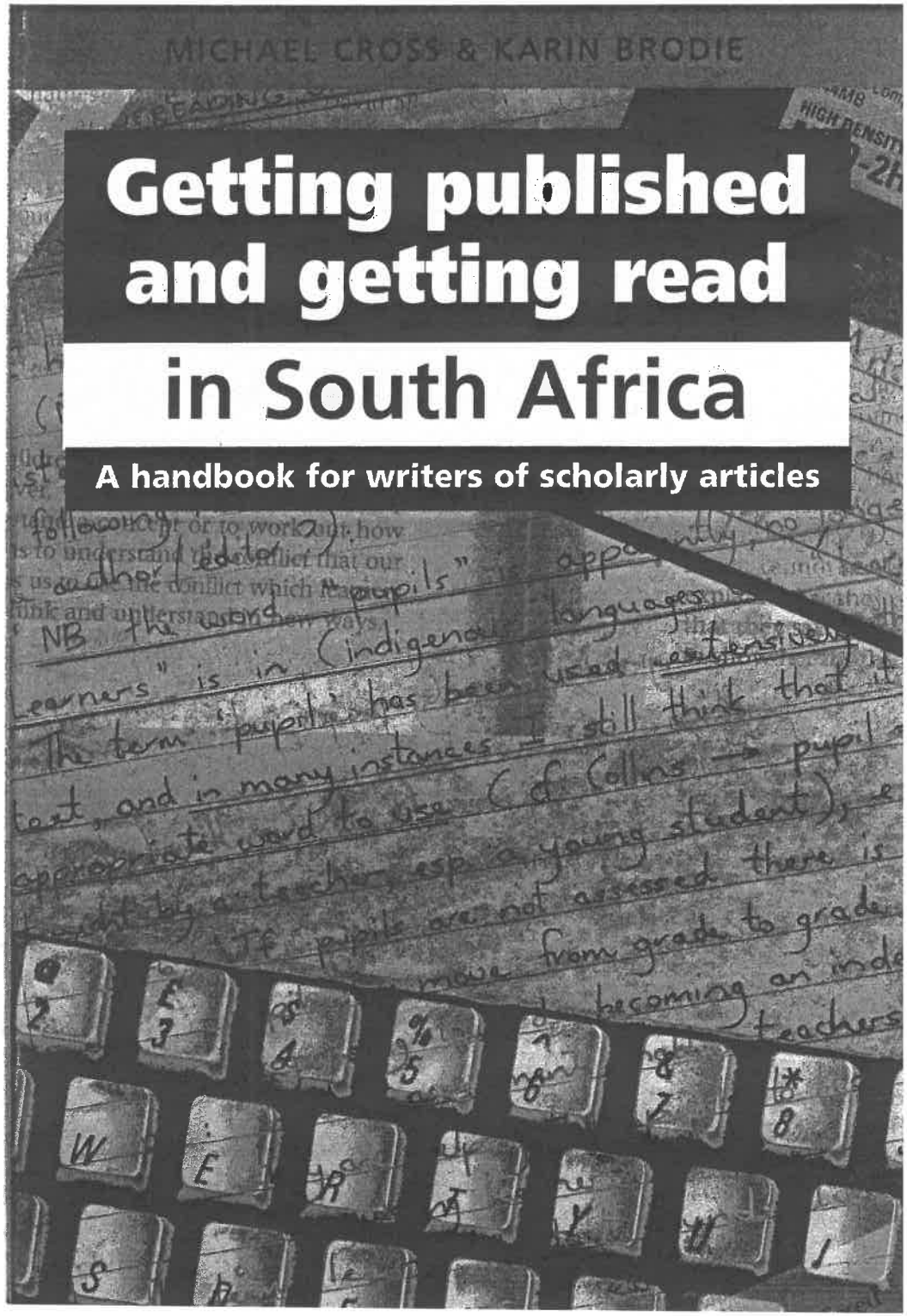
MICHAEL CROSS & KARIN BRODIE

Getting published and getting read in South Africa

A handbook for writers of scholarly articles



Getting published and getting read

A handbook for writers of scholarly articles

MICHAEL CROSS & KARIN BRODIE

Juta

UNESCO

First published 1998

PO Box 14373, Kenwyn 7790

ISBN 0 7021 4671 4

Cover design and typesetting by The Nimble Mouse, Kalk Bay

Set, printed and bound by Creda Communications,
Eliot Avenue, Eppindust II

Getting published and getting read

A handbook for writers of scholarly articles

MICHAEL CROSS & KARIN BRODIE

Juta

UNESCO

First published 1998

PO Box 14373, Kenwyn 7790

ISBN 0 7021 4671 4

Cover design and typesetting by The Nimble Mouse, Kalk Bay

Set, printed and bound by Creda Communications,
Eliot Avenue, Eppindust II

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this book.

- Members of the Editorial Board of *Perspectives in Education*, particularly Shirley Pendlebury, Lesley Hudson, Nazir Carrim and Shireen Motala for supporting writing workshops from which the idea of Audepro was born. Many of their ideas have continued to be used as part of the workshops and are used in various forms in this book.
- Lesley Hudson, Zwelaque Tshandu and Steve Segal who actively participated in running Audepro's writing workshops, which helped the authors in contextualising the book.
- Participants at Audepro workshops whose challenging ideas and questions have helped to develop many ideas in this book, and whose willingness to share openly their research and writing in its formative stages has contributed to our understanding of the problems faced by novice scholarly writers in South Africa.
- UNESCO for funding Audepro's projects and the development and writing of this book.

Michael Cross and Karin Brodie

This work was produced as part of UNESCO's support for Educational Publishing in South Africa. The views and opinions expressed in the volume are those of the authors and in no way should they be attributed to UNESCO.

Hubert Charks
Education Adviser
UNESCO, Pretoria

Introduction

Research, writing and publishing are important parts of developing knowledge and skills in a country. The aim of this book is to provide access to the knowledge, skills and opportunities needed to become a successful author of scholarly articles. In particular, it aims to address race and gender imbalances by providing guidance in writing and publishing for historically disadvantaged members of academic and research communities in South Africa.

The authors take the view that appropriate guidance is necessary to enable successful writing and publishing. On the other hand, there is no single, unproblematic way of writing, and it is not possible to prescribe rigid rules and methods for good writing. Writing is in many ways an expression of the self, and therefore a personal activity. The ideas in this book should be used to develop readers' own writing styles and preferences. As with any writing, the success of this book will depend on the way in which you, the reader, interact with it, the meanings you take from or attach to it, and the use you make of it.

Besides being personal activities, writing and publishing are also social and political activities. Whether articles are accepted for publication and read depends on interactions between authors and readers, publishers, and academic and

Contents

Chapter 1

Writing and publishing

Why write and publish?

Before you begin to work through this text, spend time thinking about why you want to write and publish. The suggestions below will help you to think about your motivations.

Think about/discuss

- What are some of the reasons why you write/want to write?
- What are some of the reasons why you publish/want to publish?

Here are some reasons for writing which you may have discussed.

- Putting your ideas into words helps you to clarify and develop them.
- Putting your thoughts into words helps you to structure and organise them.
- Writing provides opportunities for thinking and reflecting.
- Writing allows you to express your creativity and ideas.
- Writing enables you to communicate your ideas and concerns to others.

- Writing allows for flexibility: you can choose your topics, your audience and your own time-frames.

Here are some reasons for publishing which you may have discussed.

- Your job (if you are an academic) requires you to write and get published.
- Publishing gives you the satisfaction of seeing your ideas in a final form.
- Publishing allows you to communicate and share your ideas with others and to receive feedback.
- Publishing allows you to become part of a powerful group, that is, those who create and develop knowledge.
- Publishing will open up contact with other people in similar fields and facilitate networking.
- Seeing your work in print gives you a feeling of achievement.
- You can gain recognition from publishing.
- You can earn money from publishing.

Some concerns about writing and publishing

Think about/discuss

- What concerns, worries or questions do you have about writing and publishing?

Here are some concerns that people often express.

- I don't have time to write.
- Editors give preference to recognised authors; I am just a beginner.
- Journals in South Africa are controlled by whites. This makes it difficult for black writers to have their work accepted for publication.

- My training did not pay attention to the need for publication.
- I don't think I can write well in English.

This book takes the approach that anyone can learn to be a successful writer. However, it takes time and effort. Although some writers are more advantaged to begin with, they too have had to work hard for their success. Familiarity with English, a good education in writing at school and university, and access to resources, particularly human resources in the form of mentors and colleagues, all help to make the difficult tasks of writing and publishing easier. This book aims to make available to everyone the knowledge and skills that successful writers have.

Writing and publishing take different forms, including: novels; poetry; textbooks; manuals; instructional materials; academic/scholarly books; and articles. This book will focus on academic and scholarly writing, but much of what is said can apply to other forms as well.

Writing and publishing are usually interrelated, unless you are writing only for yourself, for example in a personal journal or diary. How and what you write depends on who you are writing for and where you want to publish your writing. Where you publish depends on how and what you write.

Becoming a published academic writer involves becoming part of a community of practice, the practice being writing and publishing (Lave & Wenger 1991). There are skills and approaches to be learned, such as: choosing suitable topics; choosing appropriate journals; developing appropriate styles; submitting articles in appropriate forms and using journal reviews to help you write.

The most important resource to draw on to develop these skills is other people, especially experienced writers. You can learn from them in two ways. Firstly, you can discuss drafts of your

own work with them. Experienced writers in your field should be able to give you advice on appropriate journals, how to submit articles, and how to work with reviewers' comments. Secondly, when you read published work, make notes of how the arguments are constructed, and how different styles of writing are used to communicate ideas. Much can be learned about forms and styles of writing from examples of good writing. As you gain experience, you will become part of the community of writers, begin to understand more about how writing and publishing works and, hopefully, be able to help others.

Reference

Lave, J & Wenger, E. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 2

Starting to write

Ideas and audience

To be able to write you need to have something to say, and someone to say it to – in other words, you need **ideas** and a (potential) **audience** or readers.

Ideas in academic writing usually come from research projects, but they also can come from other sources. For example, your work might raise interesting questions/issues which you want to explore and then communicate to others. Or you may have achieved success in a new project which others will appreciate hearing about.

Your **audience** can be fellow academics working in the same research fields, people who work in similar institutions to you, or practitioners in the field, for example teachers, government, curriculum developers, etc. You should feel that your audience (or parts of it) will be interested in what you have to say, and will learn something from it.

Many writers struggle to decide which of their ideas are worth writing about and which audience might find them interesting. According to Henson(1991:20):

> ...aspiring writers who attend writing workshops openly acknowledge that they do not believe they have anything worthy of publishing. This conclusion is unwise and it is wrong. **You do have knowledge that is worthy of sharing, and until you acknowledge this truth, you will remain unduly handicapped.**

Believing that your ideas are not worth sharing can be exacerbated if you are a member of a marginalised group or community. Research has shown that women, in particular, are less likely to believe that their ideas are worthwhile, or that they will stand the test of scrutiny by others. Therefore they are less likely to express their ideas, and thus less likely to have them affirmed. This can lead to a vicious cycle, which perpetuates the oppression of women. One way to break out of such a cycle is to find a supportive environment, for example other women writers, in which you can take risks and talk about your ideas, write something, and ask others to give you feedback. You will usually find, as Henson says, that you do have something worthwhile to say and, if you are in a supportive environment, others will affirm your ideas.

Another problem may be that the dominant discourse does not relate to your own ideas and issues. If you are black, it may be disheartening to pick up a journal and find that most of the authors are white and/or are dealing with topics that may not be relevant to your needs and questions. A solution to this may be to find journals that do deal with more 'marginalised' issues. This may get you published, but you may remain on the margins. Another way is to form networks of support, in order to get your work published in the mainstream journals.

Whether you are part of a historically disadvantaged group or not, you may be unsure as to which ideas are worth following up in an article. It is often helpful to talk through your ideas with more experienced colleagues, and with members of your potential audience. From their responses you should be able to

see what others find interesting about your ideas, even if you can't see their value. Experienced writers in your field may be able to advise you whether particular ideas are worth following up, and which journals may be suitable.

Activity

1 Write down three ideas/questions/topics that you might like to write about.
2 Write down who the appropriate audience(s) might be.
3 Discuss with a colleague, or a member of the proposed audience, whether they think that the ideas may make useful papers.

Conceptualising

Once you feel more confident about your ideas and you have some idea of your audience, you can begin to conceptualise your writing. Conceptualising is a personal process and people vary in how they prefer to do it.

Think about/discuss

- How do you conceptualise, plan and structure your writing?

Here is what some experienced writers say.

> 'I start with a title, which captures the main idea of the article, and then decide on headings and subheadings for each section of the article, which show the structure of my argument.'

> 'I write down my main idea, and then other related ideas. I organise them into an order, and start to develop each one in more detail. I only decide on section headings and the title at the end, when I know what I've said.'

'I start with my introduction and my conclusions, because then I know where I've started and where I'm going to. Then I structure the rest.'

'I do the introduction last, because it's only when I've finished writing that I really know what I'm trying to do.'

'I start with a vague outline of what I want to do. But I know I will not stick with it, because as I write, my ideas will change. Often, I move whole sections of my text from one place to the other, and totally change the structure.'

These are the most important points.

1 There are no easy solutions for successful writing. Writing is a craft, which you learn through experience as you do it, and from more experienced writers.
2 Writing is not a linear process. You may have to keep moving back and forth between conceptualising and writing, because as you write you develop your ideas more clearly and as you develop your ideas you are able to express them better.

Taking the first leap

The best way to begin writing is to forge forward without worrying about errors in spelling or punctuation and without trying to avoid superfluous words or sentences. All of these errors can be corrected later. Don't make the mistake of perfectionists who ponder over word choice even during the first draft ... Writing is a creative process ...

The main thing to remember about getting started is to do just that. Write! Whenever you think that you might have

> something to say, just write it down. The first draft doesn't have to be good. Getting something on paper is half of the game. You can do it. Just write (Henson 1991:38).

There is nothing worse than staring at a blank page or computer screen and feeling paralysed because you cannot write what you are thinking, particularly if you are writing in a language that is not your first language. Even experienced writers, who are writing in a first language, struggle to put their ideas into words, especially when they start to write something new. Athol Fugard, the well-known South African playwright, says: 'I'm very conscious of how faltering the first few steps are, how much stalling and drowning in the blankness of paper there is. Nothing flows in my head' (1989:41).

It is daunting to think about the end product, a long, readable paper. So don't think about it. The best way to start, as Henson says, is to start. Set yourself a manageable task, for example to write one paragraph. You may achieve this quite quickly, start to feel successful, and be able to continue writing. Set achievable goals for each writing period and know that eventually a paper will emerge. Know that you will change what you write at first: you may discard it altogether, you may improve it and keep it. All writers discard a lot of what they write (or keep it for another article) and it is not a waste of time and energy to write something that does not feature in your final product. You will never get to the final product if you don't start.

Woods (1985: 92-93) talks about a process of 'cranking up' or 'psyching' himself up for writing. It sometimes takes him a few days of thinking about writing before he gets going. This time may be necessary to sort through ideas either consciously or subconsciously. However, if it goes on too long it is probably an avoidance tactic.

Activity

1 Choose one of the topics that you wrote down on page 7.
2 Without thinking, start to write about it and continue writing for about 10 minutes. Do not worry about spelling, grammar or punctuation. If you cannot think of anything to write, write about not having anything to write.

References

Fugard, A. 1989. Interview. *The Paris Review*, no 111, 41.

Henson, KT. 1991. *Writing for Successful Publication.* Bloomington, Indiana: National Educational Service.

Woods, P. 1985. New songs played skilfully: Creativity and technique in writing up qualitative research. In Burgess, RG. (ed). *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*. London: Falmer Press.

Chapter 3

Keeping going and keeping focused

Once you have made the leap and started your paper, you have entered what is probably the most difficult part of the writing process. This is where you write most of the content of your paper: the main ideas; the relationships between the main ideas and other ideas; the relationships between the ideas and relevant theories and literature in the field. All of these need to come together to form your main argument or contention. There are no rules on how best to do this. Each individual writer develops her/his own ways of working, and very few get it right first time.

Be prepared to change and improve your writing and your ideas all the time. You are developing your ideas through writing, and so you should continually move back and forth between your conception of your paper, its structure and how it materialises in words. **Not even the best writers transfer words directly from their heads on to the page. Writing always transforms ideas.**

Athol Fugard on the writing process:

> ... there have never been sustained outpourings. If I've got three full pages done, longhand, that's a good day. That's a damn good day in fact. Sometimes there is nothing, or

> what I have written goes into the wastepaper basket. I tear up and throw away furiously when I write. I don't accumulate a lot of paper. For something to stay on paper longer than two days it has to pass some very critical tests. I usually work through three drafts, longhand, in the course of writing a play; it takes about nine months.' (1989:41)

Athol Fugard writes literature and plays, which you may think are very different from academic papers. However, Woods argues that writing up qualitative, and even quantitative, research can be thought of as similar to an artistic process. (1985:90-91) Woods averages about five pages per day during peak writing periods (much less at the beginning of the process) (1985:93).

Writing a good academic paper can take up to two years, depending on how much time you have to spend on it. Very few writers will manage a paper in less than a month. Writing takes a long time (and it always takes longer than you think it will). Therefore you will need to be considerably motivated, interested and inspired by your topic to be able to sustain your work.

Focus on content

The content of your article will be most important in determining whether it will be accepted for publication. At various stages in your writing you should check for some or all of the following.

1 Does your paper make a contribution to current debates in your field?
2 Is your paper relevant to education in South Africa at this moment?
3 Is there something new and original in your paper?
4 Is your paper interesting (to a potential audience)?

Answering these questions is not easy – it is a skill that you will develop as you become more experienced. As a beginner, these are the kinds of questions you may want to ask of more experienced writers.

Answers to these questions may be different, depending on who you ask. Some people may find a paper new and interesting, while others may not. Ultimately, journal editors may use these questions to decide whether to accept your paper.

One skill that you can learn as an author is to answer these questions in your paper, as you write it. They should usually be addressed in the introduction, as part of a justification for writing the paper.

Activity
Read the abstract and introduction of each paper in *Perspectives in Education*, vol 17, no 1, March 1996. As you read, answer the following questions.

1 What specific contribution to education is the paper making?
2 In what ways is the paper relevant to education in South Africa?
3 What is new and original in the paper?
4 To which audiences may the paper be interseting?

Justify your answers to these questions by pointing to where each author answers them.

Check list for content

The following criteria are often used by editors to evaluate the content of papers. Refer to them as you write; they may help to improve your paper.

1 Is the piece interesting? Why/why not?
2 What is the intended audience and is the piece pitched at an appropriate level for this audience?
3 Is the piece suitably informed in the relevant field?
4 What contribution does the piece make to debates about education in South Africa?
5 What is the author's main argument? Is it developed in a critical and disciplined manner? What evidence is it based on?
6 Is the piece coherent and focused? Are all ideas drawn into the central argument, or are there superfluous ideas in the paper?
7 Does the author demonstrate understanding of the relevant theories and research methodologies? What are these?
8 What data is presented? Does it help the argument?
9 Are methods of data collection clearly described?
10 Is the data analysed and interpreted, or merely described?
11 What original approach, perspective, ideas or research are evident in the paper?
12 Does the author's own voice emerge clearly?
13 Does the piece fulfil its own aims?
14 Are any limitations of the work presented?

Argument

Most important in an academic paper is that you make a claim or take a position about something, and create an **argument** in support of your claim or position. One of the most difficult aspects of writing a paper is to organise a variety of ideas into a coherent, focused argument.

An argument in an academic paper is different from an argument in everyday life. In everyday life, an argument implies disagreement between people, usually with conflict. One side tries to convince the other(s) of a particular point of view. This may be done in an emotional way, with confrontation, defensiveness and even loud words. The participants seldom listen to other points of view.

An academic argument is not usually conflictual and antagonistic unless it specifically aims to take issue with someone else's position. But most academic papers, particularly those presented by novice writers, are not of this type.

In fact, an academic argument should be in contrast to an everyday argument in that it is detached. It should consider the issue from a number of perspectives, carefully and in a considered way. An academic argument is similar to an everyday argument in that it does try to convince others of the writer's point of view. But this point of view is based on carefully gathered evidence which enables the writer to take the position that she/he has taken.

According to Northedge (1990:143) an argument should be:

- concerned with evidence;
- logical;
- objective;
- open to doubt and criticism.

Evidence

You need to base your claims or positions on sound evidence. 'You cannot expect your reader to believe what you are saying just because you are saying it. You have to show your grounds for saying it' (Northedge 1990: 144). Evidence can come from a variety of sources and gathering evidence is an important part of a research project. Evidence for your position can also come

from other research and arguments. In this case you quote from the literature to support your claims.

Logic
To build an argument you need to bring a variety of points and evidence together into a coherent whole. The sequencing of your points is important in how you make your claim and whether your argument will flow. Making logical connections between various points can help the structure and organisation of your argument. Using conjunctions like 'because', 'but', 'however', 'nevertheless', 'therefore', 'although' etc can help to show the connections between your various ideas.

Objectivity
This is in direct contrast to the subjectivity of an everyday argument, where each person defends her/his own point of view, usually emotionally. An academic argument does defend a position, but it is a position based on sound reasons and evidence, and therefore somewhat distanced from personal emotional beliefs. A detached tone can help to create this distance. Of course, it is not always possible, nor desirable, to be totally objective. The best papers are usually written by those who feel passionately about what they are writing. While passionate belief cannot substitute for sound evidence and reason, it can add to it and be based on it.

Doubt and criticism
A good academic is always open to alternative views in the spirit of developing knowledge. You should be able to point to areas where your argument may not apply, or may not tell the whole story. Your aim should not be to prove something once and for all so that no one can doubt it. Rather, it is to open up new ways of seeing your topic, from your perspective, based on your evidence. You should be able to acknowledge that others may see things differently, and that even you in the future may change your mind, on the basis of new evidence and other

arguments. This does not mean apologising for or criticising your own point of view. Rather, acknowledge that it is probably one of many points of view.

Constructing an argument is a difficult part of writing and again there are no hard and fast rules. Here is a list of some important points to remember when constructing an argument.

1 Organise the points that you are making into a few main points and related subpoints. Keep points that are similar together.
2 Decide which will be your main points, to be elaborated in detail. These will form the substance of your paper. Other subpoints may just be mentioned, without elaboration.
3 Make sure that there is a flow between your main points and between each main point and its subpoints. Northedge (1990: 152) calls this a 'thread of meaning' where 'each sentence should flow on from the previous one'.
4 Make your links clear to your reader, through using conjunctions and through referring to previous points that you have made, or to future ones that you will make.
5 Paragraphs and subheadings are your main tools for organising your argument. These will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

You cannot do the above before you start writing, since they form part of the writing process itself. While writing, you may sometimes want to change a subpoint into a main point or vice versa. Sometimes you only see the links between your ideas after you have written a substantial amount, and only then can you add conjunctions and linking words and sentences. Very often writing entails moving sentences, paragraphs and even whole sections around, so that you can get the best flow and structure to your argument. This is why computers are such a useful tool for writers.

Activity

1 Choose a paper in *Perspectives in Education*, vol 17, no 1, March 1996. Read the paper and do the following as you read.
   (a) Identify the main claim that the authors make.
   (b) Identify any subclaims which are related to this.
   (c) Show how the claims and subclaims are linked together.
   (d) Identify the evidence that the claims are based on.
   (e) Identify any points where the authors acknowledge points of view which differ from their own.

2 Look at one of your own papers.
   (a) Highlight the main claim that you are making wherever it appears.
   (b) Think about whether it appears consistently, and how it is linked to the various subclaims that you are making.

Writing a research paper

Most papers of beginner writers will be based on some form of research, usually research done for a Master's or doctoral degree. It is not within the scope of this book to discuss the features of the research process or a good research project. However, the following points are useful to note for papers that are based on research.

Literature review

You need to locate your research paper within a field of study. This is usually done through a literature review which maps out the main issues in the field and shows where your research fits in. A literature review in a paper will be a short version of a literature review for a research report or thesis.

Because of space limitations, you should select only what adds to your argument and provides a frame for your ideas and your evidence. Most papers do not have a separate section for a literature review as do theses, but rather draw on other papers as the need arises.

Theoretical frame

You will inevitably draw on a theoretical frame to interpret your data and establish your argument. A theoretical frame is a set of interrelated theories and assumptions about the subject of your report. You may work with these in a conscious, deliberate manner, or your assumptions may be more implicit. One of the features of a good paper is to make this framework explicit. Some papers have a separate section for the theoretical frame, while others weave it through the paper.

Methodology

If you are presenting data as evidence, you need to outline how the data was collected, in what context and for what purposes. Again, this section should not be as detailed as in your thesis or original research report, but it should give enough detail to enable the reader to judge whether your claims are based on reasonable methods of data collection. This is where you can describe any limitations in your study due to methodological issues.

Analysis

Most of your paper should consist of interpretation and analysis of your data. You will usually choose only one aspect of your study to report on in a particular paper. You should choose the appropriate data and the analysis carefully, the main principle being to use enough to substantiate your claims, and to allow the reader to see the basis from which you are asserting your positions. You should present enough evidence so that the reader can make informed judgements as to whether your claims are reasonable or not.

Activity
As you read other papers, be on the lookout for how experienced writers present literature reviews, theoretical frames, methodology and analysis.

Not all research papers need to follow the headings on the previous page as a strict format. In fact, some journals prefer less obvious formats. However, all papers should include some attention to each of the aspects discussed previously. And there should always be sound argument, based on evidence.

Some features of a good scholarly article

A good scholarly article should:

- be interesting and provocative, or present new ideas, perspectives, arguments or data;
- contribute to the development of knowledge in the field;
- present a critical and disciplined argument with suitable support for claims and assertions;
- have a clear structure, which enables the presentation of the argument;
- maintain its focus, with clear distinctions between important points which are elaborated and others which are just mentioned;
- employ lively and precise language with style and tone suited to the audience and the journal to which it will be submitted.

Some common failings of scholarly articles

- Overclaiming – making claims and assertions which are not supported by the evidence that you have presented.
- Underclaiming – being hesitant to make reasonable claims on the basis of your data.
- Making wild claims, *non sequiturs* (assertions which do not follow logically from the previous statements), contradictions and inconsistencies.
- Undertheorised description – presenting data as fact, without analysis or interpretation.
- Setting up a 'straw person' – presenting an argument with the sole intention of tearing it down. It is referred to as a straw person because it is usually oversimplified and doesn't really exist as any particular person's argument.
- Too much jargon which mystifies rather than clarifies your position.

(Woods 1985: 102-104)

How to keep going

After reading the above sections, you may feel exhausted and intimidated at the mere thought of writing a paper. Writing is difficult, and to pretend otherwise would be misleading. Writing can be time-consuming and lonely, and the rewards are not always evident. Often it feels like you are getting nowhere. It takes hard work, commitment and dedication, and usually many months to see a paper through from start to finish.

A paper will normally go through many drafts before it is ready to be submitted for publication. It can even go through many drafts before you feel comfortable enough to discuss it with others. On the following page is an example of redrafting, from Athol Fugard.

Writers work differently with drafts. Some write the whole paper, and then come back and rework it. Others write drafts of each section and rework them more thoroughly before moving on to the next section. You will develop your own personal preferences and style.

Writing is both a solitary and a cooperative effort. You will need lots of time alone to develop and write your ideas. You will also need to interact with others, particularly at difficult times when you are stuck and are not sure how to continue.

Think about/discuss

- What difficulties do you have in keeping yourself going with a paper once you have started it?
- In what ways can you deal with these difficulties?

Here are some ideas for keeping yourself going.

Make a commitment

Make a commitment to writing and publishing and honour your commitment. Writing and publishing is hard work, and does not always feel worth it. There are two main stumbling blocks to overcome. Firstly, you may feel that you are not good enough to write and publish successfully. It may help you to remember that it takes a long time to become a successful writer and even successful writers find it difficult. Secondly, you may feel that you don't have time. You need to **make** time to write, and to commit a regular part of your working day/week to writing.

ISABEL: Then why is he dead?

THAMI: You must stop asking those questions now Isabel.

You know the answers.

ISABEL: They dont make sense Thami. I think I'll be asking that 'why' for the rest of my life

THAMI: I know what you are feeling.

ISABEL: You do?

THAMI: (sternly) Yes! I do.

(pause)

I also loved him.

Doesn't help much to say it now I know, but I did.

Because he made me angry and impatient with his "old-fashioned ideas". I didn't want to admit it. ~~even if I had known~~. It wouldn't have stopped me from doing what I did, the boycott and everything, but I ~~could~~ should have tried harder to make him understand why I was doing it. You were right about that. I'll never forgive myself for not trying harder with him and letting him know ~~how~~ my true feelings for him ~~were unchanged~~. Right until the end I tried to deny it ... to him, to myself.

ISABEL: Are the police really looking for you?

THAMI: Yes. Some of my friends have already been detained.

They're pulling in everybody.

ISABEL: Where are you going? Cape Town?

THAMI: No. I've written to my parents telling them about everything. I'm heading north.

ISABEL: To where?

THAMI: Far Isabel. Far.

And you?

ISABEL: I've stayed home these past few days. I dont know what to do with myself Thami.

Make time

We all have busy schedules and writing takes a long time. In the author's experience, writing always takes longer than you think it will. So you have to make time to write and give yourself enough time. People differ on how much time is best. You will usually need sufficient time to get going – at least an hour at a time, preferably two. Half an hour at the end of a busy day is not enough. You probably won't get around to writing, and if you do get to it, it is likely that as you start to write something useful, your time will be up. On the other hand, too much time can also be counterproductive, because you cannot be consistently creative for very long periods of time. You need to take a break from writing and do other things.

Choose productive times

People vary on when they write best. Some people prefer early mornings, others prefer evenings and still others late at night. Your best times will depend on your other commitments, and when you can find a time relatively free from noise or disruptions. For example, it will not be very productive if you choose a time when colleagues, or your children, are competing for your attention, because you may be torn between them and your writing. If you have come to a particularly difficult section of your writing, you may find it easier to stop writing, rather than disappoint a friend or child.

Be consistent, write regularly

There are times when you should be working regularly on a paper. Many experienced writers find that two to three hours a day, for at least three to five days a week, are necessary for the main writing phase. You may have to put in more time if deadlines and conferences are approaching. It may help to spread your writing over a longer period because, even while you are doing other things and not writing, you will continue to think about your ideas, and develop them further, sometimes without realising it.

Set achievable goals

Set achievable short-term and long-term goals. For a particular paper, don't overcommit yourself. You cannot give up your other work, family and community commitments to write (unless you are one of the privileged few who can be a full-time writer). Decide exactly how much of your time each week you can give to a paper, and then stick to it. In the long term decide how many papers you can write and publish. An achievable goal for a new writer may be one article in a professional journal every two years.

Network and seek feedback on your writing

Networking can support and enrich your writing. Talk about your ideas to people whom you meet. Find people in your field who are willing and able to help you, and to whom you feel comfortable showing your drafts. Colleagues are usually very helpful for this, and can often help you to move from a position where you feel stuck and not sure what to do. You can present your ideas at seminars and conferences, where you will get useful questions, perspectives that you had not thought about, and ideas to improve your writing. Not even the best writers do it all alone – everyone gets feedback. It is necessary and helpful to see your own writing from others' points of view.
Networking is a crucial tool in research and publication. You cannot network in a day, since it is a process (like writing) and takes time. There is a beginning to the networking process but no end. It is a worthwhile process because you meet people and exchange ideas which are beneficial to all those involved. Experienced writers learn from those whom they help, and you should be able to find people willing to help you. Don't be afraid to ask for help – it is the only way to learn.

Be open to criticism

It is very hard to present your work to someone and to have it criticised. But it is the best way to learn. Receiving help often means that we have to overcome our own 'egos', which don't like to admit that we are wrong. As Fraser says: 'You have to

admit that you need help, and that involves throwing the ego out the window sometimes' (1994:264).

Work hard

Writing for successful publication is hard work, even for those who enjoy it. It requires self-discipline, self-motivation, commitment, consistency, and willingness to learn. But it is worth the effort. The rewards are intellectual development, recognition in your field, and a sense of satisfaction for achieving a difficult task.

Collaborate

Collaborating on writing projects with colleagues can provide motivation and opportunities to learn from your peers. It can also enable you to produce articles more quickly, which is useful for academics who want to increase their rate of publication. However, it is not always easy to work with someone else. The best partnerships are those where partners have similar work habits and orientations to the work. In these cases it is easier to achieve equality between the co-authors and each can feel ownership of the work. It is important that all the co-authors feel that they own the work and can feel proud of it. Another possibility is to work with a mentor, where she/he does most of the conceptualising and writing and you, as a beginner, do some of it under her/his guidance. In all cases of co-authoring it should be agreed in advance who will be the first author, and what the relative responsibilities of the others in the team are. This will help to avoid possible conflict that may arise later.

Think about/discuss

- Which of the above do you do already?
- Which can you start to do, get better at?
- What other things do/can you do in order to keep going with your writing?

References

Fraser,CG. 1994. *Success Runs in our Race: The Complete Guide to Effective Networking in the African-American Community*. New York: William Morrow & Company.

Fugard, A. 1989. Interview. *The Paris Review*, no 111, 41.

Northedge, A. 1990. *The Good Study Guide*. Milton Keynes: The Open University.

Woods, P. 1985. New songs played skilfully: Creativity and technique in writing up qualitative research. In Burgess, RG. (ed). *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*. London: Falmer Press.

Chapter 4

Writing style

At certain points in your writing you will need to tighten up your style and grammar. As discussed previously, it may be counter-productive to do this too early. On the other hand, you need not wait till the end. Particularly if you are going to give your paper to others to comment on, it should be in a form in which they can clearly understand.

Think about/discuss

- What, for you, are the most difficult aspects of style in writing?
- Why is style important in writing?

The basics: Spelling and grammar

You may think that spelling and grammar are not important. After all, it's the ideas that count. On one level, this is true; your ideas are the most important part of your paper. However, the aim of publishing is to communicate your ideas to others and therefore it is important to ensure that the way in which you write does not block access to your ideas.

If people have to struggle with misspelled words and ungrammatical sentences, they will have less energy to spend on coming to grips with what you are saying.

English spelling and grammar can be difficult, especially if English is not your first language. It is often difficult even for first-language English speakers. If you are unsure how to spell a word, look it up in a dictionary. Good word-processing packages have spell-checks which will pick up many (but not all) spelling and typing mistakes. There are also grammar-checks, but they usually require a fairly sophisticated knowledge of grammar, beyond that of most people, to use them appropriately. It is probably more useful to ask an experienced writer, editor, or someone with qualifications in English, to make suggestions on improving your grammar. Probably the best way to learn about grammar is to notice how other writers use it. When you read, don't only read for content. Also spend some time thinking about the grammar and spelling.

The main idea here is not to spend hours nitpicking over subtle grammatical constructions, but to make your paper readable and clear, and appealing to prospective editors, reviewers and readers.

Activity
Working with a partner:

1 Select two pages of your article where you think the grammar and spelling can be improved. Give it to your partner to read. Your partner must do the same.
2 Spend about 10-15 minutes reading each other's work. Make a note of where the spelling, grammar or other aspects of style obscure or confuse what she/he is trying to say.
3 Report back to your partner on the grammatical difficulties in her/his paper.

NB: You should not edit with the eye of a formal grammarian – that is, pointing to grammatical errors for their own sake. Rather, concentrate on how style and grammar enhance or confuse meaning.

Choosing words

In trying to express your ideas as clearly as possible, your choice of words is important. Many people think that the mark of a good writer is complicated words, because it makes her/him look clever and skilled. In fact, the opposite is usually true. A skilled writer is able to express complex ideas in a simple manner. A good principle to remember in writing is: **be as simple and as clear as possible.** You want the reader to understand what you are saying. If you can find a simple word rather than a more complex one, use it.

These are some important principles relating to word choice.

- Avoid using slang – it does not impress reviewers and editors.
- Avoid too much specialised jargon, unless you are writing for highly specialised readers who will understand it, or if the jargon helps to clarify your meaning rather than obscure it. If you do use specialised terminology which your readers may not understand, try to explain what you mean by it.
- Be as precise with your word choice as possible. Choose words which capture what you want to say.

Work through the activity on the next page with your partner as you did in the previous one.

Activity

1. Read the same or a new piece of your partner's paper.
2. Circle all words which need clarification or which can be replaced by simpler words.
3. Discuss these with your partner. She/he may disagree and may feel the word is justified. Try to come to an agreement on the best word in a particular instance.

Sentences

The same principle of simplicity holds for sentences. Avoid long and complex sentences. You will find that it is more difficult to write in simple sentences than in complex ones. This is because our thoughts are often complex, and hard to clarify, both for ourselves and for others. This is one of the main tasks of a writer and skilled writers are those who can take complicated ideas and communicate them clearly. If you can write in shorter sentences rather than longer ones, without losing your meaning, do so.

Also, remember your readers. A reader will try to read each full sentence in one go. If a sentence is too long, and has too many ideas, the reader will get tired. Think about giving your readers breathing space by putting full stops in your writing.

Sentences should also vary in form and in length. Sometimes a very short sentence after a longer one can help to make a short, sharp point. Like this. Some beginner writers tend to start every sentence with 'The' or 'A'. This may make the writing sound stilted or boring. Try to begin sentences with different words.

It often helps to read your work aloud. This should alert you to sentences that are too long (lack of breath), or words that are repeated at the beginning of your sentences. Read the following sentences aloud and compare how it feels to read them.

1 Outcomes are the results of a learning process whether formal, nonformal or informal. In outcomes-based education and training curriculum developers work backwards from agreed desired outcomes within a particular context which clearly state what the learner should be able to demonstrate an understanding of and ability to apply appropriately. Programmes of learning are then designed to help the learners to achieve these outcomes (National Department of Education 1996).

2 Outcomes are the results of a learning process, whether formal, nonformal or informal. In outcomes-based education and training, curriculum developers work backwards from agreed desired outcomes. The outcomes are located within a particular context. They clearly state what understandings the learner should be able to demonstrate, and what she/he should be able to apply appropriately. Programmes of learning are then designed to help the learners achieve these outcomes.

Think about/discuss

- Which of the above quotes is easier to read? Why?
- Which of the above quotes is easier to write? Why?
- How has the writer transformed one sentence in the first quote to three sentences in the second quote?

Again, work through the activity with your paper and a partner.

Activity

1 Choose another two pages of your paper.
2 Read your partner's work with a view to breaking up and shortening sentences that are too long. Make suggestions to your partner on how she/he can do this.
3 Discuss your recommendations with your partner. Try to arrive at sentences which convey the writer's meaning clearly to the reader.

You will have noticed in the previous activity that it is not always easy to transform long sentences into shorter ones without losing the original meaning. If all your sentences are too short, you may not be able to say anything worthwhile. And you may lose the flow from one idea to the next. Using sentences to their best effect is something that takes a lot of thought and practice. If you struggle to do it, ask a more experienced writer, or someone with a knowledge of English grammar, to help you. And as you read, notice how experienced writers use sentences.

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are crucial in organising your writing. The usual principle for paragraphing is: one main idea per paragraph, with others related to it. This is a good principle to try to aim for, but not always possible to achieve.

Activity

1 Read the following paragraph, which is a first draft of two paragraphs on page 9 of this book.
   (a) Identify the main ideas in this paragraph.
   (b) Discuss whether you think this works as one paragraph, or whether it can be split into two (or more). Give reasons for your suggestions.

There is nothing worse than staring at a blank page or computer screen and feeling paralysed because you cannot write what you are thinking. It may be even worse if you are writing in a language that is not your first language. It feels daunting to think about the end product, a long, readable paper. Even experienced writers struggle to put their ideas into words. The best way to start is, as Henson says, just start. Know that you will change what you write at first, you may discard it altogether, you may improve it and keep it. All writers discard a

lot of what they write (or keep it for another article). It is not a waste of time and energy to write something that does not feature in your final product. You will never get to the final product if you don't start. Set yourself the task of writing one paragraph. That is more manageable and you will achieve it quite quickly. You may be surprised at your success, and your subsequent ability to continue writing more. Set achievable goals for each writing period and know that eventually a paper will emerge.

2 Here is the second draft of this paragraph (as two paragraphs).
   (a) Discuss how the author divides the first paragraph in two.
   (b) What are the main ideas in each paragraph now?
   (c) In what ways does the division into two paragraphs help to make the ideas clearer?

There is nothing worse than staring at a blank page or computer screen and feeling paralysed because you cannot write what you are thinking. It may be even worse if you are writing in a language that is not your first language. However, even experienced writers, who are writing in a first language, struggle to put their ideas into words especially when they start to write something new. The best way to start is, as Henson says, just start. Know that you will change what you write at first, you may discard it altogether, you may improve it and keep it. All writers discard a lot of what they write (or keep it for another article). It is not a waste of time and energy to write something that does not feature in your final product. You will never get to the final product if you don't start.

When you stare at your blank page or computer screen, it feels daunting to think about the end product, a long, readable paper. So don't think about it. Set yourself the task of writing one paragraph. That is more manageable and you will achieve it quite quickly. You may be surprised at your success, and your subsequent ability to continue writing more.

Set achievable goals for each writing period and know that eventually a paper will emerge.

3 The author was still not happy with the two paragraphs, so she re-organised them. What do you think of the final version below?
   (a) What are the main ideas in each paragraph now?
   (b) Analyse what the author has changed, and how she has done this.
   (c) Do you think that the final version is better than the previous two? Why/why not?

There is nothing worse than staring at a blank page or computer screen and feeling paralysed because you cannnot write what you are thinking. It may even be worse if you are writing in a language that is not your first language. However, even experienced writers, who are writing in a first language, struggle to put their ideas into words especially when they start to write something new. Athol Fugard, the well-known South African playwright, has this to say: 'I'm very concious of how faltering the first few steps are, how much stalling and drowning in the blankness of paper there is. Nothing flows in my head.'

It is daunting to think about the end product – a long, readable paper. So don't think about it. The best way to start, as Henson says, is to start. Set yourself the task of writing one paragraph. That is more manageable and you will achieve it quite quickly. You may be surprised at your success, and your subsequent ability to continue writing more. Set achievable goals for each writing period and know that eventually a paper will emerge. Know that you will change what you write at first: you may discard it altogether, you may improve it and keep it. All writers discard a lot of what they write (or keep it for another article). It is not a waste of time and energy to write something that does not feature in your final product. You will never get to the final product if you don't start.

From the previous activity you will have seen that there can be more than one way to organise ideas into paragraphs. Individuals may disagree on what is the best way to do this. As you try to organise your paragraphs, you may struggle to make some decisions. The paragraph(s) given as an example for the previous activity was a particularly difficult one for the author. When writing, she changed it more than twice. In fact, even when including it as an activity in this section, she made some more changes.

As with sentences, a main principle for paragraphs is: **shorter rather than longer**. According to Henson(1991), a reader should be able to remember all the main ideas contained in the paragraph. The maximum size should be about half a double-spaced typewritten page, and never longer than one page. You can test whether your paragraphs are too long by reading them, and seeing if you can remember all the important points. If you can't, you should shorten the paragraph.

You will have noticed in the previous activity that as the author redrafted her paragraphs, she changed the order of the sentences. This was done to get a better flow of ideas from one sentence to another within a paragraph. You should find yourself doing this often in your writing. We do not think in linear ways – our thoughts are often abbreviated, free associations and linked nonsequentially. In writing, however, we need to order our thoughts in more linear relations to each other. This is the **structuring** or **organising** process in writing, an important part of constructing an argument, and one of the most difficult aspects of writing.

Another important way of structuring and organising your text is through the sequencing of paragraphs. In the previous activity you will have noticed that the author changed sentences from one paragraph to another so that she could get a better flow between paragraphs, as well as within them. The ideas in the second paragraph follow the ideas in the first one.

It often helps to write a linking sentence between two paragraphs which shows how the one follows on from the other. For example, look at the previous two paragraphs. The first is about the order and flow of sentences within a paragraph. The second is about the order and flow between paragraphs. They are linked to each other by the idea of structuring and organising texts. The sentence at the beginning of the second paragraph, particularly the conjunction 'another', clearly establishes the connection between the two paragraphs. When you read through drafts of your paper, think about whether you have established links between paragraphs.

For the next activity, work again with two pages of your partner's paper. Examine each paragraph with reference to the following questions and discuss them with your partner.

Activity

1 Are there too many ideas?
2 Should it be divided to form more than one paragraph? If so, where? If not, why not?
3 How are the paragraphs sequenced? Are the links between them clear? Can you make recommendations to your partner to make the sequence and links clearer for readers?

Subheadings

Another way of structuring and organising your text is through subheadings. Subheadings are being used increasingly in academic writing, and some journals insist on them. Subheadings help to structure and organise both reading and writing.

Think about/discuss

- Do you prefer to read articles with or without subheadings? Why?

Subheadings achieve two main purposes for the reader.

1 They identify the main ideas/subtopics that each section deals with and can help her/him decide whether the paper will be of interest.

2 By identifying the main ideas in each section, they help to bring out and make explicit the argument of the paper. Subheadings show how ideas follow each other in the paper and how the writer has organised the main and the secondary ideas. They are an advance organiser of the paper for the reader.

Subheadings also divide the article into readable 'chunks'. This makes an article less daunting for the reader, and enables her/him to take a rest after each section and think about what you have written. This could allow a more considered reading of your paper. However, you should always show links between sections, so that the reader does not lose the train of your thinking and your argument. Dividing your article should help the reader obtain a better sense of the whole.

For the writer, subheadings can also be helpful. They can be an advance organiser, if you develop your subheadings in advance and then write according to them. You can develop some subheadings, or section headings, during the conceptualising stage (see the section on conceptualising in Chapter 2).

However, as you write, your ideas will change. So, unless you have a very standard structure, you will probably change some headings as you go along.

Some people prefer to write a whole piece first, then reorganise and structure it, and only finally bring out the structure that is already there by using subheadings. As with all aspects of writing, the best way for you is personal. You will need to find out what it is by experimenting with different ways of working. Others can help you, by pointing out how they see the structure in your writing (sometimes others can see it better than the writer) and suggesting appropriate places for subheadings.

For the next activity, look at your partner's paper as a whole.

Activity
Discuss with your partner:

1 Are there subheadings? If not, why not? Can you work out together appropriate subheadings and where they should go?
2 If there are subheadings, are they useful?
   (a) Do they bring out the structure of the argument?
   (b) Do they help the flow of ideas?
   (c) Can you improve on the subheadings?

References
Henson, KT. 1991. *Writing for Successful Publication.* Bloomington, Indiana: National Education Service.
National Department of Education. 1996. Ministerial Committee for Development Work on the NQF. *Discussion Document: Lifelong Learning through a National Qualification Framework.* Pretoria: National Department of Education.

Chapter 5

Form and format

Paragraphs and subheadings are important aspects of the **form** of your writing. They enable you to make your content clearer. Other aspects of form are certain standard features of a paper. These also enable the reader to get a better understanding of your writing. The most obvious are the title, introduction and conclusion.

Title

A good title serves two functions.

1. It captures the reader's attention and stimulates her/him to find out more about the article.
2. It focuses the reader (and writer) on the content of the paper.

The title of your article should be short and informative and should capture the essence of what you are saying. It can also be intriguing or provocative. The title makes a promise about what is to follow. It should interest the reader. The reader should be able to predict from the title what the article will be about.

Your title can help to focus your writing. Some people start with a title and make sure that their writing relates to the title all the time. Others decide on a title at the end, once they know what they have written. It is probably best to start with a working title, which focuses your writing, but which you can change if the focus of your paper changes.

Activity

1 Read these titles and discuss what the articles might contain.
   (a) The Making of an Historian: Oral Histories from a 'Disputatious Discipline'.
   (b) Defending the 'Open University'.
   (c) University Reform, Academic Performance and the Crisis in Education.
   (d) Educational Achievement and Interpretations of 'Difference'.
   (e) Collaborative Teaching and Learning with Large Classes.
   (f) South African Black Teachers' Perceptions about their Practice.
2 Do the titles attract you to the articles? How?
3 These titles are all from *Perspectives in Education*, vol 17, no 1, March 1996. Select two or three of the articles and see whether in fact the titles do reflect accurately the content of the articles.

One way of learning to write titles is to think about the titles of articles that you read. Are you sometimes disappointed by an article because from the title you thought that it would be about something different? You do not want your title to disappoint readers. What kind of titles capture interest and accurately reflect the content of the article? How do they do this?

Introduction

Readers very often read the introduction and the first few paragraphs in order to decide whether to read the whole article. According to Steiner and Philips (1993), a good introduction will attract readers to your article, and should persuade them that the article is interesting to them and worth reading. Steiner and Philips quote an editor as saying: 'Too many articles simply "die" in the first paragraph through bad writing, or by taking the reader for granted, i.e. simply assuming the article is of as great interest to him as it is to the author' (1993:6).

The introduction must immediately tell the readers exactly what the article does. The introduction should state:

- what the article is about;
- why the topic is important;
- the central idea or argument of the article;
- the main themes/issues explored in the article;
- the context/background to the research/ideas in the paper.

If you have been working on a paper for a considerable length of time, the ideas may seem obvious to you, and you may think that they are obvious to others. However, others will not necessarily have the same insights, knowledge and background to the topic that you have. One place to let readers in to your frame of reference is the introduction to your paper.

Activity

1 Read the introduction to Nomsa Motaung's paper: 'Educational achievement and interpretations of difference in post-1990 South African tertiary education' in *Perspectives in Education*, vol 17, no 1, March 1996 (pp 73 – 75).
   (a) Does it attract you to the paper? Why/why not?
   (b) Does the introduction/title comply with the points above?

Conclusion and summary

A conclusion or a summary at the end of your paper can also give potential readers an overview of the main points that you have made. Readers often look at the title, introduction, subheadings and conclusion to get an idea of whether they want to proceed with the paper.

A summary or conclusion should restate the substantial points made in your paper. The summary is different from the introduction where you say what you will discuss. In a summary, you can assume that the reader has read the paper and shares more of your frame of reference. Therefore, you can refer to the points as they have been made in the paper. Less explaining is required.

A conclusion is different from a summary, in that it draws the summarised points into a final main point, the conclusion of the argument that the paper is making.

Activity
Read the title, introduction, subheadings and conclusion from each of three articles in *Perpectives in Education*, vol 17, no 1, March 1996. Discuss whether you think that they serve their purposes. If not, say how you might change them in order to improve them.

Abstract

Some journals require an abstract, which is a one-paragraph, concise summary of your aim, main argument and ideas explored in the paper. You can consult a range of journals to get a sense of what is appropriate to put in an abstract. In particular, look at abstracts in the specific journal to which you

are submitting. If an abstract is not required, do not submit one. If it is required, do not submit without one.

Activity
Consult a journal to which you might consider submitting an article.

1 Look at the abstracts of the papers in one edition of the journal.
2 Choose one or two papers which interest you and read them thoroughly. Then write an abstract for each one, without looking at the author's abstract. Once you are satisfied with your abstract, compare it with the author's one. Have you left out anything that is absolutely necessary, or do you have anything unnecessary in your abstract?
3 Write an abstract for a paper of yours, which would help your submission to that particular journal.

Format

Different journals require different formats. During the final stages of writing, you should begin to get your paper into the right format. Journals usually specify the required format on the front or back cover, or in a section called something like: 'guidelines for writers'. See the guidelines from the journal, *For the Learning of Mathematics* on page 47, as well as the 'Notes for contributors' on the back cover of *Perspectives in Education.*

Steiner and Philips (1993:6) ouline some general requirements of most journals.

- Papers should be double-spaced, including footnotes and quotations. This helps with the editing and typesetting.
- Leave generous margins (3–4 cm) so that editorial comments and corrections can be made.

- Neatness is important. Untidy, badly organised submissions create a poor impression and make the editor's and reviewers' work more difficult.
- All tables, graphs, charts or pictures which accompany the text should conform to the journal's standard format. Often journals require these to be submitted separately from the text, with indications as to where they will go.
- If you want to use illustrations or photographs that are not your own, you need to obtain permission from the copyright holders.
- Always conform to the required article length specified by the journal. Journals will not publish anything substantially longer than they usually do, and editors will not want to spend too much time working out how to shorten your paper. You have to do this.

Check list for style and format

Here is a check list for the style and format of your paper. You can keep checking these as you write, and especially before submitting.

1 Are your meanings made clear through the writing, or are there many obscure passages?
2 Is the piece well written? Check for grammar, spelling, punctuation, jargon, complex sentences, badly structured paragraphs etc.
3 Are all aspects of style, format, references etc, clear and standard?
4 Does the title describe the piece accurately?
5 Do the introduction and conclusion fulfil their roles?
6 Does the abstract give the reader an idea of what is in the article (if necessary)?

SUGGESTIONS TO WRITERS

Articles and contributions for publication, and all other correspondence, should be sent to the Editor. Comments on and discussions of articles appearing in the journal may be submitted for publication.

"Mathematics education" should be interpreted to mean the whole field of human ideas and activities that affect, or could affect, the learning of mathematics. Articles about mathematics or about psychology, for example, are welcomed provided their content bears on the learning of mathematics: directly, or indirectly through offering a significant perspective to teachers of mathematics. The journal has space for articles which attempt to bring together ideas from several sources and show their relation to the theories or practices of mathematics education. It is a place where ideas may be tried out and presented for discussion.

Reports of particular research projects may be submitted but the Editor also solicits articles which survey an area of research or which attempt to interpret or evaluate some published research. Reports of informal research, especially from the classroom, are as welcome as reports which meet the usual professional criteria.

Articles falling outside the above two spacious categories are also acceptable if, in the Editor's judgement, they make some contribution to understanding mathematics learning or to promoting mathematics learning.

Articles should generally be within the range 2,500 – 5,000 words. Longer articles, if accepted, may be published in two or more parts. Comments on published articles should generally contain less than 2,000 words. Short topics, less than article length, may be submitted if they conform to the general aims and style of the journal.

Writers should send two copies of their contributions, typed with generous spacing and margins. Diagrams, tables, etc., should be prepared in a form suitable for photographic reproduction, with or without reduction in size. Unusual words and notations should be indicated and explained. Notes, references and bibliography should be collected at the end of the contribution.

The Editor is prepared to give an opinion about the suitability of an article for publication on the evidence of a draft version.

Contributions may be submitted in English or French. (The English may be American, British or hybrid.) Abstracts are not required.

Taken from the journal *For the Learning of Mathematics*

Footnotes and references

It is important to get the format of footnotes and references absolutely right in your paper. Journals prefer different styles and editors and typesetters will resent having to change some or all of your references from one style to another. Find a copy of the journal you will submit to, or consult the managing editor, to ensure that all your references are in the correct style.

A point for your writing: there is nothing more infuriating than running around once you have finished a paper, trying to locate references that you have used. Keep an ongoing list of authors, titles, dates, publishers, places of publication and page numbers as you work. This may seem awkward and time-consuming, but it will save you a lot of time afterwards. It is very important to ensure that you include all the relevant information when you submit your article.

Although journals have different referencing styles, here are some features that are commonly found.

- Usually the author'(or authors') surname(s) and initials come first (in most cases surname followed by initials, in some, initial first then surname, eg Brodie, K or K Brodie.
- The date of publication comes either immediately after the author's name (in brackets), or at the end of the reference (in or outside of brackets).
- Titles of books and journals are in italics. Titles of papers in journals or chapters in books are in inverted commas, followed by the journal or book as above. Titles usually follow the author's name or the name and the date.

  For example:

  Mercer, N. (1995) *The guided construction of knowledge: talk among teachers and learners.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

  or

  E. French, "Theory and the Literacy Mission", *Perspectives in Education*, 16,2 (September 1995).

- If you are using a chapter of a book which is edited by someone other than the author of the chapter, you need to give both sets of names (of authors and titles).
  For example:
  F. Chikane, "Children in Turmoil: The Effects of the Unrest on Township Children", in S. Berman and P. Reynolds (eds), *Growing Up in a Divided Society: The Contexts of Childhood in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 20.
- Titles of books are followed by the place of publication and the name of the publisher (see above for examples).
- Titles of journals must include the volume, the number and the page numbers of the article.
- Page numbers in books and individual articles are always given if a quote is taken directly or if the idea can be clearly identified as coming from particular pages.

The above points can help you, as can noticing references as you read. However, **nothing can substitute for careful study of the referencing rules in the journal you are submitting to.** Each journal has particular rules for commas, full stops, spaces, colons, etc, in references. These should be **strictly** adhered to. This book, for example, has been edited in the house style of the publishers, Juta and Company, Limited. Note the style used in the references at the end of each chapter of this book – which is very different from the style used in the examples provided.

You should also check for the journal policy on footnotes. Some journals require all references to be in footnotes, in addition to any actual footnotes you might include. Others require a reference to the author and date in the text, with a list of references in alphabetical order at the end. This is known as the Harvard style which is the style adopted in this book. In this case, footnotes are only used when you want to say something additional which you do not want to include in the text.

References

Steiner, DR & Philips, CR. 1993. Historical Journals – *A Handbook for Writers and Reviewers*, 2 ed. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc.

Chapter 6

Getting published

Once you have completed the difficult tasks of conceptualising, writing, tightening up your writing, and getting your paper into the correct format, you may feel that substantial work has been done. However, getting published will take some more time and effort on your part. It may also require substantial reworking of your paper. This will usually be the case if you are a new writer. This section gives you some advice on how to submit articles for publication, and how to deal with the (sometimes arduous) process of reviewing and resubmitting in order that you will finally achieve your goal of publication.

Selecting a journal

Submitting your manuscript to an appropriate journal makes it more likely that it will get published. You should therefore choose carefully where to send it. Steiner and Philips (1993) suggest the following steps which may help you to choose an appropriate journal.

- Make a list of the journals whose interest coincides with that of your article.
- Narrow your list down to those journals whose readership is compatible with the level of ideas and language contained in your article.
- Rank your list of journals.
- Refine your journal list.
- Update your list regularly.

Steiner and Phillips (1993) also provide a list of some factors to think about as you rank your preferred journals.

- Size of the journal's circulation and who makes up its readership.
- Number of issues published per year (if there are more issues, you may have a better chance of getting into print quickly).
- Its acceptance/rejection rate (as a new writer you may want to try a journal with a higher rate of acceptance).
- Whether any payment is made to or by contributors, and whether you receive offprint copies of your article. A few journals pay a small amount to authors, most send some offprints of your article for you to distribute to colleagues. Some may require a submission fee.
- Prestige of the journal.
- Whether you have recently had an article published in the journal.
- Whether it is a refereed journal.
- Whether it is SAPSE accredited (for university lecturers).

You may have to weigh some of these factors against each other when making a selection, depending on your reasons for getting published. For example, if you are publishing as a university job requirement, the last factor, a SAPSE accredited journal, is more important than the circulation size of the journal. If, however, you are not concerned with publishing 'for publishing's sake' in an accredited journal, but are rather concerned with how many people may actually get to read your

ideas, then you would want to think about circulation size. If you are concerned with academic status as a writer, then a prestigious journal would be appropriate.

It is always worth your while to read through the most recent issues of a journal you are considering. This will help you to make a decision about whether your paper is in fact suitable for the journal. By modelling your article after the characteristics of the articles in a journal, you can significantly improve your chances of acceptance in that journal.

According to Henson (1991:133), two important factors in selecting a journal are the audience and the type of article usually published. For example, it is not wise to submit an article intended for classroom teachers to a journal which targets teacher educators. Some journals may be predominantly research oriented, some may give substantial space to more directly practical issues, while others may be more concerned with policy. Among research-oriented journals, there may be some that are more focused on empirical research, while others emphasise conceptual papers.

Selecting a journal and writing do not happen independently of each other. You can write a paper, and then decide which journal(s) it is most appropriate for. This may be a good idea if you are not familiar with the journals in your field; however, it may require substantial changes in your paper at a later point. Most accomplished writers have an idea of possible journals beforehand, or even one journal that they are writing for. They know the audience that the journal is aimed at, and the ideas that are considered important by the journal. They can then write specifically for that particular journal, which may increase their chance of publication. However, it doesn't ensure publication and, if the paper is rejected, substantial changes may be required at a later point for submission to a different journal.

Submitting your article

In the section on format in Chapter 5, we discussed getting your paper into the format of the journal to which you are submitting. Find out if the journal you intend submitting your article to has a set of guidelines for authors. See the example of guidelines on the following page. It is important to stick to the guidelines as specified by the journal. Editors are within their rights not to consider articles which do not conform to their specifications. Remember, you are only concerned with your own paper; editors are concerned with all the papers they receive. They cannot do what is actually an author's job for so many papers. Also, editors are usually not in full-time positions. Many editors are academics, and they edit in addition to their teaching and research commitments.

An important requirement of most journals these days is for articles to be submitted on computer disc as well as hard copy (on paper). You should use a standard word-processing package, Microsoft Word or WordPerfect being the two most commonly used packages. A later version of either one (version 5 or above) should be acceptable because they can read each other. Small, obscure packages may not be helpful because, unless the journal has the same programme, which is unlikely, its computer will not be able to read it. You should provide details as to which package you have used.

Many journals require more than one hard copy of your paper. The usual number is about three; some require as many as six. Some journals may require you to submit some or all of the hard copies without your name on them, because they use a system of 'blind review'. This means that, in order to ensure greater objectivity in the review process, they send your article to reviewers who do not know your identity (see the following section on the review process). Always make sure to keep a copy of your paper (on disc and on paper) in case it gets lost in the post.

MODEL B(c)

Guide for Authors

Information to those Submitting Manuscripts

1. ✉ **Cover letter.** All manuscripts should be accompanied by a cover letter. In the cover letter, the author(s) must state:

(a) that the material in the manuscript has not been published, is not being published and will not be submitted for publication elsewhere unless rejected by the journal editor or withdrawn by the author(s);

(b) that the material in the manuscript, so far as the author(s) know, does not infringe upon other published material protected by copy-right; and

(c) that submission of the manuscript gives the journal exclusive right to publish, to copyright, and to allow or to deny reproduction of it, in whole or in part.

(d) If the manuscript is submitted on computer diskette, send background information to enable editors use the information. See point 5 below.

2. **Length, three copies, and abstract.** Articles should preferably be of about 4,000 words. Send three fully legible copies to the editor. Each article should have an abstract, not exceeding 150 words, giving a clear indication of the nature and range of results in the study.

3. **Typing.** Double-space all material, including footnotes, tables, quotations, and reference, on plain white paper with margins on all sides of at least 2.5 cm (1 inch). Copies should be typed on one side of the paper only. Broad divisions and section headings should be clearly marked in the text where appropriate.

4. **Author's identification.** To protect their anonymity in the review process, authors should not identify themselves in the manuscript. Attach a separate page including the names of the author(s) and appropriate biographical information, as well as the title of the manuscript. Include only the title on the first page of the text.

5. 🖭 **Manuscript on diskette.** If your manuscript was typed on computer, you can speed up the editorial process by sending us a diskette and one typed copy of the manuscript (not 3 as in point 2 above). In the cover letter, please indicate which computer programmes the manuscript was typed in. We can handle manuscripts typed in WordPerfect, WordStar, MS Word, WinWord, Multimate, Harvard Graphics, Lotus, dBase, Excel and PageMaker. However, it is advisable in addition to send us an ASCII (DOS, text) file of the manuscript in case we do not have your particular computer package. The diskette will be returned to you.

6. **References and citations place.** All references should be alphabetised by the author, in a list at the end of the paper entitled *References*. Only cited works should be included in the reference list. All citation should appear in the text and contain the author's name and page numbers, *when* necessary. Where only two authors are involved both names should appear in the text. Where more than two authors are involved only the first author should be cited and the rest who should appear in the reference section be presented by *et al*. Only articles or books that have been published or are in press may be included in the list of references. Any other material must be accompanied by permission from the source.

7. **Tables.** Place each table on a separate page; double-space all material; omit vertical rules. Tables should be clearly labelled at the top with a number and title. Units of measure should be metric, clearly indicated, and with two places of decimals. Base-dates for index numbers, geographical area covered and sources be clearly stated. Statistical differences, losers for the 5% (< 0.05) and 1% (< 0.01) significance levels should be indicated. Avoid footnotes. Authors are fully responsible for the accuracy of the data and for checking their proofs, but whenever they feel that the referee would have difficulty in testing the derivation of their statistics, they should provide supplementary notes on the method used, which will not be published.

8. **Figures and illustrations.** Figures should be clearly drawn, with clearly marked axes, must be numbered and with a title at the bottom. Lettering on the figures must be sharp and dark enough to withstand reduction. Figures must be cited in the text, submitted on separate sheets and accompanied by the basic statistics required for their preparation, when appropriate. In short, send the illustration (say bar graph) with the tables from which the graph was derived. The editors may prefer your graph presented as a pie chart or as a table. Illustrations should be in black and white, if colour is (absolutely) necessary, indicate in the covering letter.

9. **Footnotes and acknowledgement.** Number footnotes consecutively throughout the paper, not page by page. Type all footnotes, including authors' acknowledgements, etc. double-spaced, on a page following the article. Footnote should be only explanatory and not for citations or directing the reader to a particular work.

10. Σ **Mathematical notation.** Use only essential mathematical notation, as mathematical formulae are difficult and costly to typeset. Avoid using the same character for both superscript and subscripts, using capital letters as superscripts or subscripts, and using over-bars, tildes, carets, and other modifications of standard type. Asterisks, primes, and small English letter superscripts are suitable.

11. **Research notes and review papers.** The editors particularly welcome brief notes, such as those dealing with a single point or setting out the results of research, with an offer to supply readers with details of statistical procedures on request. Review papers should cover detailed literature on a specific topic, which in the opinion of the Editor would be of value if published.

12. ✉ **All correspondence should be addressed to**

The Editorial Secretariat,
Uganda Journal of Agricultural Sciences,
National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO),
P. O. Box 295 Entebbe, Uganda.
Phone: (256-042) 20512, 20472 Fax: (256-042) 21070 ◆

You should include a covering letter with your submission, so that the journal can contact you and keep a record of your particulars.

A covering letter should be short and to the point and should include:

- the title of your paper;
- the date of submission;
- your name and complete mailing address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address;
- your institutional affiliation and address;
- a computer disc and an indication of which word-processing package you have used, including which version, (eg WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows);
- a declaration that you are not submitting the paper simultaneously to another journal;
- a self-addressed, stamped envelope, if required.

Some journals give brief biographical notes on contributors, so you might want to include some points about who you are, your areas of specialisation and a list of other publications.

You should receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your article within three to four weeks of having sent it (allowing for delays in the post). If you do not receive one, you should call the administrative staff of the journal to find out whether they have received your submission. If they have, ask them to acknowledge this in writing.

Having done all this work, you may be tempted to submit your paper to more than one journal. This is not acceptable practice in the publishing field, since a paper cannot be published in more than one journal. If two journals both accepted your paper, one would have invested a lot of time and energy in reviewing your paper and would not get to publish it. An editor is entitled to assume that if she/he accepts your paper, it will be published in her/his journal. If a paper gets rejected, you are then free to submit it to another journal.

Submission check list
Make yourself a submission check list, which you can consult just before you send everything off to the journal. Check that you have:

- a covering letter, including where you can be contacted;
- the required number of hard copies, with or without your name as required;
- a computer disc, in a standard word-processing package, with details supplied;
- an abstract, if required;
- references in the correct form;
- a self-addressed, stamped envelope, if required.

Proofreading
At this final stage, you should also make sure that there are no unnecessary typing, spelling or grammatical errors in your paper. You should check that the layout, subheadings and numbering are consistent. You should make sure that all references are complete and in the correct form. Editors and reviewers will be irritated by too many mistakes and it will probably affect how they view the work. It may cause them to overlook the good aspects of your work. It is the author's responsibility to ensure that the version of the article submitted for publication is as error-free as possible.
Refer to page 66 for some important points on proofreading.

The review process

If a journal is a **refereed** journal, the editor will send your article to selected reviewers or referees.

Review procedures vary from journal to journal. In smaller, nonrefereed journals, the editor may decide, without consulting anyone else, whether to accept or reject submitted

material. In refereed journals, when a manuscript is received it is screened by one or two of the editors or by an editorial board. If the article is outside the focus of the journal, a decision to reject the paper may be reached quickly and the manuscript returned. If the article is within the scope of the journal, and of an appropriate standard, quality and tone for the journal, it will be sent out to one or more reviewers.

Most journals have a list of reviewers who regularly review articles. Editors are usually on the look out for potential reviewers with expertise in the areas on which the journal focuses. Once you have published in a journal, or have become well known for publications in other journals with related areas of interest, you may be requested to serve as a reviewer.

The task of reviewers is to evaluate the manuscript, usually in terms of criteria set up by the journal, and to make recommendations to the editor/editorial board about the suitability of the article for publication. Articles can be sent out to between one and four or five reviewers. The norm is two or three. After weighing up the remarks from the different reviewers, the editor decides whether to accept the article.

On the following pages are two examples of review forms used by South African journals. You will see that the one is more detailed than the other. Some forms do not provide much guidance on what counts as a publishable article. The activity at the end of this section will help you with some criteria for evaluating your own work as if you were reviewing it.

Acceptance and rejection of papers

As you will see from the review forms, the recommendations that reviewers make are not only about pure acceptance or rejection of the article. Very often reviewers may think that the article is not quite right for a journal, but can be changed easily enough to be accepted. They can recommend that the article be accepted if certain changes are made, and they will usually outline those changes. The editor will then send the article

SOUTH AFRICA JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REFEREES REPORT

CONTENT (Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (Good)

1. Problem, aim and hypothesis formulation ❑❑❑❑❑
2. Clarification of concepts ❑❑❑❑❑
3. Scientific presentation of content ❑❑❑❑❑
4. Relevant theoretical formulation ❑❑❑❑❑
5. Data bases (choice and presentation) ❑❑❑❑❑

PRESENTATION

1. Systematic (structure and style) ❑❑❑❑❑
2. Argumentation ❑❑❑❑❑
3. Conclusions and recommendations ❑❑❑❑❑
4. Creativity and originality ❑❑❑❑❑
5. Guidelines and conditions taken into account ❑❑❑❑❑

RELEVANCE

1. Theoretical relevance ❑❑❑❑❑
2. Practical relevance ❑❑❑❑❑

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

1. Accept: **YES** ❑ **NO** ❑
2. Accept with the following ammendments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Reject for the following reason(s):

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Perspectives in Education

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Tel: (011) 716-5088, Fax: (011) 339-3956 e-mail 022lesely@mentor.edcm.wits.ac.za

Article Title:

Note to Author: The above article has recently been submitted to the journal. Would you kindly comment on its suitability for publication. If you are unable to, please return the article and where possible, make suggestions for alternative referees.

Please return your comments by:

.....

Please check one of the following responses:

1. Publish as is.
2. Publish with minor revisions (see comments below)
3. Publish with revisions (see comments below)
4. Publish with major revisons (see comments below)
5. Not worth publishing
6. Rewrite and resubmit.

Please write you suggestions to the author below:

Date:

.....

Please do not identify yourself anywhere on this sheet. Where appropriate your comments will be returned to the author. If you need additional space, write comments on a separate sheet.

back and ask for it to be resubmitted within a certain time period, with the required changes. If the changes are made, she/he will publish the article.

Sometimes the reviewers will recommend acceptance of the article, but give some helpful feedback on it anyway. The editor may then give the author a chance to incorporate this feedback to improve the article.

An important point needs to be made to beginner writers: **very few articles are accepted first time without suggestions for changes.** Even experienced writers will often be asked to improve their papers. This is because the art of writing is never perfected, and someone else will always see something that you have missed, or bring to your work a new perspective that you have not thought of. Try not to interpret recommendations for changes as a rejection or a failure on your part. In fact, it is a success, because your article has not been rejected outright.

Take the feedback as an opportunity to improve your writing, with the incentive that if you do implement the changes to the satisfaction of the editor, your article will most probably be published. If you are unsure about how to implement the suggested changes, consult a colleague, or more experienced writer, who may be able to help you. Or contact the editor and ask for some advice. Editors who are looking for new talent may be very willing to help you. Unfortunately, you will probably not be able to contact the reviewers who made the suggestions, because the system of 'blind review' (see the next page) prevents this.

In your first few submissions, you may have the unfortunate experience of rejection. Rejection rates in scholarly journals may be high. If you know this, you may feel less hurt if your article is rejected outright. Try not to let a rejection discourage you. Firstly, it is a rejection of your article, not of you as a writer or scholar. Secondly, it does not mean that your paper has no value. It may mean that your article is not appropriate for that

particular journal, but can be submitted elsewhere. Journals usually ask reviewers to justify their recommendations. You are within your rights to ask for these comments and editors may make them available to you (anonymously), so that you have something to work on. However, the editor is within her/his rights not to give you access to them for various reasons. If your article is rejected, consider sending it to a different journal.

If you receive a number of rejections from journals in which you want to publish, you will have to accept that there are some problems with your writing. In this case you should try to find ways in which you can improve your work, and you may have to make major revisions. Try to address any feedback that you have received from the journals. Also, ask experienced colleagues for help. Try not to give up. As we have said often before, writing is a difficult craft. It takes a long time to learn, with many frustrations along the way. But it is worth the difficult journey.

Two more points about the review process need to be made.

1 We referred previously to the system of 'blind review'. This means that the author's identity is concealed from the reviewers. This is to ensure that the article in question is judged on its own merits rather than by the name or reputation of the author. As indicated before, if you are sending your article to a journal which utilises 'blind' reviewers, you should omit your name from the manuscript (including the title page). Your personal particulars must, however, be included in the accompanying covering letter.

   The 'blindness' in reviewing also works the other way. The author is usually not entitled to know who the reviewers are. This is to avoid situations where authors harass reviewers about reasons for rejections.

Most reviewers will not undertake the task unless confidentiality is assured. Their task is to recommend decisions to the editor, who makes the final decision. So any dialogue about your article needs to be with the editor. You should not attempt to find out who the reviewers are.

2 Reviewers have their own professional commitments, including their own research, writing and teaching. Although they are usually given deadlines, they may take a long time to review papers. If you feel that there has been a long delay in the processing of your article (more than three months), you should send a polite letter to the editor, enquiring about the reasons for the delay.

Activity

The criteria below may be used to evaluate papers submitted to journals. Read them through. Then work with a partner to evaluate one of her/his papers on the basis of these criteria. You should do the following.

1 Read your partner's whole paper.
2 Make brief notes on each of the criteria.
3 Discuss your responses with your partner.

Criteria for evaluating papers

The criteria listed here are a combination of previous check lists.

Relevance

1 Is the piece interesting? Why/why not?
2 What contribution does the piece make to debates about education in South Africa?
3 What original approach, perspective, ideas or research are evident in the paper?
4 Is the piece suitably informed in the relevant field?

Content

1 Does the title describe the piece accurately?
2 Does the abstract give the reader an idea of what is in the article? If not, suggest changes.
3 Are the aims stated clearly?
4 Does the piece fulfil its own aims?
5 Do the introduction and conclusion fulfil their roles?
6 If hypotheses were postulated, were they proved or not proved?
7 Does the author's own voice emerge clearly?
8 What is the author's main argument? Is it developed in a critical and disciplined manner? What evidence is it based on?
9 Does the piece contain critical consideration of the issues raised?
10 Is the piece coherent and focused? Are all ideas drawn into the central argument, or are there superfluous ideas in the paper?

Research methodology

1 Does the author demonstrate understanding of the relevant theories and research methodologies? What are these?
2 What evidence is presented? Does it help the argument?
3 Are methods of data collection clearly described?
4 Are they suitable for the task?
5 Is the data analysed and interpreted, or merely described?
6 Is the piece suitably informed in the relevant field? How?
7 Are any limitations of the work presented?
8 Are tables, diagrams and figures well drawn?
9 Are they properly integrated into the text?
10 Are conclusions based on evidence?
11 Have any claims been made that cannot be susbtantiated?

Style

1. What is the intended audience and is the piece pitched at an appropriate level for this audience?
2. Are the author's meanings made clear through the writing, or are there many obscure passages? Identify these.
3. Does the piece have a lucid and appropriate structure? Does the structure help the argument?
4. Does the piece have coherence, focus and unity?
5. Is the piece well-written? Check tenses, grammar, spelling, overlapping passages, punctuation, jargon, complex sentences, badly structured paragraphs, etc.
6. Are all aspects of style, format and references clear and standard?

Not all of the listed criteria will apply to every journal or paper. But if you find that you are not meeting many of them, you probably have some more work to do. These criteria can form an evaluation check list, which you can use for guidance throughout the writing process. If you can anticipate them, your paper is less likely to be rejected.

The final touches

Once your article has been accepted, there is still some work to be done. It is the author's responsibility to proofread and correct proofs of the article. You should check the proofs against a copy of your original article. When you are proofreading, you should look for and correct typographical errors that have been made by the typesetter and, possibly, some mistakes that you may have overlooked in the original manuscript.

You may also want to make some comments on the layout of the article, including tables, diagrams, etc. The cost of making major changes is usually very high, so the journal may not accept such suggestions.

Here are some important points about proofreading.

- All corrections should be made with a pencil in the margins of the proof.
- Special care should be taken to make handwriting legible.
- Additions of a sentence or more should be typed on separate slips of paper and attached at the edge of the proof with a clear indication to the typesetter where the insertion should go.
- A word-for-word reading is required for typographical errors.

Points to keep in mind

Henson (1991) surveyed 172 editors in the United States and from their responses has identified five of the most common errors that contributors make. He also makes suggestions about how to avoid such errors. The table on the next page summarises these suggestions. In this handbook we have dealt in depth with all of these issues. The chapter numbers in bold refer to sections in this handbook that deal with each particular issue.

Common mistakes	Recommendations
Lack of familiarity with the journal Misjudging the journal audience or not addressing appropriate topics	**Read recent issues** Ascertain who the main target audience is, and what kind of research is published. **(Chapter 6, Selecting a journal)**
Wrong style or format Submitting with incorrect length of paper, line-spacing, margins, etc and particularly references and footnotes	**Check journal guidelines** Make sure that you stick to these. Editors will not budge. **(Chapter 5, Format, Footnotes and references and Chapter 6, Submitting your article)**
Grammatical errors Submitting with many and obvious spelling and grammar mistakes (one or two will always slip in, no matter how thoroughly you check; more than this is a sign of carelessness and is unacceptable)	**Check thoroughly** Read your paper 'cold', a few days after you last worked on it. Some distance will make mistakes clearer. Ask colleagues to read, paying specific attention to grammar. **(Chapter 3, Focus on content, Some common failings of scholarly articles)**
Failure to include substance Submitting a paper that does not say something original, and is not based on sound argument and evidence.	**Focus on content** Ask yourself what you are saying and on what basis you are saying it. Why is it interesting, to you, to others? **(Chapter 3, Focus on content, Some common failings of scholarly articles)**
Pedantic writing Submitting a paper that does not flow well, with main ideas hidden instead of emphasised, unnecessary detail and jargon, and overcomplex sentences and paragraphs	**Write simply and clearly** Avoid unnecessary jargon. Use familiar words, short sentences, and short paragraphs. Structure and organise your writing. Use the title, introduction and conclusion to good effect. **(Chapter 4, Choosing words and Chapter 5, Conclusion and summary)**

Source; Adapted from Henson (1991:142)

References

Henson, KT. 1991. *Writing for Successful Publication.* Bloomington, Indiana: National Educational Service.

Chapter 7

Mentoring and being mentored

One of the best ways to develop your skills as a writer is to get help from more experienced writers. These can be research supervisors and other lecturers. It often helps to establish a mentoring relationship with someone. 'Mentoring generally refers to an older, more experienced person helping a younger one (or less experienced person) in a one-to-one relationship that goes beyond the formal obligations of a teaching or supervisory role' (Rapoport 1987: 110; authors' brackets).

Mentoring relationships can arise informally and spontaneously, or they can be formally arranged. Informal mentoring relationships will usually arise in your place of work or study, with someone you respect and admire, and who respects and admires you. Here is a personal account of an empowering mentoring relationship.

> Frustrated by my employment instability, I decided to pursue my studies in the Education Department at Wits University. I did so with one major goal: to improve my academic qualifications in order to get a better job. I could not hide this from my colleagues, friends and lecturers. One day, one of my lecturers invited me to her office and asked me: 'I understand you are looking for a job, have you considered this university?

Without taking the idea very seriously, I replied: 'What does it take to get a job at Wits?' She replied: 'The university's policy is "publish or perish". If you can publish a couple of articles in accredited academic journals, I am sure you will stand a good chance of being considered for a job here.'

For many reasons, the possibility seemed well out of my reach. Firstly, I percieved Wits as a white, English-speaking university, staffed by sophisticated, eloquent, white academics. Secondly, I was merely a student. How could a student publish an article in an academic journal? The lecturer insisted: 'I know you can do it. Take advantage of your assignments, draft them carefully and discuss them with me. I will help you to turn them into papers or articles.' It still sounded unreal to me. Nevertheless, I took the advice seriously. I spent most of my spare time in the library collecting data, and a large part of the evenings processing information. I handed all my drafts to the lecturer and she responded with corrections and several pages of comments and suggestions. There was always an encouraging comment: 'This is a very interesting draft and I've learnt a lot from it. Read my comments and bring me the next draft.

The efforts paid off. The four assignments required for my courses were developed into conference or seminar papers, then into articles which were accepted for publication in leading international journals. I also developed my research report into an article which was published in one of the most reputable education journals in the field. My dream came true: at the end of my studies I was offered a job at Wits.

Today, ten years later, many people ask me: what made it possible? I was not different from many other students who came from disadvantaged backgrounds. I was lucky to establish an empowering relationship with a lecturer who became a mentor and role model.

She helped me to develop discipline, commitment and dedication which go with sound intellectual work. She demystified academic work for me, and helped to build my self-confidence. She was always ready to share her academic experience and skills with me and all her students. These were the keys to this success story.

The above is an account of an **informal** mentoring arrangement, because no formal structures were set in place and no formal arrangements were made. However, from the account it should be clear that both the mentor (the lecturer) and the person being mentored had to work very hard to keep the relationship going. If either had not kept her/his side of the relationship, it would have collapsed, and the student might not have achieved his successes.

In this case, the lecturer took the initiative, identifying an enthusiastic student who would be receptive to help. You may not be so fortunate, and you may have to seek out such a relationship. You can do so in an informal manner, finding someone who you think you can work with, and approaching her/him for help. It is also possible to make more formal arrangements, by approaching someone to be a mentor, and negotiating how such a relationship will work. University departments and organisations such as Audepro can help to facilitate **formal** mentoring arrangements. In these cases, precise roles for both the mentor and the person being mentored can be defined, in order to enable a successful relationship.

There are no universal recipes for good mentoring, but a successful relationship requires commitment from **both** parties. The person being mentored needs to remember that someone else is giving time to help her/him. At the same time, the mentor is not only giving that: she/he will also gain a lot from the experience (it is often said you learn most about something when you try to teach someone else). A successful relationship will be built on the understanding that both are

giving and both are gaining, although in different ways. Both people should be tolerant and considerate of each other.

Some important points for mentors

- Provide support and encouragement. Generally, those who seek mentors have not received positive feedback in the past. One of your main roles is to help to build their self-esteem.
- Remain critical and supportive at the same time. It does not help if you are uncritical, because the person may not learn. However, too much critique at once may be counter-productive. Always comment on what is good in the person's work and point to what can be improved. Always make suggestions as to how to improve, otherwise you may leave the person feeling lost.
- Don't always assume that those you are mentoring will get the point, or will always agree with you. Make sure that they understand or see the value in what you are telling and showing, but allow them to disagree.
- Provide new challenges and ideas, and try to inspire.
- Remain patient if progress is not as fast as you expect. People develop at different rates, and slow progress initially may be necessary for later development.

Some important points when being mentored

- Try not to be upset by critique. It is very hard to hear negative comments on your work, but it is the way to learn.
- Do not avoid challenging your mentor. She/he may be more experienced than you, but she/he does not know everything, and you have a right to differ. You will also learn from debate with your mentor, rather than by accepting everything that she/he says.
- Your mentor is there to help you, not to do the job for you. Take responsibility for your own work, and find your own voice.

Some important points to be considered by both sides

- Respect the other person and try to understand where she/he is coming from and why she/he may react in a particular way.
- Make sure that you have something to contribute to each meeting. A mentoring relationship is never one way, and both parties need to contribute, although in different ways.
- Keep an open mind. Be ready to accept challenge and critique. Two people will inevitably hold different ideas on a number of issues.
- Show consideration for the other person. Always keep appointments, and be on time. If you can't make it, let the other person know in advance.

Think about/discuss

- Based on previous experiences of helping/teaching people, discuss what the main strengths and difficulties in a mentoring relationship could be, for both parties.
- Discuss how the difficulties might be overcome.

Reference

Henson, KT. 1991. *Writing for successful publication* Bloomington, Indiana: National Educational Service.

Rapoport, RN. 1987. *New Interventions for Children and Youth: Action Research Approaches.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.