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Writing for Publication

Liminal Reflections for Academics

 Springer

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Foreword

I am very pleased to write the foreword for this book. The original conception for compiling a book on writing and publishing developed from a course taught at the School of Education at AUT during 2017 and 2018 concerned with scholarly writing and publishing. I had accepted a three-year contract at the School of Education, from 2018 to 2020. Although I coordinated the course, the three editors of the book also participated. The focus of the taught lectures was on developing better practical techniques and on understanding the processes of writing successfully for scholarly publication. Those who enrolled for the course were either Staff or Ph.D. students from across AUT. As well as dealing with the creative processes of framing, conceptualising, and getting pen to paper, the course also sought to develop a critically discerning approach towards publishing outlets, especially academic journals. This included researching possible journal outlets, selecting target journals, liaising with editors, understanding the processes of scholarly review, managing peer feedback and responding appropriately to this feedback, in such a way as to improve the quality of the finished submission.

Underpinning the course was an explicit intention of relating professional practice to research and writing for publication, specifically in relation to such topics as curriculum, learning and teaching. The paper offered support to educational practitioners to incorporate a serious research habit within their working lives and careers in order to develop a portfolio of potentially publishable outputs, ranging from traditional academic articles and books, also including book reviews and editorial opinions, but also focusing on the newer media such as video articles, radio broadcasts, blogs and web pages. An important background objective was to instill research and writing as central to the habitus of the academic as someone who defined themselves as a reflective practitioner and spokesperson on issues of both local and global concern. The editors of this volume, and several other staff who have contributed chapters, participated as staff on the course, and shared their own knowledge and experience through formal lectures, individual and small group tutorials and focus-groups, as well as one-on-one mentoring. Course participants sought to develop their knowledge and understanding of writing and publishing techniques and processes through individual in-class activities of writing their own scholarly article for publication, the final products which were submitted as part of the formal assessment for the

course. Some of the lectures that staff developed, as well as some of the articles that those who took the course submitted, appear here in this volume, after considerable revision, and a great deal of ‘wordsmithing’, and endless ‘spitting and polishing’. Prospective participants in the course were told in advance that an important aim of the course was that each journal article submitted as a part of the assessment would be potentially completed to a degree of finesse that the finished product could be submitted to a journal. If successful, each student would receive ongoing mentoring support until final submission. For the most part, however, the course sought to impart the craft of writing and research. In this sense, the course sought to achieve what this book seeks to achieve: to critically understand the relationship between research and practice, reflecting on that practice in the form of research- and evidence-based outputs, and in terms of considering the most suitable channels for publishing those outputs.

In my own lecture, presented as the coordinator of the course, I offered an introduction to the topic of writing and publishing. This was based upon my own experience. I started by emphasising the importance of having something to say, of using writing to harness and express one’s own passion, and one’s own anger, to show that you are not crazy, that you have something to say. Writing in this sense should be a way to verbalise one’s own hidden resentments, and to critique approaches which one doesn’t like, to take a stance in relation to the world.

But writing should be more than a way to comment or criticise those things that one doesn’t like in the world. A second thing to keep in mind is the function of writing in the care and development of the self. Writing is a form of disciplined activity which, if undertaken and practiced regularly, on a daily basis, constitutes a form of self-therapy, a way of regulating the self, of controlling the self, of developing the self. Michel Foucault (1997) developed the notion of ‘writing the self’ whereby writing functioned as a technique of self-surveillance, or ethical comportment. Foucault cites Seneca, from Letter No. 7, to reinforce two principles: ‘that it is necessary to train oneself all one’s life, and one always needs the help of others in the soul’s labour upon itself’ (p. 215). Similarly, writing functions as a mental exercise, as was the *hupomnēmata* for the Greeks. They referred to note-taking, or diary writing. The use of the *hupomnēmata* as ‘books of life, as guides for conduct’ became in ancient Greece, a ‘common thing for a whole cultivated public’ (p. 209). Writing in this sense functions as a *technē* for the development or formation of the self, a political apparatus, for ‘taking a stand’, and acting on the world, as well as a means of communicating and dialoguing with others, in the sharing of ideas. Writing *hupomnēmata*, thus, encourages a detailed focus on one’s life, an aesthetics of existence, that is, an *askēsis* by which one can work out one’s ideas and develop a set of moral principles as a substitute for obedience to a moral code so as to regulate one’s life in one’s comportment with others, and the world. In writing, in other words, one works out what one thinks as well as how to act in the world. As the self is the sum of its actions, writing not only develops the self, but communicates one’s views to others, and hence, generates a public self as an emergent a historical process of becoming-in-the-world.

Writing is also a vehicle for political, moral, and pedagogical action, or *parrhēsia*, the concept that Foucault drew from Greek thought, which referred to ‘speaking truth to power’. To write enables one to express oneself and thereby express one’s moral agency. *Parrhēsia* was on the one hand, a *technē* of political engagement and critique, and, on the other hand, a *technē* in the care of the self. It was in this second sense that one required an interlocutor, mentor or teacher, throughout one’s life, whose function is to act as a *parrhesiastes*, that is, to challenge one, to keep one up to the mark, to get the best out of one, in order to assist the development of self. By expressing one’s agency, one takes up a position in relation to arguments, and both constitutes oneself and defines oneself in relation to power and in terms of principle. In doing this it differentiates the subject from the collective and defines them in their specificity and particularity as the sum of their actions. Writing and publishing interpolates the subject into the network of risks, gambits, tactics and strategies, which constitutes them as subjects of their own making. This defines writing and publishing, essentially, as ethical activities, and as centrally important in the moral comportment of the self.


Many of the class asked the question as to how one gets started, or where one starts, and the answer to such a question was always that one starts where ever one happens to be in the present, one starts in the existing conjuncture, in response to the issues and thoughts that are circulating and on which one has a perspective, or wants to say something, by which one alters the current flow of values and meanings, and thereby influences, however minutely, the future course of events. One starts with whatever is cogitating within one’s mind concerning the current order of events. The chapters in this volume present the details of how this process can get started, the *technē* of what is involved, as well as the risks such a pursuit involves for the academic.

Much of my own writing activity has involved confronting the structures and conditions within which academics work. The neoliberal university pressures academics to publish or perish in order that the university can maintain a competitive advantage in the ordering of universities within the network of tertiary or higher education institutions. Such a situation carries with it its own rewards and risks. On the one hand each individual academic is given the freedom to write what they like; on the other hand, they must conform to certain methodological and epistemological rules of the game. The game itself is structured competitively and each newcomer will find the process difficult to navigate the various hurdles, traps and pitfalls, that structure the field and which define the rewards that the academic can expect to achieve in the process.

The best way to proceed in this process is to find a mentor who can serve as a guide and helper, who is already further along in the process of getting started than yourself, and who will agree to serve as a part of your support network. In a way, this is the function, traditionally, of the doctorate supervision arrangement, and for those who proceed to academic writing and publishing after completing a doctorate, existing supervisors may continue in this role. Usually, they will be more skilled in the process, know editors and journals, and be more experienced in relation to marshalling arguments and presenting research findings. One must be wary above

all that the process itself can be corrupting, and not taking oneself too seriously, and being aware of the paradoxes associated with expertise and truth, are important always to keep in mind. The ‘author’, after all, is in many senses a fiction, in that the ideas and thoughts assembled, brought together, and recirculated, no doubt already existed in the culture, and no doubt, will also be quickly forgotten. It would be foolhardy to exaggerate one’s own contribution, or one’s own importance. Writing and publishing are in many important senses collaborative activities. Ultimately, then, in writing and publishing, above all, one engages in the process of self-formation, one develops oneself as a human being able to engage in conversation, to exercise one’s creativity, and comport oneself in a difficult and complex world.

The chapters in this volume present a compendium of how to get started, and in this sense, serve as an important resource in the armature of academic development and comportment. Not only do they present the *technē* of writing and publishing, but they also list the traps and snares for unwary players, as well as the reflective considerations, paradoxes and contradictions involved for the academic who successfully puts pen to paper, and becomes a result, an expert in a particular domain or field. The course that I coordinated on writing and publishing sought to induct the university staff members who took it into this process. As well as lectures presented by several staff, each student was required to write an abstract and journal article as a requirement for assessment. As it turned out, several of those who were successful with these assignments were provided with tutoring and mentoring to develop their articles to publication standard, and several class members then submitted and saw their articles finally published in refereed academic journals. Although this book is on one sense the outcome of the process, it also ensures that the knowledge associated with writing and publishing can be transmitted to a far wider audience. That, perhaps, is its ultimate success.

Mark Olssen 

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Introduction

Getting research outputs published can be challenging for academics who are experts in their fields of practice, but not necessarily in writing about that field. This edited collection is aimed at early career academics, doctoral students, researchers and teachers in universities and higher education, who are under increasing pressure to ‘publish or perish’—the old author adage that now applies to all academic staff in the globalised universities of the twenty-first century.

This book is about academic writing so is relevant to methodology, but is not a method text in the traditional sense—rather, it takes scholarly writing for publication as its primary focus. There are 11 chapters from a range of perspectives on various aspects of scholarly writing for publication. These chapters give accounts of experiences and techniques of writing across the genres of today’s world of digital academic publishing, and demonstrate the global nature of academic writing and publishing. It is a resource for scholarly writing that will appeal to researchers from a wide range of disciplinary and geographical backgrounds.

The contributors to this book work in a young university. While not a new institution, having a 120-year history as an educational provider and technical institute, its recent history as a university over two decades mark it not only as a millennial university, but as an instance of neoliberal policymaking. The erosion of vocational education, the massification of university education and the ‘bracket creep’ associated with qualification inflation, are characteristic of neoliberal Western economies of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In a ‘new’ university such as the one represented by the contributors to this book, academics come to the academy as expert chefs, lawyers, engineers, sportspeople, nurses, teachers and more, often with minimal experience of writing academic papers.

This book opens a new conversation about academic writing, in support of those new to academic life, in a manner that recognises the performative pressure imposed on and by neoliberal universities, working increasingly in an economic context in which the ‘digital’ is no longer novel, but is instead woven seamlessly into daily life, including knowledge production through research. It is this imperative, to ‘do research’, and to engage in research that has an ‘impact on industry’, that has supported the burgeoning publication industry of which this book is but one example. This book is inspired by both achieving success as an academic writer, and making

sense of, and navigating, the pitfalls and opportunities of contemporary academic publishing. While much of the content of this book has general relevance to new and emerging academics, its content is delivered by authors working in, or close to, the field of Education, who themselves largely approach their work in qualitative, post-qualitative, critical indigenous, theoretical and philosophical styles of inquiry.

Each chapter unpacks and responds to the conditions of written academic labour in an age of digital publishing: its nature, how it works, and guidance for thinking about successful navigation. These chapters attest to the magnitude and speed of the changes that are transforming the landscape of the global academy. These circumstances create a need for literature on the nature of academic work for the workforce of the new academic world.

This book crosses three strands: it discusses research methods in the social sciences; it connects with recent literature on twenty-first-century universities (Denman 2005); and also the emergent field of doctoral education studies (Rath & Mutch 2014). The background discipline of the authors is Education, understood as a new university subject that draws on the entire traditional university canon, from the fine arts to the natural sciences. This radical philosophy empowers the aspiration of this book to provide helpful guidance to student and staff researchers in all university departments and other tertiary institutions, who are united in facing the challenges presented by this new world of academic publishing.

We take up themes of peripherality in owning our marginal academic status, which unites the diverse authors of this volume who work at the smallest university in New Zealand, itself occupying a peripheral position in the global academy. Our marginal academic position is reinforced by our affiliation to Education, with its recent and still contested status as a university discipline (Furlong 2013). Awareness of our peripherality encourages us to take an interest in liminality, which we interpret as a theorisation of various forms of social and intellectual marginality—a focus away from the centre, an interest in the centrifugal forces that drive us to the edges of the worlds we inhabit. The word ‘liminal’ derives from the Latin ‘limen’ for threshold, adopted into social science originally to refer to rites of passage and processes of initiation, and later extended by Victor Turner (2012) to apply to the ‘no-man’s lands’ and ‘in-between’ states, which are found in many social processes and scenarios, as part of transitions from one state to another (weddings, airports, funerals, graduations, etc).

A liminal state is an uncertain space of both danger and opportunity, essential for growth and education because it provides for new possibilities, creativity and openness to the future. An interest in liminality by definition entails an interest in boundaries and borders between forms of knowledge. We take liminality to mean awareness of margins and thresholds of knowledge. It may involve stepping up to, stepping beyond or stepping back from those thresholds. We are writing from liminal perspectives about a global topic of ubiquitous interest to academics, on which very little is yet published. We want to say things that are not usually said about academic work at this moment.

How the Book Came About

All the chapters are authored by academic staff or doctoral graduates of Te Kura Mātauranga School of Education, Auckland University of Technology (AUT). AUT is the youngest university in the country, currently marking 20 years since it successfully transitioned from its former venerable life of 100-plus years as a technical institute. As a university it has had teething problems and growing pains. In 2020 AUT is still growing strongly and performs well in the Millennial (i.e. established post-2000) section of the global university trackers. It is diverse for its size, and possibly attracts independent (‘quirky’) academics seeking refuge from the shade of ‘ivory towers’ in larger, more traditional universities. Many academic staff at AUT come from non-traditional academic backgrounds as food and hospitality, nursing, engineering, and sport and physical recreation. They are employed in a university context currently dominated (locally) by the expectation to publish high-quality research and the national scheme of research assessment for funding purposes known as PBRF (under review at the time of writing in late 2020). The establishment of new university subjects results in steep learning curves in areas such as academic publishing and scholarship.

Within AUT, Te Kura Mātauranga—the School of Education is working to contribute to wider academic staff development in teaching and research: an aim that underwrites the philosophy behind the conceptualisation of this book. The story behind this book illustrates the clashing paradigms that operate in today’s universities, and of taking opportunities afforded under neoliberal conditions to create meaningful projects. Several years ago, the university was a few enrolment points short of its fiscal targets, and appealed to the departments for help to make up the numbers. The three editors were part of a group of six senior academic staff approached by the Head of School of Education, with a request to devise and teach a postgraduate course on scholarly writing for publication. The course was aimed at AUT staff who felt the need for assistance to translate their expertise into publishable form. The course attracted 18 students, and helped the university to achieve its annual targets. This book project is an outgrowth of that undertaking.

Introducing the Chapters

The 11 chapters to follow are an eclectic mix, including some surveys of general aspects of the work of academic writing, and some that reflect on writing for publication from particular angles, based on personal experience. The two chapters that bookend the collection, Chapters 1 and 11, are designed as useful reference works. Chapter 1, *Writing for different academic purposes and genres*, surveys ten types of writing for publication undertaken by academics, from the main research outputs—journal article, chapter, monograph—through to book reviews, blogs and newspaper articles. It aims to answer questions often asked by recent doctoral graduates and

contribute towards theorising the work of academic writing. Chapter 11, *Being an author in the digital economy*, discusses the emergent relationship of online and digital media with traditional academic scholarship, including the inherent tensions, and the opportunities for scholars offered by online and digital media.

Chapter 2, *Becoming an academic differently: On not following the rules*, uses Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge, resistance and self-writing to consider the 'conditions of possibility' of academic writing in the contemporary university, arguing that contemporary expectations of academics are not only deleterious to the individual, but also work against the overt intention to diversify the academic workforce. Chapter 3, *Standpoint, style, and self as author in writing* takes a poststructuralist position from which to address the author as an embodied, located speaker, who is exhorted NOT to follow the default 'mouthpiece of tradition' approach, but rather to make modest claims to make our academic writing our 'own'.

At the heart of the book are five chapters that take up a particular topic or lens, related to the work of academic writing. In brief, these lenses are: Māori/Indigenous post-qualitative methodology (Chap. 4), Poetic inquiry (Chap. 5), Art and affect in research and writing (Chap. 6), First-person research (Chap. 7), and Collaborative writing (Chap. 8). Chapter 9 explores the common issue of academic impostorism, while Chap. 10 meditates upon the qualities of academic writing. We hope you enjoy reading the whole book.

Georgina Tuari Stewart
Leon Benade
Nesta Devine

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Nesta Devine is Professor of Philosophy of Education at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. As an immigrant she is interested in the interplay of ethnicities and cultures in our society, and consequently focuses on ideas concerning power and subjectivity in educational institutions. She is a Fellow of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia, Co-Editor of the *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, Reviews editor of *New Zealand Journal of Education Studies*, Editor of the *Royal Bhutan Journal of Education and Development* and Associate Editor of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*.

Leon Benade is an Associate Professor in the School of Education of the Auckland University of Technology. His research interests are teachers' work, school policy, ethics, philosophy in schools, critical pedagogy and the New Zealand Curriculum, with a current focus on Innovative Learning Environments (ILE). Leon is a co-editor of the *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* and the *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*. He is Author of *From Technicians to Teachers: Ethical Teaching in the Context of Globalized Education Reform* (Continuum, 2012) and *Being a Teacher in the 21st Century: A Critical New Zealand Study* (Springer, 2017).

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Chapter 1

Writing for Various Academic Purposes and Genres



Leon Benade, Georgina Tuari Stewart, and Nesta Devine

Abstract This chapter overviews the main academic writing genres, ranging from traditional types, such as journal articles, books and book chapters, to those types resonating with the digital world. The main section delineates the purposes and key textual characteristics of each. The final section articulates the philosophy of academic writing that underwrites this volume, conceptualising ‘academic writing’ as an umbrella for all the above genres and purposes. A philosophy of academic writing rests on an understanding of writing as integral to thinking in academic scholarship.

Keywords Academic writing · Digital publishing · Research outputs · Writing genres

Introduction

How do we learn to write for academic purposes? For most academics it is through the undergraduate practice of writing essays, culminating in the production of a doctoral dissertation. The transition from Doctoral graduate to published research author is a central theme of this book—a transition that is now expected of all university academics, but one which only some manage with ease and fluency. Peer-reviewed journal articles remain the premier form of academic writing, but the digital economy has given rise to different kinds of academic outlets, such as video journals, online encyclopaedias and academic blogs. This chapter examines the demands of writing

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