

The Academic Composing Process: Some Conjectures

Don't be in a hurry, don't overwork

Write before you read

It's easier to write now when you know less (Peter Elbow).

Read after you have a plan, read narrowly

And read "narrowly."

Should you "keep up with the literature"?

Bazerman's scientists

Flexible plans: good writers are willing to change their plans, return to their plan while reading the research of others.

Creative thinkers get most of their original ideas from their own previous work;; they read to confirm their own ideas (Glueck and Jauch, 1975).

Primary research: Only when necessary!

Breakthroughs - often from

- 1. secondary analysis**
- 2. meta-analysis.**

Doing primary research

SK: 1. use existing sets of data.

2. Save your time, save subjects' time.

3. try to use tools developed by other researchers,

4, "Unobtrusive measures," data = subjects contribute without knowing it, without being bothered

Z Frank automobile dealer

e.g. The Wear and Tear study (Ashtari & Krashen)

Writing up the research paper

Which journal? Forget it.

The Central Table Hypothesis.

The order:

- 1. the central table**
- 2. supporting tables of results**
- 3. write up the results section - frames the tables**
- 4. the procedure section**
- 5. the conclusion – short summary, "apologies", implications (concise), future research (short)**

: "It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material" (Crick and Watson p. 737).

- 6. the introduction (focused). Do this LAST. Just the necessary background, no more.**

Everybody gets rejected: not everybody talks about it.

Refusal rates: APA 2013 76%

Are journals arbitrary?

Peters and Ceci, 1982: 12 previously accepted papers changed only slightly, resubmitted under different names to journals that had previously accepted them: Reviewers recognized only three of the papers as previously published, eight of the remaining nine were rejected for publication, mostly because of methodology.

Are journals conservative?

One negative review out of 3 > rejection.

Suggested reading: Rotten Reviews

Dealing with feedback. Do it right away:

Accept those criticisms that you think feel are right, and reject those that you think are wrong, even if it doing the latter means not getting the paper published in a prestigious journal.

It is your paper, you are responsible for the content.

Summary

GWs (Good Writers) understand that revision helps them come up with new ideas. They do not confuse revision with editing, and regard their first drafts as tentative.

GWs have a plan before writing, but the plans are flexible.

GWs frequently reread what they have written.

GWs delay editing (formal aspects) until their ideas have been worked out.

GWs intersperse periods of relaxation with periods of intensive activity, to encourage problem-solving and loosen writers' blocks.

GWs treat writing as a job, keep regular hours, write regularly. They do not engage in binge writing.

GWs delay considerations of audience until their ideas have been worked out.

GAWs (Good Academic Writers) ignore deadlines.

GAWs write before reading.

**GAWs read narrowly. They do not attempt to “keep up with the literature.”
GAWs return to their plan frequently while reading the research of others.
GAWs understand that primary research is only one way of doing research.
GAWs take advantage of existing sets of data, others’ tools, and try to do
unobtrusive studies**

GAWs don’t worry about where to publish until the paper is done.

GAWs deal with criticisms and rejections without delay.

**GAWs accept criticisms and comments that are helpful to them, and do not
accept those that are not.**

NOTE:

**Simonton (1984) asks: Are eminent thinkers (a) ahead of the times or (b) with
the times? None of the above. They are usually behind the times.**

**The truly impressive thinkers are ruggedly independent of what the zeitgeist
dictates for their generation” (Simonton, p. 156).**

**Eminent thinkers: “oddly backward-looking in their ideas” and “struggle to
consolidate the ideas of the recent past into some grand overarching
synthesis” (p. 156).**