Publish or Perish

Maureen Anthony, PhD, RN
Editor, Home Healthcare Now
Tina M. Marrelli, MSN, MA, RN, FAAN
President, Marrelli and Associates, Inc.
“Writing is easy. All you have to do is cross out the wrong words.”
Mark Twain
Reasons to consider writing

• Passion/personal satisfaction
• Share information
• Answer research questions
• Improve nursing practice
• Share your best practice or unforgettable patient story
• Provide your opinion
• Improve your knowledge
• Influence policy
Reasons to consider writing

• Support tenure and promotion
• May be tied to performance evaluation
• Helps define your niche/specialty
• Acceptance emails make an author feel great! (whether it is the first time or after numerous submissions)
NOT a Reason to Write!
Publishing Opportunities

Organization newsletters and newspapers
Journals (in a range of styles- approximately 530 nursing journals, >350 are peer reviewed)
Lay publications
   Newspapers
   Magazines
   Books
Beware!

- Jeffrey Beall’s list of predatory journals: [http://scholarlyoa.com/2015/01/02/bealls-list-of-predatory-publishers-2015/](http://scholarlyoa.com/2015/01/02/bealls-list-of-predatory-publishers-2015/)
Barriers to Writing

• Inexperience
• Lack of time and effort
• Lack of knowledge related to the process
• Lack of mentoring
• Not sure what to write about
What do Editors do?

• Develop journal philosophy, mission
• Research needs of audience
• Plan and create the journal content
• Recruit authors and reviewers
• Create an interesting publication that meets the needs of a diverse readership
Overview of Process

E-mail query to Editor
Submit manuscript to journal
Internal review (Editor)
External review – **Peer review process**
Decision
Revision
Production – copy editing
Author review of proof
Design/Art
Publication of article!
Selecting the Journal

Nurse Author Editor – List of Nursing Journals


- Submit your abstract – will select best-fit journals

Author guidelines

– Pay attention to details (word count, double space, page numbers, no fancy fonts, etc.)

Review three recent issues

Is it a match?

• Focus and style

• Audience
Alone or With Co-authors?

• Writing with others can motivate or slow you down
• Experienced authors can mentor – especially university faculty
• Determine order of authors before you start
Who is an Author?
Authorship

• Honorary authorship
• Ghost authorship
The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Criteria

– substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
– drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
– final approval of the version to be published, and
– agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.
Is it Yours?
The Legal Side of Writing

- Copyright and CTA
- Permissions
- Submit paper to only one journal at a time
- Plagiarism (either passing someone else’s work off as one’s own or not correctly citing where information was retrieved from)
- Self Plagiarism
Query Letter to the Editor

• Pick the journal that appears to be the best fit
• Go online to find information
• Sell your topic in a query email
• Address to current editor
  – On journal masthead
• Keep it brief, but long enough to convey ideas
  – 2 paragraphs or one paragraph with a bulleted list
The clock is ticking...

A positive response to your e-mail query shows that an editor is interested in your topic.

It’s not a guarantee.

Don’t delay!
Gather information

Gather more information than you think you need… Saturate yourself!

Journal articles
Reputable/authoritative Internet sources
Resources from multiple disciplines, lay press
Colleagues feedback: both expert and non-expert

*References – not more than 3-5 years
“All . . . have good thoughts, good ideas, and good intentions, but precious few of them ever translate those into action.”

John Hancock Field
Getting Started

• Set aside a day to get started
• Start your literature review
• Read, take notes, develop an outline
• Plan a paragraph a day
• Put it aside for a week or two and re-read
• Ask others to read
  – Someone knowledgeable with the topic
  – Someone unfamiliar with the topic
Writing is a learned skill

Learn more about writing by:

Practicing

Writing courses

Reading about writing


Writing is like going to the gym. No one likes going but everyone loves the feeling after...
Conquering Writer’s block

Take breaks as needed

Reward yourself after each page

Seek mentoring and encouragement from experienced writers
Poor Manuscripts: Symptoms

- Disjointed
- Does Not “Flow”
- Contains typos
- Make strong statements without references
- Was not proof-read/spell-checked before submission
- Sounds like a paper for school
- Reflects not reading/adhering to the Journal’s author guidelines

- Paper does not reflect purview of chosen journal
- “Old” references
- Poor title
- Information does not support title
- References in paper are not listed in reference list
- References not in APA or other chosen format
The Writing Process

• Consider co-author(s) – Who “does” what
• Mentors can help guide authors
• Offer support and “Lessons Learned”
• Remember ALL published authors started somewhere
• Journal clubs
• Writing clubs
The Writing Process

- First draft gets completed quickly when immersed in chosen topic
- Plan sections to write in specific time frames
- Use headings to define the topic for those sections
- Set and stick to a deadline
- Check your facts
- Think about and choose a working title – may be changed with Editor’s input
- Titles are important for many reasons
The Writing Process

Making the manuscript interesting: “sidebars”

– Use of tables, charts, figures
– Graphs in place of copy/written words
– Bulleted list
– Boxes

Why use a sidebar?

– Helps provide an interesting visual layout for the article
– Catches readers attention
– Less long running text
– A nice technique that catches an editors eye
– When scanning lengthy articles, readers can view bottom-line through these tools
Review by Colleagues – Seeking to Improve the Manuscript/Information

- Choose a special peer/collleague
- Direct them to be critical
- Expert and non-expert nurse review
- Interdisciplinary if needed
- Any problems/questions/clarifications
- Make their directed changes as identified
- Proofread/spell check one more time
Passive Voice

• The nursing exam was failed by over one-third of the applicants to the school. (14 words)

• Carbon dioxide was consumed by the plant. (7 words)

• The book is being read by most of the class. (10 words)

Active Voice

• Over one-third of the applicants to the school failed the exam. (11 words)

• The plant consumed carbon dioxide. (5 words)

• Most of the class is reading the book. (8 words)
Good Manuscripts: Symptoms

- Title reflects content
- Planned, organized content
- Adheres to Author Guidelines
- Stresses implications for practice
- Without typos
- A joy to read
- Editor/other readers learn new information

- Headers/topics categorized in body of paper
- Adheres to word limits
- Content supports title
- Science-based
- Evidence of depth of knowledge
- May be a CE manuscript/topic
- Clearly written for target audience of readers/subscribers
After manuscript submission...

Internal review begins...

• The editor critically reads with his/her knowledge of the Journal and its subscribers/readership!

• If you do not hear from the editor within 4-6 weeks, email for an update

• The editor may review and identify areas for improvement, gaps in the information, etc. and ask that you make changes prior to peer review. Remember, the editor is the expert on the Journal!
Blind Peer Review Process

- Very important and valuable
- Helps define the quality in manuscripts
- Time-consuming professional contribution activity
- Time-frame: 4-6 weeks (usually)
- Bottom-line: Does the manuscript merit publication?
- Reviewers seek to improve manuscripts, when possible
- Does this paper move forward knowledge/science/other related to HHC, hospice, and other health care provided at home?
Accepted Manuscript
Acceptance

• Most manuscripts need revision
• The editor usually provides the reviews with actual comments from reviewers (peer and editorial comments)
• Important to make the changes/requested revisions!
• Accept with minor revisions versus major revisions and review
• Do the rework – very high chance of acceptance at that point (many hours by all involved – author(s), editors, peer reviewers, editorial office team)
• All with the goal of improving your manuscript!
• Make changes and resubmit

Almost there!
Top Reasons for Rejection

1) Not written for the correct journal or audience
2) Multiple grammar and spelling errors
3) Nothing new or different
4) Poorly written
Other reasons for rejection:

- Old information/data
- Poor literature review or clinical inaccuracies
- Lack of clarity and focus
- The so-what factor
- Better papers on that topic in review/already accepted
- Lack of timely communications/revisions from author(s)
After editing by the journal team, the author reviews the final draft/revision!

- Carefully review all edits
- Author(s) and Journal are responsible for the final product!
- Proof, proof, and re-proof
Resources for Authors


- *Nurse Author & Editor* is an international publication dedicated to nurse authors, editors and reviewers and is completely free online [http://www.nurseauthoreditor.com/](http://www.nurseauthoreditor.com/)

- The OWL at Purdue is great for both MLA and APA styles for entire papers, not just citations: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/) and [http://www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)

- [http://www.mla.org/](http://www.mla.org/) as well as [www.citationmachine.net](http://www.citationmachine.net)

Resources for Authors

• STATS: Steve’s Attempt to Teach Statistics (http://childrens-mercy.org/stats/ask.asp) - Steve Simon, PhD, research statistician at Children’s Mercy Hospital and Clinics in Kansas City, MO, has a utilitarian website for those needing a quick explanation of various statistical maneuvers and tests seen in research papers. This helpful site is great for personal use when assessing stats in a manuscript and for author referral.

Resources on Publication Ethics

- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)
  http://www.publicationethics.org.uk/about

  http://www.asbpe.org/ - Also has a master list of links to editorial standards and guidelines from many organizations and publishing companies (newspapers, journalism organizations, etc)

Resources on Publication Ethics

• Recommendations on Publication Ethics Policies for Medical Journals, World Association of Medical Editors
  http://www.wame.org/pubethicrecom.htm


• How to Write a Scientific Paper –
  http://abacus.bates.edu/~ganderso/biology/resources/writing/HTWtoc.html
Questions?
Topic ideas? Brainstorming?
Where to From Here?