

Getting your educational research published makes sense, and is essential for more formal recognition of one's work. It also means that bioscience and bioscientists contribute and inform the wider education literature, particularly important in light of the TLRP Tavistock Report (2002) which noted a general absence of 'evidence-based practice'. That said, getting published in a new field can be daunting so this poster gives some tips on how and where to publish.

## Suitable material you may already have

As a lecturer/teaching fellow it is likely that you are sitting on a wealth of data which may be suitable for publication, not just from exam performance but also module review and student feedback, completion rates, first destination data etc. Combining evidence of different types and from different sources to support a claim (that is, triangulation) greatly strengthens any paper.

## Still not sure what you have is good enough?

Started the evaluation and realised that you could have done something better? Don't worry that isn't necessarily fatal. It is recognised that there are differences between educational research and scientific research and when dealing with students it may not be possible to 'do the extra experiment'. Essentially editors are looking for pieces of work that are original, add to the body of knowledge and are realistic about the work being done, so the advice is be honest and self critical, i.e. a 'warts and all' approach. A good many papers that contain adequate data are rejected because of over-inflated or unsubstantiated claims regarding that data.

Ultimately a decision has to be made whether a paper makes a useful contribution to the literature and has a methodologies robust enough to make those claims. Can you repeat another year (with improvements)? Can you offer anything else?

Listed below are 7 common reasons why papers are rejected (Willmott, 2007):

1. Inadequate engagement with existing literature;
2. Poorly written;
3. Show and tell, i.e. only done once;
4. Little or no evaluation;
5. Not original;
6. Too obscure, not transferable; and
7. Content good, but not for specific journal.

## I'm unfamiliar with the literature

As indicated earlier inadequate discussion of background can be a killer and a further difficulty is that pedagogic articles are not as well served by search engines as scientific/biomedical papers. The most pragmatic solution is to follow the scent from other people's reference lists and Google Scholar is perhaps the easiest way to do this.

## What writing style should I use?

In general, the advice is the same as per science research articles

- Decide on the intended journal before writing the paper, not after;
- Check their 'Instructions for Authors' and obey the rules on formatting!
- Read some other papers published in your target journal; and
- Think "brevity and clarity" – tell as much of the story as necessary, but tell it concisely.

A useful checklist is:

- Is the message clear?
  - Is the message interesting (that is, novel, and appropriate for the publication's readership)?
  - Is the message supported by appropriate evidence?
  - Is the English of high quality? Spell checkers should be used, and the document proof-read by a colleague (who is a native English speaker, if you are not).
  - Are the references/bibliography up to date?
  - Is the formatting correct (according to the guidelines)?
- from Joy *et al.*, (2006)

## Where to publish?

Theoretically it is possible to publish educational articles in mainstream science journals (e.g. Science Education Forum [www.sciencemag.org/sciext/educationforum/](http://www.sciencemag.org/sciext/educationforum/)), realistically to do this you need to develop a reputation via other journals so if you're just getting started you need to look at other routes. The Deliberations website maintains two lists of educational journals ([www.londonmet.ac.uk/deliberations/journals/](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/deliberations/journals/)) and is a good place to start. The first question to ask is whether to go for a generic or subject-specific journal.

### Generic

- Higher impact factor. As a general rule these journals have higher impact factor compared subject-specific educational journals. Notable exceptions are 'Trends' journals.
- Wider readership. In the sense of educationalists from a range of disciplines. These journals are not read by the majority of lecturers/university teachers.
- Cross-curricular projects. Inter-disciplinary projects fit well into these journals.

For a list of generic education journals see

[http://heabiowiki.leeds.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Generic\\_education\\_journals](http://heabiowiki.leeds.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Generic_education_journals)



### Subject-Specific

- Nearer the 'chalkface'. These journals tend to have articles at the applied end of teaching.
- More likely to be of direct relevance to readers. Articles are often from contexts that are very similar to your own.
- More likely to be 'used'. A combination of the first two points and a readership from the subject area.

### Bioscience-specific education journals

- Bioscience Education
- Journal of Biological Education
- Others include CBE Life Sciences Education, Biochemical and Molecular Biology Education, Advances in Physiology Education

bioscience  
education



## References

Joy, M., Sun, S., Sitthiworachart, J. Sinclair, J. and López, J. (2006) Getting started in computer education research. Available at [www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/pedagogical/cs\\_research/before.php](http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/pedagogical/cs_research/before.php)

Tavistock Report: Review of Current Pedagogic Research and Practice in the Fields of Post-Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning (2002) Available at [www.tlrp.org/pub/acadpub/Tavistockreport.pdf](http://www.tlrp.org/pub/acadpub/Tavistockreport.pdf)

Willmott C (2007) Getting published – writing papers for pedagogic research journals. Presentation at the UK Centre for Bioscience event "An introduction to educational (pedagogic) research in the sciences" [www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/pedr111007.aspx](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/pedr111007.aspx)

Taken from "Getting Published" on the UK Centre for Bioscience Getting Started in Bioscience Education Research wiki [http://heabiowiki.leeds.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Getting\\_Published](http://heabiowiki.leeds.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Getting_Published)  
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