

ASPIRING ACADEMICS

A Resource Book for Graduate Students
and Early Career Faculty

MICHAEL SOLEM KENNETH FOOTE JANICE MONK

Aspiring Academics is a set of essays designed to help graduate students and early career faculty get started in their careers in geography and related social and environmental sciences. Rather than viewing faculty work as a collection of unrelated tasks, *Aspiring Academics* stresses the interdependence of teaching, research, and service and the importance of achieving a healthy balance in professional and personal life. Drawing on several years of research, the chapters provide accessible, forward-looking advice on topics that often cause the most stress in the first years of a college or university appointment, including:

- Time Management
- Career Planning
- Developing Collegial Relationships
- Balancing Personal and Professional Lives
- Succeeding at Tenure and Beyond
- Designing Significant Learning Experiences
- Active Learning
- Advising Students
- Ethical Teaching in Practice
- Teaching Diverse Students: Teaching for Inclusion
- Preparing Competitive Research Grant Proposals
- Ethical Research in Practice
- Academic Publishing
- Working Across Disciplinary Boundaries

Aspiring Academics also features a companion website offering dozens of activities that can be used in workshops, seminars, and informal gatherings of graduate students and faculty. Written in a spirit of collegiality and sharing of support, visitors to the website can participate in discussion forums and contribute their own resources and tips for others.



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PEARSON PRENTICE HALL

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EDITORS

**MICHAEL SOLEM
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Academic Publishing

Stanley D. Brunn

Aspiring professionals in the academy as well as those entering the public and private sectors are usually expected to be able to initiate or collaborate with others on research projects that advance a field or subfield. While a good first step in reporting findings and getting feedback is to present to appropriate audiences at workshops and conferences, the major method of communication with colleagues is through publication in disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals (Kenzer 2000), thereby creating a permanent record of the research and reaching wider audiences. Although academic professionals are trained to perfect their writing and presentation skills in graduate school, a logical and important advance for early career professors in the social and environmental sciences is to publish their research (de Souza 1988; Hanson 1988; Kitchin and Fuller 2003, 2005). This goal, however, presents challenges beyond just writing, for both neophytes and experienced academics. In this chapter I offer suggestions and advice about publishing your research.

While the focus of this chapter is on those taking up college and university faculty positions in the U.S. and Canada, much of my advice also applies to those entering the public or private sectors (Boice 2000). Some of the points I will raise apply to academics entering the job market for the first time because many institutions want to see evidence (sometimes multiple examples) of a candidate's pre-Ph.D. publications and presentations. I want to unravel some of the myths, mysteries, and misconceptions about publishing, including "publish and/or perish" (see Kitchin and Fuller 2003; Linton and Embrechts 2007). I will address preparation of manuscripts for peer-reviewed journals, not research monographs, books or book chapters, or editing books. The review processes for books and chapters are often quite

different from those of journals. There are, however, useful resources for authors aiming to write a book such as the advice offered in Dedi Felman's column (2006) in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, a short and readable introduction to what editors look for and some ways in which a book is different from a dissertation.

WHERE DO IDEAS COME FROM?

Identifying a legitimate and important research problem is essential if you hope to get your ideas in print. It is not only the idea or topic being investigated that is important, however, but how you present it. A very legitimate topic could be identified, but if it is poorly articulated and presented, the reviewers and editors may not support publication.

Ideas for early manuscripts commonly come from a dissertation or a thesis, which can be mined for one or two different manuscripts that focus on the major findings and/or on some innovative methodology or model. Additionally, by the time graduate students complete their degrees, they have usually written a half-dozen research papers, each of which might be a possible publication. As an academic progresses, ideas also stem from interacting with colleagues, including those in related fields, conducting seminars, listening to conference presentations, reading books, articles, book reviews (very good sources), presidential addresses, conversations on field trips, and exchanges on listservs. It is useful to keep a list of potential research topics in a folder or notebook (printed or electronic) and to update it with ideas, references, potential funding sources, maps, conversations, valuable web sites, informative footnotes, and listserv discussions.

WHY PUBLISH?

This question is raised in graduate school and by those seeking first jobs. I can think of three major reasons for publishing. First, job descriptions and performance evaluations usually include publication as an expectation. No one should assume a position without first knowing what the expectations are for research and publication. Usually, they are greater in major research universities with doctoral programs than in institutions where heavier teaching and advising are the norm. While the amount and type (articles, chapters, or reports) will vary with the job and title, publishing is expected for retention and promotion; funding agencies that support research also look to see if results of previous awards have been disseminated via publication. The research expectations for temporary and part-time faculty are less than those for full-time positions, but since people in such situations may be aspiring to full-time and permanent academic appointments, they need to consider whether and how they will make efforts to publish.

A second reason for publishing is the enjoyment that comes from working with ideas, writing, and sharing results. Many academics get excited

about starting a new project, even if completing it requires much time and money (their own or from other sources), and then preparing presentations and manuscripts for journals. I have observed junior and senior geographers wax with enthusiasm and eloquence about their research projects on topics such as climatic change models, gender and work, and Internet mapping. Many are stimulating teachers who are not simply driven by "requirements" for promotion and tenure as they undertake multiple projects simultaneously and publish several articles yearly.

Third, publishing is widely required for professional advancement (see also Susan Roberts's chapter on "Succeeding at Tenure and Beyond"). In most institutions, retention and reappointment are contingent on maintaining and demonstrating an active research program. The degree of activity will vary with the university's mission. Promotion to associate professor requires an accounting of what one has accomplished as an assistant professor. That record should reflect intellectual growth beyond the dissertation research. Some colleges and universities may require only one or two published items, but others may expect two or three papers in major refereed journals each year. Additional research-related materials considered for promotion will be book chapters or books (edited or co-edited), research proposals (both funded and rejected), reports for governmental and private clients, book reviews, and conference presentations. While the formula for promotion to full professor will be similar to that for an aspiring associate professor, and also vary by institution, the expectation is that the research record during the time in associate rank will have shown sustained development; research universities will also expect that some national and international stature has been achieved for a full professorship. Publications are a major indicator of such recognition.

WHEN AND WHAT TO PUBLISH

Because many current job advertisements specify that applicants have a record of publication prior to earning the doctorate, it is important to begin thinking about publishing while in graduate school. This requirement is often the threshold even for being seriously considered, with applicants lacking publications often placed in a different/lower category. For aspiring academics, a first manuscript might come from a seminar paper or thesis that is presented at a regional conference and submitted to a regional journal. As the graduate student advances, it is important to think about building on this experience, to present at national conferences, and to consider submitting an article to a journal that has wider recognition or circulation.

The dissertation is the obvious place to look for early and substantial publications that establish your status as a scholar because it is a sustained piece of work that has survived the scrutiny of an advisory committee, which validated its worth. The committee's advice is valuable in recommending not only what to publish (major findings, the methodology, the techniques, etc.) but also where to submit.

WHERE TO PUBLISH?

Many authors consider this question when they embark on a project. Some will submit their manuscripts to refereed journals, others for non-refereed conference proceedings, though these are often less valued, especially in institutions that offer doctoral degrees. Since professional journals are "information gateways" for future scholarship, the outlet becomes very important. The recipes vary by subfield: human geographers, for example, commonly write sole-authored articles and may write for one of the many specialized journals in historical, cultural, political, or economic geography. Those in physical geography and technical specialties, whose research may be done in teams, often write coauthored articles and send their articles to interdisciplinary journals. Bourne (2000) offers useful reflections on experiences of publishing in human geography, and Butler (2000) in physical geography. Another question to consider is whether findings are best shared with one's own discipline, with scholars in another field, or with those whose major language is not English (Turner 1988). Some authors check the impact ranking of a journal and submit manuscripts first to those that have high ratings based on the extent to which the articles published in them have been cited by other scholars as identified in citation indices such as the ISI Web of Knowledge.

Young professionals often aspire to publish their findings in highly ranked and peer-reviewed international journals, advice that probably came from their advisor and members of their dissertation advisory committees. Publishing in these journals gives the author wide visibility, but I maintain that very few articles from dissertations appear in them, perhaps because they were not submitted, they were rejected, or the authors submitted them elsewhere. While flagship and high-impact journals can be important in a research career, many lesser-ranked journals regularly publish quality and innovative research, commentaries, and book reviews. A check of the references in articles in major journals will reveal many citations from the more specialized journals that have proliferated in recent years, as well as from lesser-known and lower-impact thematic, regional and interdisciplinary journals, and from books. The approach that a journal favors is also a key criterion. Does it feature articles that are strongly theoretical, ones that emphasize empirical studies, or those that offer a balance? Does it focus on particular paradigms or methodologies?

It also pays to be thoroughly familiar with a journal's orientations prior to submission. Scholars should not be deterred from seeking to publish their research by thinking that only those from major research departments will be included in journals. Good, solid, and frequently cited publications come from authors in doctoral, master's, and baccalaureate programs and in large and small departments and universities (Brunn 1995), and there are many prolific professors in baccalaureate programs in which the teaching and advising responsibilities are heavy.

AUTHORSHIP

Questions often arise about who and how to list as authors of an article. There are several issues. First, if the manuscript is based on your dissertation or seminar paper, you legitimately should be sole author. This point may be ticklish because some advisors want to be counted as coauthors; they may expect to be recognized because the dissertation topic or seminar paper idea originated in their classes, or the research was supported under a grant that they had been awarded. Some young scholars who want and/or need a pre-Ph.D. or an early post-Ph.D. publication welcome a dual authorship arrangement with their advisor, knowing that this may be a diplomatic approach. Other advisors are very comfortable with their advisees preparing potential manuscripts as sole authors and experiencing the process themselves. These advisors are content to be listed in the acknowledgments section.

Second, it is prudent early to agree on the "order" of multiple authors. I know two-member author teams who alternately switch the order of authors. In multiple-authored papers, a common guideline is for the person who contributed the most time and effort, or who obtained the grant, to be listed as the lead author. When contributions are equal, the order is usually alphabetical. As noted earlier, multiple authorship is more common in the physical (and medical and behavioral) sciences than in the social sciences. In the humanities, single-authored publications, especially books, are highly important in promotion decisions. An early career professional should check with a potential employer about what will "count" when he or she is evaluated for purposes of salary increases and promotion.

REWARDS

There are many joys awaiting those who publish. These rewards come from seeing long hard work being completed, from a sense of individual accomplishment in completing a task, and from insights gained in collaborative explorations. Many junior scholars and career professionals find that having something published, either in a major or minor journal, is both professionally and personally rewarding (all authors remember their first acceptance and rejection letters). When a manuscript is published, it means your peers like your work and want to see it disseminated. Probably next in gratification to having an article, research note, or book review published is seeing one's own work cited by prominent or unknown professionals in one's discipline and beyond.

Publishing several articles early in one's career and on related topics will provide name recognition to editors, peers, program directors and reviewers at funding agencies, and prospective employers. The recognition that comes from publishing significant, quality, and cutting-edge research may result in some unforeseen professional benefits and surprises, including being sought as a candidate for a job, and invitations to participate

in disciplinary and interdisciplinary conferences and workshops, or to submit a paper for publication in a thematic journal issue. Publications should result in salary increases.

EDITORS AND THE MANUSCRIPT REVIEW PROCESS

Editors are crucial individuals in the early years of an academic career. They come in various shapes and sizes, just like members of the organizations they serve and the universities they represent. Some are relatively junior in ranking, others have senior standing; some are appointed by publishing houses and universities, others are selected by professional societies (the Council of the Association of American Geographers, for example, advertises for and selects the editors of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and *The Professional Geographer*). All editors have favorite topics and personalities that range from positive and engaging to being perhaps haughty and unpleasant. They serve as disciplinary gatekeepers in that they are responsible for what others see about a discipline's scientific and theoretical advances.

Successful editors like to work with ideas and with authors; they also tend to be independent and seek to be fair. They recognize their decisions may have critical implications for a scholar's career. The editor of a refereed journal (not all journals have a review policy that is mandatory and transparent) selects reviewers and makes decisions based on the advice of a number of individuals, including editorial board members and others selected because of their familiarity with the subject matter and because they have a reputation for providing prompt and constructive reviews and no apparent conflict of interests with the author.

Commonly, a manuscript is sent to three reviewers (though some journals seek more) who are asked to respond within a specific time and given a set of criteria to consider in their evaluations. Editors read manuscripts independently and study reviews and the reviewers' recommendations (Brunn 1988). While there is often a consensus among reviewers on the manuscript's merits and shortcomings, when discrepancies occur, the editor evaluates what weight to give to the different opinions. The editor's decision commonly is in one of three categories: "accept," "revise and resubmit" (R and R), and "reject." Some offer the alternative "accept with minor revisions." Indeed, very few manuscripts are given a strong "accept" initially. The R and R is "positive," signaling that the paper has merit, but requires additional work before possible publication.

When manuscripts are rejected it is usually because reviewers have judged them to be flawed in writing, methodology, analysis, and/or presentation. Those with potential (R and R) may require a more comprehensive literature base, a stronger theoretical section, clarification of the methodology, additional analyses, and/or tighter writing. The editor shares the reviewers' comments with the author without revealing the reviewers' identities; he or

she usually writes a detailed letter summarizing the key points to address in revision.

A revised manuscript should be carefully thought out and prepared. When it is submitted, it should be accompanied by a detailed (point by point) cover letter that addresses specific and general points raised by reviewers and the editor. The revision would likely be sent to at least one previous reviewer and perhaps two new ones. When some editors send the revised paper to reviewers who have already read the first submission, they enclose the original set of reviews to facilitate assessment of whether the criticisms and suggestions have been adequately addressed. It is not unusual for manuscripts to be subjected to a third round of revisions.

The length of time for a manuscript to be published following initial submission depends upon when reviewers respond, the time taken to prepare the revision, the time required for subsequent reviews, and the backlog of accepted manuscripts. Once a manuscript is accepted, the paper might see the light of day within six months but the time to publication may be as long as eighteen months. Some editors may publish the paper earlier, especially if they are looking for a manuscript that fits the exact page allotment for an issue or if it provides some balance to the readership. Usually editors submit materials to a printer several months before a specific number appears. Some journals now offer online preprints of accepted articles in order to speed the circulation of research.

The process of manuscript submission, review, and responding to an editor's suggestions for revision is illustrated in Activity 13.1 on this book's web site—this activity will teach you some of the ways to work effectively with journal editors.

A CHECKLIST OF HINTS FOR AUTHORS

Editors can readily provide a specific list of hints regarding manuscript preparation, electronic submission, and revisions. It is important to visit the journal's web site for specific information prior to submission of a manuscript and to study the instructions for authors. Journal editors also often offer advice panels at professional conferences. To supplement such hints, I offer the following additional recommendations:

1. Plan a pre-tenured publishing schedule that includes a mix of grant proposals together with articles, chapters, and research notes with tentative deadlines and tentative journals.
2. Ensure that the manuscript submitted is original and that it is your own work. State in the cover letter to the editor that this or a similar manuscript has not been submitted elsewhere and will not be sent elsewhere until you hear from the editor.
3. Provide the editor with (brief) information regarding the genesis of the manuscript, your academic background and research interests, whether the manuscript is based on a thesis or dissertation, field

- research (done when and where), the source of any funding, and anything else you think might be useful for the editor to know.
4. When submitting a revision, be sure the cover letter contains detailed responses to points raised by the reviewers and the editor. You need not agree with them (state why), but you need to explain succinctly and clearly why you do not.
 5. Study carefully the journal's instructions for authors, including details related to preparation of figures, tables, any special word-processing requirements, and whether to submit on paper, in electronic form, or both. Editors may return manuscripts immediately if they fail to conform to the journal's requirements.
 6. Include specific sections that may be called for in the instructions, for example, a short title, detailed abstract, key words, theoretical or conceptual statement, and methodology. Consult previous issues for major headings and subheadings. Include an acknowledgment that lists funding sources, support from your university, cartography lab, advisors, and others.
 7. Check that all bibliographic entries conform to the journal style and that all appear in the text and vice versa. This can be quite a frustrating and time-consuming process because journals vary in their styles.
 8. Be sure the manuscript is well written, is grammatically correct, and has correct spellings (including accents) of all words from other languages. Be sure accurate captions accompany photos, maps, and graphics.
 9. Identify a mentor (preferably a senior professor with experience) who can/will assist you in your professional career with advice on grant submissions, journal outlets, teaching/research/service balance, and time commitments.
 10. Ask your advisors and impartial colleagues to read your manuscript before it is submitted, including people not familiar with the subject matter. Let them know where you wish to send the manuscript. Also feel comfortable in working with professionals in your university's writing center about manuscript preparation and revision. Their assistance may make the difference between rejection and an R and R decision.
 11. Work with the editor on all phases of the manuscript review and revision process. If your manuscript is rejected, feel comfortable knowing why.
 12. Be sure that the manuscript is of the highest quality, not marginal in scholarship in any way—analysis, methodology, techniques, graphics, and so on. Hold to the highest of ethical and professional standards at all times (Brunn 1989).
 13. Avoid manuscript cloning and submitting multiple niche manuscripts; better to have two solid contributions than four niche papers (Brunn 1998; Graf 2004).

14. Do not plagiarize, that is, include small or large sections of text, maps, or photos without appropriate, correct, and complete citation, or self-plagiarize, that is, lift (include) large sections verbatim of another work you have published.
15. Do not include a supportive letter from your advisor or possible reviewers.
16. Make moderate use of self-citation, especially when necessary to avoid self-plagiarism. Also do not list "forthcoming" items in the list of references; you can inform the editor of relevant forthcoming manuscripts in your cover letter.
17. Do not bribe or attempt to influence the editor or badger the editor with repeated e-mails or phone calls about the review process. Avoid getting your advisor or department chair to intercede on your behalf. Delays are usually due to tardy reviewers.
18. Do not be obsessed with publishing by such approaches as seeking to publish quickly, confusing quantity with quality, and using journal rankings only to build a research career.

SOME FINAL "WORDS OF WISDOM"

Finally, I include some additional advice from conversations with young professionals who have successful publishing careers:

1. For non-tenured, adjunct, and part-time faculty in colleges and universities it is probably unwise to write textbooks during one's first few years as a professional. Research monographs and dissertations published by major commercial publishing houses or university presses may "count."
2. Editing books and authoring lab manuals are unwise projects for assistant professors. Wait until you have advanced in rank.
3. Almost (probably) all authors, junior and senior, well cited and with international stature, have had manuscripts rejected. Those who say otherwise are being less than candid. Success always comes with some failures. If a manuscript is rejected, seek out mentors for your next steps.
4. Publishing is a lifelong learning process. One should strive to become a polished writer and professional with each manuscript written. To look at academic publishing in any other way is not very instructive.
5. There are many quality outlets. These include flagship and minor journals, those in English and other languages, and those with interdisciplinary audiences.
6. For every good manuscript, there is an appropriate journal; it may require some time to identify the "right" one. Patience and persistence are keys to success in any publishing career.
7. A professional career is seldom based on a publish-or-perish model, but rather on all facets of a job description.

8. A mix of publications is desirable in one's career: some single-authored, others multiple-authored, grants, conference presentations, book reviews, and edited books.
9. Those who produce high-quality work on a sustained basis will be recognized for their efforts. Sloppy and shoddy research (if it does get published) and suspicions that data are falsified or materials plagiarized may cause you to suffer professional consequences (loss of job, graduate advisees, research dollars, and respect).

The meaningful professional life has constant growth and benefits, including working with ideas and with people. That life includes identifying interesting and timely research projects and communicating those results in oral or written form. A certain enjoyment comes from preparing a manuscript for one's peers. The manuscript process requires patience, persistence, and flexibility on the part of authors before their ideas will see the light of day. The end result should be a product that you, as an early career professional, are pleased with and one that you envisage as a contribution (minor or major) to a given field. While the benefits of publishing early and often are immediate and apparent in job placement and security, over the long term a sustained record of quality research will lead to some unexpected and challenging opportunities for intellectual and personal growth.

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