

## Intensive Course in Research Writing

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## Intensive Course in Research Writing: Session 11 (12 July 2016)

### Today

- Presentations by some class members
- Presentation/discussion (left from before): preparing progress reports
- Presentation/discussion: writing review articles
- Presentation/discussion: writing or supervising a thesis or dissertation
- If time permits: workshop—plans for compiling your paper

### Presentations by Class Members

### Preparing Progress Reports

(material from before)

### Announcements etc

- Copies available: books ordered
- Reading for tomorrow and Thursday
- Writing for tomorrow, Thursday, and Friday
- Panel discussion Thursday: advice from journal editors and peer reviewers
- End-of course dinner

## Writing Review Articles

## Review Articles

- Review article—an article summarizing the literature on a topic
- Popularity of review articles with
  - Graduate students
  - Practitioners
  - People changing research areas
  - Others
- High citation rates of some review articles and review journals

## Mini-Workshop

- Do the instructions for authors for your target journal say anything about writing review articles? If so, what do they say?
- Have you ever written a review article? If so, what was the experience like?
- What did you notice about some of the review articles you looked at?

## Tips: Preparing to Write a Review Article

- Check beforehand whether an editor might be interested.
- Carefully define the scope of the article.
- Search the literature thoroughly and methodically. Keep a record of your search strategy.
- Perhaps obtain help from a librarian.
- Perhaps have criteria for including articles.
- Consider recording information on standardized forms or in a spreadsheet.

## Two Structures for Review Articles

- Subtopic-by-Subtopic (with a subheading for each), much like a book chapter
- Modified IMRAD—for example, for a systematic review article
  - Introduction
  - Methods used to search and analyze the literature
  - Results (findings of the search)
  - Discussion

## Browsing: Examples of Review Articles with the Two Structures

## Tips: Writing a Review Article

- Organize the article carefully.
- Stay focused.
- Integrate what you found; do not merely catalogue it.
- Because the audience may be broad, write especially clearly.
- Double-check the text and references for accuracy.

## Discussion Questions

- If you were to write a review article now, what would the topic be?
- Where would you want to publish the article? Why?

## Some Resources

- [Tips for writing your first scientific literature review article](#)
- [I want to do a systematic review](#)
- [The PRISMA Statement](#) (PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses)
- [Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide](#)
- [NAS Award for Scientific Reviewing](#) (a good way to identify authors of excellent review articles—and thus to find examples of excellent review articles)

## Writing or Supervising a Thesis or Dissertation

Some Pointers to Use or Share  
(with an emphasis on writing and publishing)

## Pointers: Doing a Thesis or Dissertation

- Be alert for potential topics long before you need to choose one.
- Choose a topic you're very interested in.
- Choose a topic that's big enough to be meaningful but small enough to be doable. (Initial ideas tend to be too ambitious.)
- Pay careful attention to study design.
- Keep publication in mind from the beginning.

## Pointers (cont)

- Try to include committee members who can guide you in various aspects of your thesis, including writing.
- Make sure all members of your committee agree up front about the scope of your thesis.
- Write a good proposal, and use it as a foundation for later writing.
- Set a timetable. Realize, however, that items are likely to take longer than expected.

### Pointers (cont)

- Realize that you'll need to rewrite and rewrite.
- Be aware that you don't "publish a thesis." Rather, you prepare publications based on your thesis research (or incorporate papers that you wrote into your thesis).
  - A thesis tends to include lots of detail, in part to help you master your field and show your committee that you've done so.
  - The publications based on your thesis research should focus on what readers would find new, interesting, and useful.

If Time Permits: Workshop—  
Plans for Compiling Your Paper