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David Coniam · Peter Falvey

Academic Publishing

Processes and Practices
for Aspiring Researchers

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Processes and Practices for Aspiring
Researchers

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ISSN 2211-1921

ISSN 2211-193X (electronic)

SpringerBriefs in Education

ISBN 978-981-19-3067-6

ISBN 978-981-19-3065-2 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-3065-2>

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The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Foreword

As one who's been nailed to the publication treadmill for countless years, I enjoyed reading this treatise. While a serious, well-researched and argued tome, what appealed was how Coniam and Falvey drew on their many years of experience to illustrate and personalise the potholed path to successful publication. While Coniam's careful recount of what he endured (what he described as 'his journey') to get one paper published had me audibly moaning, the transcript of his communication with the hidden editor of a predatory journal had me giggling. But, as the authors make clear, publishing is a severe and often career-defining activity for academics. It is daunting for even seasoned professors who have plied their trade for years, and it can be downright frightening for those new to the game. This book is written mainly for the latter group, for aspiring researchers navigating the early stages of their careers. Publishing for this group is rarely an option; it's a necessity, and they'd do well to sit down and listen to the authors' experiences.

The first section sets the context and personal tenor of the book and demonstrates that the authors are serious researchers and scholars. The section first lays out their orientation and beliefs, explains why they decided it was important to write the book and introduces us to the shifting context of academic publishing. They also detail some of the critical issues around publishing. These range from the necessary basics of the peer review process, knowing the journals in your field, having a research structured plan, moving from practitioner to academic and the skill of academic writing for first and second language speakers. I like their discussion of writing support strategies for aspiring academics, which, in my opinion, has not received enough attention either in the literature or in universities themselves. They round out the section by introducing the theory and methodologies underpinning the studies presented in the book. Perhaps unintentionally, their explication of the basics of research itself will also benefit emerging researchers.

Drawing on the authors' extensive experience in education, Chap. 4 opens a treasure-trove of ideas for professional practitioners new to academia or those who have struggled for some time to cross the practitioner-academic divide to know what is worth writing about. Using an accessible and honest writing style, the authors stress the importance of a research agenda and how this may be developed iteratively

from their everyday work. Drawing on real-life examples, the authors discern and illustrate what they call the *professional activities publication process*, which, in my opinion, provides excellent, practical advice for research agenda setting and producing meaningful publications.

If the advice mentioned above on converting professional practice into publications provides cracks of light for aspiring academics, Coniam's recount of his "journey" (which I'd label an odyssey) to get a paper published will soon drag us back to reality. Reading through his experience gives a real insight into what it takes, beyond having an idea and supportive data, to publish successfully—persistence (if not stubbornness), humility, focus, openness, a thick skin, self-belief and lots of time.

Part 3 continues the discussion of the context, pitfalls and realities of academic publishing. This is as good an explication of the *state of the game as I* have read and is required reading for all new academics. After reading it, I better understood the tensions around predatory journals, open access, pay to publish, plagiarism and other issues, and I've been in the game a long time now. The authors continue their balanced advice for aspiring researchers by helping us see the process not just from a personal, insular viewpoint but through the eyes of the other key players—editors, reviewers and the journals themselves. In this way, the book finishes as it starts. While the volume doesn't hide the struggles or incertitude of publishing for new academics, it frames the exercise as a positive learning experience, all the time offering and illustrating experience-informed, heartfelt advice to help them on the path to successful academic careers.

You'll enjoy reading this book; it is intentionally targeted, nicely written, balances literature and personal knowledge and provides solid, sensible advice. If followed, Coniam and Falvey's insights can only make aspiring academics' pathways to success smoother and more enjoyable. In fact, if submitted to me for review by the editor, I'd wave it through as it stands ... well ... maybe with just a few minor amendments and clarifications.

Brisbane, Australia
April 2022

Allan Walker

Allan Walker is an Adjunct Chair Professor of International Educational Leadership and the Co-Director of Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change at the Education University of Hong Kong. Until 2020, he was the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Human Development at the university. He has worked as a teacher and principal in Australia and at universities in Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong. He has published extensively on educational leadership, and leadership development and learning; his work also explores the relationship between culture and leadership.

Preface

The basis for this monograph lies in the background of the authors who, between them, share over a hundred years of involvement with all levels of students and academics, helping to improve their research, writing and publishing skills.

Peter Falvey's doctoral thesis was in text linguistics and he has a love of dealing with text, either constructing or deconstructing it, especially in relation to making meaning so that readers of text, particularly academic text, find that the words placed in front of them are as coherent, logical and free from ambiguity as possible.

David Coniam's varied background involves working with computational linguistics, testing, assessment and evaluation, much of it involved with writing, corpus and text analysis.

Both authors are teacher educators and researchers of long-standing in different countries, having supervised numerous Masters and doctoral students, as well as mentoring many aspiring academics. These activities led to the decision, in 2016, to work on a monograph that would not only utilise their long experience of helping professionals publish their work in respectable journals but would also base much of what they have discovered on genuine research that is heavily linked to academic publication.

Both David and Peter are former university Heads of Department with responsibility for mentoring their academic staff. Both are well aware of the pressures that staff are subjected to in their search for academic credibility in research and publication and their aspirations for growing their reputations as bona fide academics. Chapters 4 and 5 of the monograph are based on research initially carried out by David which readers may find both useful for their own research and publishing and which exemplify the value of persisting with publication, often through a number of cycles of submission, rejection, re-submission and eventual acceptance for publication.

Other issues that readers will find useful are warnings about predatory journals, the parameters of plagiarism, awareness of varying perspectives when publishing and choosing the best journal for publication.

David and Peter have collaborated successfully for over 40 years and, together, have edited or written 7 books and well over 100 academic journal articles. Here,

they share their research and publication experience and insights that will aid aspiring academic writers.

Tai Po, Hong Kong
London, UK
March 2022

Peter Falvey
David Coniam

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