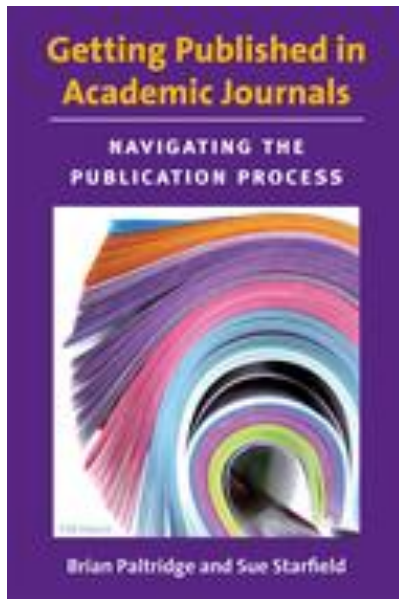


BOOK REVIEW



ACADEMICS MUST WRITE: PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield.
GETTING PUBLISHED IN ACADEMIC
JOURNALS. NAVIGATING THE PUBLICATION
PROCESS (2016), Ann Arbor: University of
Michigan. 114 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0-472-
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The book *Getting Published in Academic Journals. Navigating the Publication Process* by Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield contributes to the field of academic literacy by tackling the academic publishing system. Aimed at graduate students and early career researchers, the book is compelling reading and meticulous in the extensive details it presents based on authors' experience as authors of published research, teachers and researchers of academic writing for research publication purposes, editors of academic journals and peer reviewers. The process of getting published in academic journals is foreseen – and this is the main assumption of the book – as a “race” (p. x) in which a great deal of meta-awareness is needed to make writing processes available for reflection and to monitor one's own production system. While engaging in this race, to be able to cash in on those academic and professional opportunities that many novice scholars aspire to is deemed necessary.

The information is concisely relayed in five chapters followed by a flowchart which breaks down the peer review process into manageable steps. Chapter 1 “Writing for academic journals” raises awareness of issues that range from manuscript preparation and drafting aspects such as research ethics, knowledge of

the rhetorical situation, style and discourse community to the practice of getting feedback, collaborating on a manuscript, or publishing from a dissertation. But the discussion is not limited to these topics, and it extends to good examples of methods that may facilitate writing productivity.

Chapter 2 “Deciding which academic journal to publish in” is a comprehensive overview of key issues, including measures that quantify the impact of peer-reviewed academic journals as well as that of single papers, a useful classification of journals ranked according to their prestige (i.e. disciplinary, field, interdisciplinary, age or regional scope) or access (i.e. open-access), social media sites for academic publishing, and fundamental principles of writing for an international audience of peers. The challenge for novice writers is to figure out where to publish, and a “Worksheet for Evaluating Academic Journals” (p. 40) has been proposed to enable writers to make an informed decision. The take-home message of the chapter, however, is that submitting your work to a highly ranked peer-reviewed journal may seem a daunting prospect only when awareness of potential publication outlets is lacking, so novice writers should buckle up for the ride and keep a list of journals (ordered by relevance) at hand.

One of the assets of this book is that it draws not only on peer review feedback but also on strategies advocated by research into academic writing for research publication. Such strategies are discussed in Chapter 3 “Connecting your article to readers”. The challenging Introduction, Discussion and Conclusion sections are dealt with separately. By the end of this chapter, novice writers learn to be more attuned to reader thinking. They are shown how to become ethnographers of writing practices and observe rhetorical strategies and language function to communicate knowledge to a community of peers. Other aspects such as keywords, the title and the abstract of a paper, journal guidelines, and references come under the magnifying glass of this chapter.

Moving on to Chapter 4 “Understanding the peer review process” the authors discuss the role that editors and reviewers have in the review process, the criteria which are used to evaluate the quality of a manuscript, and the expectations they have for the author of the paper under review. This chapter lays down arguments for quality in research publication. Once again, the authors make a case for peer review conventions encouraging new writers to consider carefully aspects such as journal guidelines and be prepared for the time the reviewing process will take.

Finally, Chapter 5 “Reading reviewers’ reports and addressing their concerns” is an excellent hands-on chapter that cites specific review comments and author responses, giving novice writers an idea of how to format the response letter to allow the editor and reviewers to follow the actual manuscript changes in the revised version of the paper. Responding to reviewers’ comments on submitted articles is paramount and the outright value of the chapter in that regard lies in the fact that few authors receive any training in how to respond to editors and reviewers’ feedback.

Overall, this book is not only a guide, dedicated to training novice writers about the rules of the game of academic writing and publication as it is played in the mainstream, but also equips them with the tools, questions and habits that are critical for success. These aspects greatly enhance the pedagogical value of the book. On the practical side, this book is a toolbox which contains a flowchart of the peer review process, a worksheet to get feedback from colleagues on a draft paper, extracts from real author responses to reviewers and even anecdotes as personal life stories in relation to academic publishing to be used along the way.

In *Getting Published in Academic Journals. Navigating the Publication Process*, the authors provide a comprehensive treatment of the subject that flows smoothly from chapter to chapter. It is an easy read and the issues covered in the book parallel the issues in other research texts, making it useful for teachers who need a pedagogic tool in academic writing classes as well as novice writers at different levels of writing achievement and in different contexts. From well-respected and renowned researchers of academic writing, teachers of courses in writing for publication and editors of acclaimed peer-reviewed journals Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield, this book is a must-read guide to academic writing publishing strategies that most successful writers use to get published in academic journals worldwide.

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