WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

Professor Anne-Wil Harzing
Middlesex University
www.harzing.com
OUTLINE OF TODAY’S SESSION

- Quick intro of myself and my role at Middlesex
- Part 1 presentation: Why do you (not) publish?
- Table discussions (10min table, 10min plenary)
  - What is holding you back?
  - What would help most to get you back on track?
- Part 2 presentation: Four P’s of publishing in good journals
- Table discussions (10-15min table, 10-15min plenary)
  - What is your burning question on publishing?
  - What is your key tip you would like to share on publishing?
- Further resources
My name?....., Yes Anne-Wil is one name and not part of my family name

Started at Middlesex in September 2014

- Previously in Melbourne 2001-2014 (PhD director 2004-2009, Associate Dean RHD, 2009-2010, Associate Dean Research, 2010-2013)

Productive and passionate researcher & research mentor

- 79 international journal articles since 1995 (160+ publications in total), incl. approximately two dozen in ABS 4*/JoD
- >12,000 Google Scholar citations, h-index 51, ISI citations: >4,000, top 1% most cited world-wide in Economics & Business
- Passionate about bridging European, Australian and American research traditions
QUICK INTRO: ANNE-WIL HARZING

- **Service to the wider academic community**
  - Editorial board membership of 6 IB journals, as well as HRM, EMR, EMJ, JGM, HRDI
  - My personal website with freely available resources since 1999, 1000-1500 visitors/day
    - Journal Quality List since 2000, 57th edition, around 40,000 page visits/year
    - Publish or Perish since 2006, version5 Nov. 2016; app. half a million users
  - Active blog with weekly postings: Academia Behind the Scenes, Academic Etiquette, Research Focus, Publish or Perish Tips, Classic Papers

- **My specific remit at Middlesex**
  - Advice to SMT on all topics relating to research evaluation and benchmarking
  - Running staff capability development groups, nearly 30 junior academics are included
    - Review of papers before submission or after rejection or R&R
    - Discussions of 1-page research proposals
    - Structured discussions about any topic related to academia: e.g. time-management, journal selection, social media use, promotion applications, research funding, research collaboration, research and teaching interface.
WHY PUBLISH? [PLENARY FIRST]

- Because I have to?
  - To keep my job, get tenure or promotion
  - We nearly all face this pressure, but this should never be the only reason

- Because it is my duty as an academic?
  - A responsibility to transfer your knowledge to others
  - Can be done in other ways too (teaching, consultancy)

- Because I want to?
  - You are passionate about your research and want to share that passion
  - The only reason that will sustain you in the end

- Because it is very rewarding and motivating!
  - There is nothing like seeing your name in print for the first time
  - There is nothing like seeing other academics read and cite your work
  - There is nothing like seeing research students build on your work
WHY DO YOU NOT PUBLISH?

- “It’s not good enough yet”
  - “There are only two types of articles; those that are perfect and never get published and those that are good enough and do.”

- “I’m a failure”
  - Fear of rejection, every academic gets rejections. If you don’t get rejections, you are not ambitious enough in your choice of journals.

- “People might steal my ideas”
  - Ideas are cheap, no one gets anywhere because they thought about something. People only succeed when they actually do something.

- “I don’t have time”
  - The question is not “How much time do I have?” but “How can I use the time I have most effectively?”

[Based on Abbey 2007]
What is holding you back from starting or finishing your research papers?

- Don’t just say “teaching load” please 😊
- Teaching loads at MDX are not light, but not out of the ordinary
- Most top research universities worldwide have a teaching load of three or four courses a year (coordinated and taught in full without much, if any, teaching assistance)

What would help you most to get back on track?

- 10 minutes in groups, 10 minutes plenary
- At each table, please prepare one key issue to share
HOW TO PUBLISH IN TOP JOURNALS (1)?

Perform

- Top journals have very high standards
  - Theory development
  - Research methods
  - Writing style
- Get research training if you need it (and nearly all of us do!)
- Get to know the journal you are submitting to, desk-rejects are increasingly common

Practice

- Start as student, learn from others; as academics, support your own students
- Submit conference papers, but realise the difference between feedback at conferences and journal reviews
- Never send out a paper without some internal review
- Never send out a rejected paper to another journal without making revisions first
- Start with recognised international journals, before moving on to top journals
HOW TO PUBLISH IN TOP JOURNALS (2)?

- Participate in academic networks
  - Go to conferences and prepare
    - Your research brief (elevator, coffee line, after presentation, reception) and small talk
    - Decide who you want to meet beforehand, don’t just hang out with your friends, meet someone new every time, ask for introductions
  - Volunteer to review, to participate in committees, get a role if you are shy (MIC)
  - Networking will not get a mediocre paper accepted, but it will make it easier to get a good paper recognised, it is only human to have more confidence in people you know

- But most of all: Persist, Persist, Persist
  - Rejection is part of an academic’s daily life
  - Shout, curse the reviewers, treat yourself, but never give up …
  - My SMJ paper was rejected at three journals before it was accepted at SMJ, the JOB paper was desk-rejected (“doesn’t fit the journal’s mission”) at nearly a dozen journals
  - Over time you will get better at targeting your papers to the right journals
  - For junior academics publication in top journals can have an important signalling effect
HOW TO PUBLISH IN TOP JOURNALS (3)

- **Performance:**
  - Recognise your own limitations and be prepared to improve them, collaborate with others that have complementary skills

- **Practice:**
  - See feedback on your work as a *gift* that helps you to improve, many academics see it only as *critique or discrimination* and become very defensive/argumentative

- **Participate:**
  - You don’t have to be the world’s greatest networker or an exuberant extrovert, but get out there and create your own academic networks

- **Persistence:**
  - Get over rejection quickly and don’t take it personal; rejection might simply mean the journal wasn’t the right outlet for the paper
  - Use whatever is right for you to get rejection out of your system: wine, chocolate, a night out, moaning to colleagues, writing an angry response (but don’t send it!)
  - Wait for a couple of days/weeks, read the rejection letter again, and revise the paper as soon as you can for another journal
What is your “burning question” in terms of publishing, i.e. which question have you never had a chance to ask, but would love to have the answer to?

Do you have any key tips that have facilitated your publishing journey?

10 minutes in groups, 10 minutes plenary

Each table prepares one burning question or one key tip
FURTHER READING:
ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

- Anne Sigismund Huff
  - (1999): Writing for scholarly publication, Sage Publications
- My blog on all things academia
  - How to prevent burn-out? About staying sane in academia
  - Why does my paper get a desk-reject time and again?
  - How to find your next research project?
  - Is publishing like marriage, engagement, and dating?
  - Thank You: The most underused words in academia?
  - How to make your case for impact?
  - Meeting an official guest or your academic hero?
  - Female academics: Wives of the organization?