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# Publication Tips from NUGSE Faculty

ALTYN BAIGAZINA AND LYAZAT GAPBASSOVA

Henry Ford once wisely noted, “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success”. This quote accurately mirrors the team spirit that has inspired and fueled the creation of the first peer-reviewed student-led journal at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education. Indeed, the first issue of *Research in Education* has received tremendous support from NUGSE faculty and the student community, who have willingly taken the initiatives to become peer-reviewers, editors, proofreaders, administrators, designers, writers and authors. This has been a long learning process for all of us, and in this editorial we have collected tips from our contributors for future authors. These recommendations explain how to nail down your research hunch, how to present convincing argumentation in your writing and turn it into a solid paper. In addition, our contributors will help you to clarify what publishing ethics you might want to consider to make your paper look substantial and share their experience on how to navigate through the rigorous publishing process for success.

## Focus on Strategy

Daniel Hernández-Torrano, PhD, Assistant Professor, Inclusive Education

Publishing is one of the most exciting activities in the life of a graduate student and a researcher, as it provides you with the opportunity to share your research with other scholars and to contribute to the development of your field of study. But publishing can also be a challenging activity. Writing academic papers requires certain skills that should be developed such as designing and conducting research studies; mastering discipline-specific vocabulary and concepts; analyzing, summarizing, and drawing conclusions from the work of others; and communicating ideas effectively in several languages. In this brief editorial I would like to share with readers of the journal NUGSERIE six strategies that have helped me navigate the exciting but challenging publishing process.

First, pick a topic you are passionate about and that is meaningful to you. There is nothing as satisfying as spending some of your time doing something you care about!

*Self-discipline  
and networking  
is the key.*

Second, opportunities for conducting research and publishing are very limited in undergraduate programs, so try to get the most out of the courses and resources during your graduate studies. All graduate programs offer a wide range of courses to introduce students to the world of research, delve into a special type of research methodology, or develop academic English skills. Take these courses seriously and try to go beyond the content offered in class. Request additional resources to expand your

learning. Your professors and instructors will be always happy to provide additional assistance if needed.

Third, publishing can be hard when you work on your own, especially as a graduate student or emerging researcher. Therefore, try to collaborate with other researchers in the publication of your papers. Think about your classmates as potential research collaborators. Also, all faculty members are actively involved in research. Many times, they are in need of research assistance and will be happy to have you on board. Investigate what type of projects they are leading and make yourself available if you are interested in the subject.

Fourth, talk to other people about your research! Research conferences and seminars offer unique opportunities to network and meet other students and researchers who share the same interests as you in other institutions and countries. Effective use of social networks specializing in professional and research activities such as *LinkedIn* or *Academia* also provide opportunities to make your research outcomes and interests available to a wider audience and find potential research collaborators.

Fifth, is important to familiarize yourself with the most relevant journals and authors in your field of study. On the one hand, this allow you to become an effective consumer of research and remain current with the latest findings, ideas, tendencies and debates in your area of study. On the other hand, this lets you know which journals are better suited to the theme of a particular paper you want to publish. Of course, staying updated on the research developments in your areas of interest is a difficult task due to the amount of existing journals and the number of articles that are published every day. The easiest and most effective way I found to do this is to sign up in the most relevant journals in my field to receive email alerts on the latest publications, special issues and call of papers. This service is offered free of charge by the majority of academic journals and you can choose the frequency at which you receive the alerts.

Sixth, publishing is easier when you schedule and protect time for writing. Some people prefer to write very early in the morning before going to school or work. Other people prefer to set aside an hour or two at night every day for writing before going to sleep. In my case, it works best to identify a day in the week when I do not have classes or meetings and devote that day exclusively to writing. Whatever the time of day or week that works best for you, it is important to have a strategy to use your time effectively!

Do not forget that different publishing strategies work best for different people. The key is to find the strategies that work best with you. This is achieved with experience, time and dedication. Good luck with your publications!

### Focus on Originality

Robyn Bantel, PhD, Instructor, Academic English

All the journal editors I've talked to have said that probably the most important factor that determines whether a paper is accepted is whether it makes a *contribution* to knowledge in a field. So you need to take a step back from your paper and ask yourself honestly if your bottom line actually contributes or adds anything new. You do not necessarily have to invent or discover anything. Do you have a new perspective? Do you have a new way of looking at a difficult issue? Have you identified some disturbing gaps in the literature? Do you have a new solution to a difficult problem that your readers might find helpful? A journal editor wants to see real originality. Unlike writing a research paper for a university course, you have to move beyond the scholarship that already exists and do more than just gather information and report on it. This is actually a lucky time and place for you. Being on the forefront of educational reform in Kazakhstan, you are now in the "sweet spot" when it comes to contributing new ideas to the international community.

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originality.*

### Focus on Argumentation Through Data-Driven Methodology

Ali Ait Si Mhamed, PhD, Associate Professor, Finance in Higher Education

To publish is to share your knowledge with the rest of the world. However, sharing knowledge through empirical peer-reviewed publications is different from other mediums because your work must:

1. Be very focused on the knowledge you want to share.
2. Follow a scientific method: the researcher is required to have at least one focused research question, a clear method of analysis (i.e. quantitative or qualitative or mixed methods), identify specific data sources needed, and designate specific methods of analysis to strengthen the argumentation and facilitate the process of 'persuasion'
3. Present a good literature review that grounds the research question(s) in previous studies similar or identical to what the researcher is involved in investigating.
4. Include a clear theoretical framework as the lens or lenses through which the researcher analyzes his/her research.
5. Demonstrate clear argumentation and stimulating discussion to convince the reader.
6. Present an argument based on proof from data and empirical information.
7. Draw some meaningful and pragmatic conclusions that are data-driven.

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All the points above are to be looked at as units necessary to hold the research paper, similar to building a house whereby units in a research paper stand for robust cement and iron poles holding the building to stand strong and for a long time.

Finally, argumentation holds the components/units together in a cohesive way because argumentation keeps the researcher on track of what she/he wants to achieve with the writing. The stronger the data-grounded argumentation you provide, the more effective the study will be. And the more effective the study, the more impact it will have. And the more impact it has, the more likely it is to be published.

## Focus on Persistence

Rita Kasa, PhD, Assistant Professor, Inclusive Education

From my peer reviewed publishing experience, I would outline two things as the most important for successful publication of your manuscript. The first step to success is a well-developed manuscript which you submit to the journal for peer review. The better your initial text is, the more likely you will receive a positive response and with fewer revisions required. Most probably you will still need to do at least two rounds of revisions before your paper is published. Yet, this work will not be as difficult as it would be if you have a weak initial submission.

The second step to a successful peer reviewed publication is your ability to address the feedback of the reviewers to the best degree possible and in a timely manner. Sometimes you may not agree with a revision required. In such cases, you need to explain in a letter to the editors why it is so and show the evidence that your existing text is sufficient. However, in most cases the feedback of reviewers will make your publication stronger and you need to work on it seriously. That means you need to be prepared to revise and revise and revise your paper. Be persistent. And this is the part where authors often fail. So, in short, be attentive, persistent, and do not drag on with the revisions of your manuscript. If you work this way, your publication will see the light from the pages of a peer reviewed journal.

*You need to be  
prepared to revise  
and revise and  
revise your paper.*

## Focus on the Guidelines

Lyazat Gapbassova, PhD Student, Co-Managing Editor

In addition to the advice of our experienced faculty members, I would like to offer my own based on my role as a peer reviewer and managing editor. I want to draw our potential authors' attention to the journal's rubrics and requirements in order to avoid making common mistakes, and thereby minimize the number of future resubmissions.

The most common trap our authors fell into relates to the paper's structure and format. In particular, it seems that most of our authors do not usually see the difference between an academic piece of writing and a scholarly article. However, there is a difference.

*Your article's  
appearance,  
whether carefully  
prepared or not, is  
a reflection of you.*

First, academic writing is usually very focused and detailed, especially, when it is an empirical study or a course assignment. Journal articles, however, need to be more contextually laden, and include a brief overview of the current situation in order to get the reader acquainted with the field. Moreover, your article should not be overly detailed, as it can distract the reader from the main idea. Of course, it should also articulate its objectives and a roadmap explicitly in the beginning in order for the reader to easily follow you.

Second, the authors should not forget the main requirement of our journal: apart from being interesting, the articles should have something to do with education in Kazakhstan. Authors should define a connection with Kazakhstani context, and to reiterate this connection and further implication of their studies in the conclusion too. Otherwise, the article does not hold a big value for the journal, even if it is well-written and well-organized.

Third, I would recommend our potential authors to carefully read the formatting guidelines of NUGSERIE journal three times: before writing an article, during the writing process, and after its completion, to show respect to our peer-reviewers, their efforts and time. Keep in mind that your article's appearance, whether carefully prepared or not, is a reflection of you. With this advice, please welcome our first issue, which will hopefully be the beginning of our beautiful friendship.