

Scholarship Made Easier:

Best Practices for Writing and
Publishing More Effectively and
Efficiently

- The following is a summary of a presentation by Linda B. Nilson, Clemson University
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Participant Objective

- Maximize production of well written manuscripts with a high likelihood of publication (presentation) in an appropriate journal (conference)

Best Practices for Producing Effectively and Efficiently

1. Get Publication ideas: “further research needed,” “limitations.”
2. Preparation: emotional balance, plan-development, organization
3. Follow a formula
4. Control your writing time
5. Write to communicate.

Best Practices *continued*

6. Stop before returns diminish and get feedback
7. Query target journal editor.
8. Submit!

Preparation

- Detach yourself from the product; stay open to criticism and change.
- moderate emotions
- “wait actively” to develop plans.
- Start early.
- Get organized.

“Wait actively” to plan.

- Don't rush into next step, sentence.
- Reflect first on **what** to say/do, **how** to say/do. Breathe, Visualize, Meditate
- Pause to notice alternatives and simplifications.
- Do this anytime, anywhere
 - ≠ Procrastination, which puts focus on something else.

How to “wait actively”

- Close your eyes and imagine yourself at your work place.
- Focus on something you’re in the process of writing or designing.
- Breathe deeply, relax, and visualize or reflect on the next steps.

Start early.

- Before you feel ready, pushed to start.
- Outline, concept-map, free-write
- Give your subconscious time to conceive, organize, refine ideas.
- Enjoy freedom from stress, pressure.
- Do this almost anytime, anywhere.

Get organized.

“Fast Organizing”

- 2 bookshelves: In Prep, In Submission
- One 1” – 2” binder per article
- Key idea or title on spine
- Adjusted article checklist (sections)
- Dividers: Article, Data, References
- Key literature in Refs section

3. Follow a formula.

- “Fast Writing”
- Select & flag model article.
- E-folder with adjusted article shell
<http://people.clemson.edu/~eleanam/>
- Write into shell, easiest sections first.
- Tables & figures first, then simply describe in Results and Discussion.

4. Control writing time.

- Say “no” to *non-essential* tasks.
- Limit time for *low-consequence* but *essential* tasks (email, ms reviewing, writing tests, grading). *They take as long as you allocate to them.*
- Limit student time; draw boundaries.

Control time *continued*

- Don't wait for long blocks of free time.
- Research/write ***daily*** at least 15-30 minutes, and keep track.

Quadrupled average number of ms pages written/revised in a year (17 to 64 pages)

- *Write* something every day

Control time *continued*

- You will keep your flow from day to day, eliminate start-up time.
- You will see your progress every day and gain motivation.
- Find a writing buddy or group.

Increased average number of ms pages written/revised in a year by a **factor of 9** (17 to 157 pages)

5. Write to communicate.

- Post thesis and write to it.
- ID key message for each paragraph = “key(topic)sentence” (→outline).
- Use transitions.
- Read ms aloud.
- www.editavenue.com editing service 20 pages: \$133 (3 days), \$203 (1 day)

6. Stop before returns diminish, get feedback.

- Avoid perfectionism.
- Share with colleagues for advice:
 - Early drafts with non-experts (no-need to impress)
 - Later drafts with experts– and ask for journal recommendations
- Revise to readers' comments

7. Query journal editor.

- Ask about interest/fit.
- Email.
- Wait 2 weeks, then resend.
- Reply w/ thanks to any response.

8. Submit!

- “Fast Record-keeping”
- Electronically if possible.
- File receipt, in article binder.
- Record journal’s log-in info.
- Move folder to “In Submission” shelf.
- Spreadsheet listing of submissions