possible. Helps to overcome writer's block.
5. Save research articles for a rainy day (i.e., create file folders of articles on different topics).
6. Make both short term and long-term plans and goals. Review and revise those goals often.
7. Perhaps draft a timeline or multiple timelines for your publications with flexible goals.
8. Make a list of prominent journals (e.g., SSCI journals) and go after them one by one.
9. Look for special journal issues that you might contribute to.
10. Organize conference symposia which could lead to special journal issues and books.
11. Get to know the journal editor(s). Write to the journal editors with questions.
12. Look at the available journals and decide on the best 3 or 4 for your article.
13. Always look at the reference section to see where people are publishing similar articles.
14. Sponsor visiting scholars who want to work with you; they often have writing plans.
15. Become second or third author sometime in order to spread your limited time.
16. Listen to your colleagues and team and shoot for the journals to which they aspire.
17. Recap the reviewer points and how you have attempted to address them.
18. Be polite and thankful to the journal or book chapter editor(s).
19. Review your CV/resume: check in process, in review, in press, and published articles and chapters. Remind yourself of your annual accomplishments. Remind yourself of your shortcomings.
20. Celebrate your writing accomplishments with friends. These do not happen often enough.

See also: Cecil Smith (2004, April 12). *Advice for new faculty members: Getting your writing program started.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference (AERA), San Diego, CA.

1. Assistance, Or Getting by with a Little Help from My Friends.

- a. Find a writing mentor—someone who is honest, direct, and quick with feedback.
- b. If you form a research team, commit to a time and place for weekly or monthly meetings.
- c. Identify good writing models in your field.
- d. Be careful being lured onto the research projects of others and senior faculty.

2. Organization is the Key.

- a. Do your research and writing prior to your teaching and class preparation.
- b. Use bulletin board with push pins and index cards of writing projects to indicate progress.
- c. Set small writing goals for each week.
- d. If you must teach in the summer for the \$\$\$, teach short or intensive courses.
- e. Try to familiarize yourself with the journal and the manuscript style and format.
- f. Find a direction for your writing. Rework dissertation to the “least publishable unit.”
- g. Do not be afraid to call a senior person in your field for advice.
- h. Think about multiple papers from one project; e.g., publish both the research AND the model.
- i. If you find a niche area, keep publishing in it...go deep! Applied and theoretical articles is fine.

3. Persistence + Priorities = Productivity.

- a. Try not to ever give up on a piece of writing. Persistence and grit wins the day.
- b. But still be willing to cut your losses and move on when needed.
- c. Avoid doing too many conference presentations. Finish your papers first.
- d. Get an effective laptop, tablet, or writing device for writing on planes and in airports and cafes.
- e. Try not to feel guilty declining a committee or other service or requests.

4. Money, It's a Hit.

- a. Get grants and inquire about other sources of funding to give you time off to write.
- b. Attend workshops on grant writing.
- c. Find small pots of money from university for small projects and start-up research.