

Support for graduate research, practice, experience, and process

Notes from the second annual HSD graduate student conference

In October and November 2004 the Human and Social Development faculty held a two part conference for graduate students. The first part was a series of workshops intended to provide students with the practical information needed to navigate the research and writing process on their way to completing their degree. The second part focused on what to expect as an HSD graduate student and all paper and poster presentations were presented by HSD grad students with regards to their own research, practice, experience or process.

With permission from the authors, the notes from several of the October workshops are reprinted in the following pages. See the Studies of Policy and Practice website for some of the other papers and presentations from the HSD conference, including:

- *The Methodology Chapter*, by Susan Boyd
- *Practical Tools for Handling Stress as a Grad Student*, by Michele Butot
- *Writing Analysis in Qualitative Research*, by Marie Campbell
- *The Conference Presentation*, by Lynda Gagne
- *Mapping the Thesis*, by Patricia MacKenzie
- *The Defence*, by Anita Molzhan
- *Academic Publishing for Graduate Students*, by Pamela Moss
- *Thesis Proposals: A Declaration of Honest Intentions*, by Michael J. Prince
- *The Research Proposal in Thirteen Parts*, by Marge Reitsma-Street
- *Writing, Re-Writing and Writer's Block*, by Dr. Daniel G. Scott
- *Undertaking a Literature Review: Conceptual and Practical Issues*, by Tracie Smith
- *Library - Frequently Asked Questions*, by Tracie Smith
- *Undertaking a Literature Review*, by Kathy Teghtsoonian
- <http://web.uvic.ca/spp/news&events/pastevents.htm>

Notes on Academic Publishing for Graduate Students

by Pamela Moss, PhD, Studies in Policy and Practice for Health and Social Services Faculty Member (prepared for October 2004 Human and Social Development Conference).

Academic publishing is increasingly becoming a requirement for Canadian graduate students. The beginning of the pressure to publish is now shifted from post-doctoral scholars and new scholars to graduate students during their studies. Academic publishing takes many forms: reports, briefs, journal articles, books, monographs, editorials, newsletters, book chapters, conference proceedings, etc. The focus for emerging scholars is the journal articles that have been peer-reviewed.

When to publish

There are different strategies to approach publishing. Some advocate publishing widely, quickly and in every way you can. Some advocate a directed publishing approach, deliberately planned and carefully thought out, taking into account long periods of an academic career. While both can probably get you where you need to be, there still has to be a solid base from which you publish. In other words, your work has to be good.

Pre-thesis/dissertation publishing

Often works published before the thesis or dissertation is completed are not about the research topic itself; usually they are literature reviews, book reviews, methodological pieces, opinion pieces, editorials and perhaps group research papers. These are works that are related to the research process but may not find a way into the thesis or dissertation or to coursework that you've done.

Of course, the efforts to publish ought not to get in the way of continuing your work on your thesis or dissertation.

Post-thesis/dissertation publishing

• These works tend to be about the research itself. Usually there is an empirical component (based on data collected) and a framework (theory, even if used in a loosely defined way). The contributions that these pieces make to the literature out [are] often noted in the end sections of the article.

- For master's students (and some undergraduate students), usually one really good article from the thesis can be expected, and possibly two (but this is not usual).
- For doctoral students, the dissertation is the basis upon which you get a job and constitutes a large part of the first years of publication while in a tenure track position. In this sense the dissertation is the initial shaper of the publishing aspect of an academic career.
- For post-doctoral students, the time during the tenure of the award is the time where you work with an already existing framework (either teaching or research) and publish your work from the dissertation research. This time is also devoted to setting up the next project and putting into place solid research from which you launch your academic career.

Where to publish

This depends on your discipline. Most disciplines, even if you are interdisciplinary, have specific sets of journals that are germane to your work – topically, methodologically and theoretically.

This also depends on what 'counts'. By counting I mean which journals are considered to be prestigious, worthwhile, cutting-edge and so on. For example, a journal that is not peer-reviewed does not hold as much academic clout as one that is peer-reviewed. Sometimes book chapters are acceptable, and sometimes they aren't. Some journals have more prestigious reputations (ones that are international as opposed to national, and national as opposed to local). On-line journals used to be less prestigious than printed journals. If

you are unsure about the hierarchy of journals in your area, ask your peers, your supervisor or your committee members.

One of the most useful things you can do when beginning to publish academically, is to identify journals you want your work to appear in.

- *Topical journals*: these are organized around the topic under scrutiny, e.g. European Journal of Social Welfare, Canadian Review of Social Policy, Social Science and Medicine, Social Problems

- *Theoretical orientation*: Studies in Political Economy, Feminist Theory, Theory, Culture & Society, Rethinking Marxism

- *Methodology*: Qualitative Research, International Journal of Social Research, Qualitative Inquiry

- *General fields of study*: these are usually the publications of the professional organization body of the discipline; *The Canadian Geographer*, *The New Zealand Geographer*, *The Irish Geographer*, *The Professional Geographer* (transactions and annals in the titles of the journals are good indicators that these are general fields of study. One-word titles encompassing large bodies of thinking, too, are good indicators, as for example, Sociology).

Once you have decided, look at the journal and see what kinds of articles have been published recently (in the last few years). If the journal has several themed issues, it is prudent to contact the editor to see if the journal is accepting unsolicited manuscripts. Make a judgment as to whether your work would fit the journal's mandate.

Preparing the manuscript

Most journals have a set of notes to authors – printed either online or in at least one of the published issues of the journal – that specifically state how the manuscript is to be prepared. Follow these. Don't submit a sloppy copy. Don't have typos. Don't make blatant grammatical errors. There is nothing an editor likes better than to have a manuscript that actually follows the detailed guidelines for manuscript preparation that have been set out

for the journal! In some cases, journals do not even consider manuscripts that are not in their specific format.

- Include an abstract, if requested. One guideline for writing abstracts is to have a sentence corresponding to each of the sections in the paper. Sometimes guidelines are published as to what is to be included in the abstract. If so, do it this way.

- Include a cover letter. Use polite, professional language. Include the title, contact addresses and any additional information the editor might need to know. For example, if there are figures or tables to be included but are on different-sized sheets of paper because of the production process, state it. If this is a re-submission of an earlier manuscript reviewed for the journal, explicitly state how you addressed each reviewer's and the editor's comments.

The review process: peer-review journals

Each piece is reviewed by three experts in the area. Sometimes these are exactly in your field, and sometimes they are not. Reviewers submit a written report to the editor, who then distils that information and writes a report to the author. This process takes anywhere from three to six months. If three months have passed and you have not heard from the editor, do contact and ask where the manuscript is in the review process. Most editors will respond kindly.

The usual categories for a submission report are: accepted as is; accepted with minor revisions; accepted with major revisions (editor only to review changes); accepted with major revisions (referees to review changes); revise and re-submit (undergoes the review process again, sometimes the same and sometimes different); reject (poor quality); reject (not appropriate).

- The first category is rare. There is usually something that needs attention, even if minor.

- If asked for revisions, do them in a timely fashion. Put lots of thought into the revisions. Don't just go through the manuscript and correct the items noted by the reviewers. Take into account what the reviewers have written in the reports and thoughtfully go through the

manuscript to see if there are other instances of the issue identified in another part of the paper.

- Don't be offended if the decision is to "revise and re-submit". This category is usually only used when the piece of work shows real promise. Revise the entire paper and then re-submit. (In the cover letter, state how the paper was revised.)

- If the manuscript is rejected, don't be alarmed. Rejection rates for journals vary widely - between 20 per cent and 80 per cent; the higher the rejection rate, the more prestigious the journal usually is. The rejection rate for emerging scholars is usually higher than more established scholars. Remember, every established scholar was once an emerging scholar. The stack of rejection letters is indeed high.

- Sometimes a paper needs to be revised and re-submitted to a different journal. Sometime a paper needs to be abandoned. This is a difficult decision, but one that may prove to be useful in the end.

Books

The publishing processes vary from publishing house to publishing house. Sometimes you contact them. Sometimes they contact you. Sometimes an entire manuscript is needed. Sometimes only an outline. Sometimes a sample chapter. Each publisher is different. Make sure that you contact the acquisitions editor to see if they are interested in a particular idea for a book. That editor will direct you through the process.

- Choose an appropriate press. University presses hold more academic weight than others. However, there are other publishers that have outstanding reputations. If in doubt, ask around; people will have opinions.

- In some disciplines, there is an implicit expectation that the dissertation is to be transformed into a book once a job has been secured. This is not the case for all disciplines. Some disciplines have an implicit expectation that books are not for junior scholars, but only for senior scholars – and certainly not arising from the dissertation. Again, ask around. Someone has to know these implicit

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expectations!

Publishing as part of your career

Some people set up publication schedules for themselves early in their career. This may be helpful for you, especially when the implicit expectations of your discipline and your job are included.

You may get asked to submit a list of publications you are working on or of journals you plan to publish in. Be careful in acquiescing to such a request. It may turn into a contract. Clarify the use of the list before you submit it.

It is a good idea to get other people to read your written work. Perhaps as a potential reviewer (ask your supervisor or mentor), as a peer or as a harsh critic. The written work only benefits from such a process.

Some people just write and submit their work for review without ever having someone else read the manuscript. There are lots of reasons for this – lack of community, deadlines and timidity, to name but a few. Not having anyone look over the written work makes a lot of work for an editor and a lot of work for a reviewer. If you're just starting out, I would suggest not doing this.

Choose a mentor (who has things to say about publishing in your field) who understand your interests and has some commitment to you as a person. The mentor can assist you in making your way through this labyrinth of publishing.

Research team publishing and co-authoring with supervisor

Research team publishing is different than publishing between a student and a supervisor. It is now routinely part of the research planning to designate authorship on articles arising from research in a team setting. If this is not part of the planning, be sure to ask. Getting paid for doing research does not automatically position you as an author on all future publications about that data.

Boundaries are confused/blurry/permeable when a student obtains the information for the thesis/dissertation from a team research project. Try early on in the process to clarify who has authorship rights to your part of

the research project.

Sometimes, when students publish from their thesis work, supervisors become co-authors. Again, clarify this with the supervisor or other research team members.

Semi-final comments

- Do try publishing. Placing your graduate research in published forums has wider audiences than for theses and dissertations.
- Don't get discouraged. Publishing has been described as a brutal process. Tears are shed and feelings are hurt.
- Publishing your research is probably still a worthwhile process, but only you will know for sure.

Library Frequently Asked Questions

By Tracie Smith

(Prepared for October 2004 Human and Social Development Conference).

1. Can I get to the library resources from off campus?

Yes. The library resources are available from anywhere. You will be prompted for your netlink ID and password when you go to use the journal databases.

2. I tried searching a journal database but got too many results or too few. What am I doing wrong?

Probably nothing! Searching is part art and part science. Remember to combine terms or concepts using the word and which will help to narrow your search results. Combining similar terms using the word or will help to expand your search results. You can also use these in combination – for example, if I wanted to search for material on housing for the elderly I could do any of the following:

- elderly and housing
- (elderly or aged) and housing
- (elderly or aged) and (housing or accommodation)

Putting (brackets) around those words separated by or is the accepted practice for searching in databases.

3. Can I search more than one database

at a time?

YES. Certain databases that all come from the same vendor can be searched simultaneously. A good example of this is any of the Ebsco databases. We subscribe to many – Academic Search Elite, ERIC, PsycInfo and others are all Ebsco databases. Another example would be the CSA databases such as Sociological Abstracts, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts and a few others.

Other databases must be searched on their own but it's a good idea to enter the same search terms in each database to see what kinds of initial results you find.

4. Can I get the full text of journal articles online?

YES. Some articles are available in full text through journal databases. Other articles are available because we subscribe to an online version of a particular journal.

5. Sometimes when I try to get the full text of a journal article, I get asked for a username and password. What's going on?

Many of our online journal subscriptions begin in 1998. It could be that the article you want was published earlier than that. If so, check the library catalogue to see if we have the journal in print.

6. If UVic doesn't have the book or journal I want, can I get it from another library?

Yes. You can order journal articles and books using Document Delivery or Interlibrary Loan.

Document delivery is an unmediated service where you request the material directly from another library. Your request usually takes from three to seven business days to arrive and will come to the McPherson Library. Articles are placed in baskets on a shelf near the loan desk and books will be kept behind the loan desk for you to pick up. You are NOT notified if an article arrives so just keep checking. You WILL be notified if you've ordered a book as this will have a due date.

Interlibrary loan is a mediated service which means your request goes to our Interlibrary Loan department and they search for you. Use this service only if you cannot find what

you want using Document Delivery. Also this service is useful for ordering theses/dissertations from other universities. You can expect to wait two to three weeks during peak times of the term for your article or book to arrive. Again, these come to McPherson Library. You WILL be notified when your material arrives.

7. *How do I make sure I have looked in other disciplines and areas of study to make sure I have as much research on my topic as possible?*

Think about all the angles to your topic – psychological, emotion, social, anthropological, medical, etc. Then look at Articles on a Topic and decide which broad subject best suits that angle. Read the database descriptions under each broad category and go from there. If in doubt, ask a librarian for some suggestions.

8. *I've heard about Endnote or RefWorks. What are these and how do I get them?*

These are bibliographic management tools you can use to store citations you find in databases and then use in the writing of your paper to insert in-text citations and to format your bibliography.

Endnote is software that you buy. The computer store on campus sells this software and it costs approx. \$100. The software can only be on one computer, so if you were doing work on campus and wanted to export your citations to Endnote, you could only do this if you had brought along your computer.

Refworks is an internet-based product. The library has purchased a license so that any UVic student, staff or faculty can log in and set up an account. You can get access to your *Refworks* account from any Internet computer. For more information about both these products, go to the Libraries Gateway (gateway.uvic.ca), mouse over Library Instruction and click on Endnote/Refworks.

9. *I've heard that the library does the final check on my thesis. Is this true?*

NO. The library stopped checking theses in 1998. Candidates will be required to check their own theses according to the *Instructions for the Preparation of Graduate Dissertations and Theses*

<http://web.uvic.ca/grar/website/forms/pdf/Sept00thesisguide.pdf>

Undertaking a Literature Review: Conceptual and Practical Issues

By Tracie Smith

(Prepared for October 2004 Human and Social Development Conference).

Databases

A database is any collection of data or information that is specifically organized for rapid search and retrieval by a computer. Online databases frequently provide citations and abstracts and often the full text of articles, book chapters, poetry, drama etc. Tables of data and graphical images may also be included. The library subscribes to a variety of databases which cover many subject areas. Some encompass several disciplines and others are subject-specific.

Choosing a database

From the Libraries Gateway choose databases. Select a broad subject category that covers your research and click to find the related databases (*see next page for some suggestions). Ask a librarian for advice, or use our online reference services Ask a Librarian (email) or Ask Us Live! (chat)

Starting a Search

Simple Search: Each database offers a "search" or "find" option where you enter your keywords or concepts.

Keyword searching: allows you to search for terms/words in the citation as well as the full text.

Advanced/Guided Search: The advanced search function offers specific field searching. It allows you to search in the author, subject, abstract or full text fields. Advanced searching allows you to be more specific with your searching.

Refine your search: In addition, many databases provide ways of limiting searches: to full-text articles only, to peer reviewed journals only, to a specific date range etc.

Searching tricks

- Use * at the end of a word to find different endings. e.g. child* finds child, childs,

childhood, children

- Use the word and to combine terms (to narrow your search) and use the word or between similar terms (to expand your search)

Help Screens

Use help screens for each database.

Some databases to get you started:

Alternative Press Index

International/interdisciplinary coverage of alternative sources of information.

Dissertation Abstracts International

Contains more than 1.5 million citations to dissertations and theses written by authors from over 1,000 North American graduate schools and European universities. Abstracts are included for dissertations written after 1980 and for theses written after 1988.

PAIS International

Public and social policy literature of business, economics, finance, law, international relations, public administration, government, political science and other social sciences -- with emphasis on issues that are or might become the subjects of legislation.

Science Direct

A collection of e-journals that you can search for your topic. A useful way of finding current full-text information in scholarly publications

Social Services Abstracts

Current research on human services and related areas including social issues, social policy and community development.

Web of Science

A scholarly database with current coverage of many topics. Web of Science is Arts & Science, Humanities and Science Indexes combined. Article citations include a Times Cited link.

For further information or help, contact

Tracie Smith: tracies@uvic.ca / 721-7899 D202, MacLaurin Building

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Practical Tools for Handling Stress as a Grad Student

by Michèle Butot, BEd, MSW, RSW,
Clinical Social Worker

(Prepared for October 2003 Human and Social Development Conference, when Michèle was an MSW candidate)

Some simple exercises:

Let your mind rest on the breath at the nostrils, silently repeating to yourself “in-cool, out-warm” for one to several minutes, allowing the practice to do its work, helping your distress symptoms or anxiety to subside naturally.

Parasympathetic stimulation breath

(for anxiety reduction)

This breath physiologically stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system via the vagus nerve, stimulating the body’s natural relaxation response. It can safely be practiced at any time. In case of depression, it is best balanced with a period of aerobic activity such as walking.

- Bring your attention to your breath, as it is in

this moment, rest and breathe. Now let your attention come to the base of your nostrils, allow your attention to rest here for a few moments.

- Now, begin to notice the difference between the in-breath and the out-breath. Perhaps you can notice that the in-breath is slightly cooler and the out-breath is slightly warmer. Some people also notice that the in-breath and out-breath are different in moisture content.

Anxiety reduction pressure point

This technique acts to calm and lower anxiety.

- Make a soft fist with your left hand, so the fingers rest along the center of your palm. Notice where the left middle finger touches, in the ‘heart’ of the palm.
- With your right thumb, press firmly on this point in the center of your left palm for one minute, breathing slowly and comfortably, and feel your anxiety drain away.

Simple sleeping meditation

Make yourself comfortable, close your eyes and

bring your attention to your heart.

- With your inner awareness on your heart, silently say “one”.
- Next, bring your attention to your left shoulder and silently say “two”; your left hip, “three”; your navel, “four”; your right hip, “five”; your right shoulder, “six”...then back to the heart for “one” and so on...two, three, four, five, six...moving your attention at a comfortable and relaxed pace.
- If your attention wanders, simply notice that and gently bring it back to the count. Let your mind ‘busy’ itself slowly moving in this pattern, and it will soon tire and come to rest at the heart, its settling place for sleep.

As you begin to drift off, simply let go of the practice and allow yourself to sink into sleep.

- Right Shoulder – (6)
- Left Shoulder – (2)
- Heart – (1)
- Navel – (4)
- Right Hip – (5)
- Left Hip – (3)

The secret life of rabbit secretions

By An Anonymous Contributor

Rabbits are herbivores, which means that their diet is strictly plant matter. Plants have strong cell walls that are difficult to break down. This is a problem for any herbivore, since all the good stuff, (the nutrients) is contained within the cell. Rabbits are able to access and utilize plant nutrients with the aid of two processes. The first, is that rabbits have an enlarged cecum. Within the cecum there is bacteria that helps to break down the plant cell walls. Plant material passes through the digestive system once, and is excreted as waste. After passing through the rabbit digestive track only once, the feces (pooh) are green. The feces are consumed by the rabbit, and again pass through its digestive tract. This helps to maximize the amount of nutrients that rabbit can absorb from the plant (waste not, want not). After a second run, the feces are then brown. This is the rabbit pooh that the public is familiar with. The green pooh goes unnoticed, since it is immediately consumed.

