

# Publishing in academic journals: Process, tips, & tricks

WILLIS A. JONES

EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES & EVALUATION


# Presentation Outline

- ▶ Journal publication process
- ▶ Inside the mind of journal editors/reviewers
- ▶ Preparing a paper for submission
  - ▶ Identifying audience
  - ▶ Choosing the right journal
  - ▶ Tips for preparing manuscripts
- ▶ Dealing with revision letters
- ▶ Dealing with rejection
- ▶ Why grad students don't publish

# Why should you care about publishing in grad school...

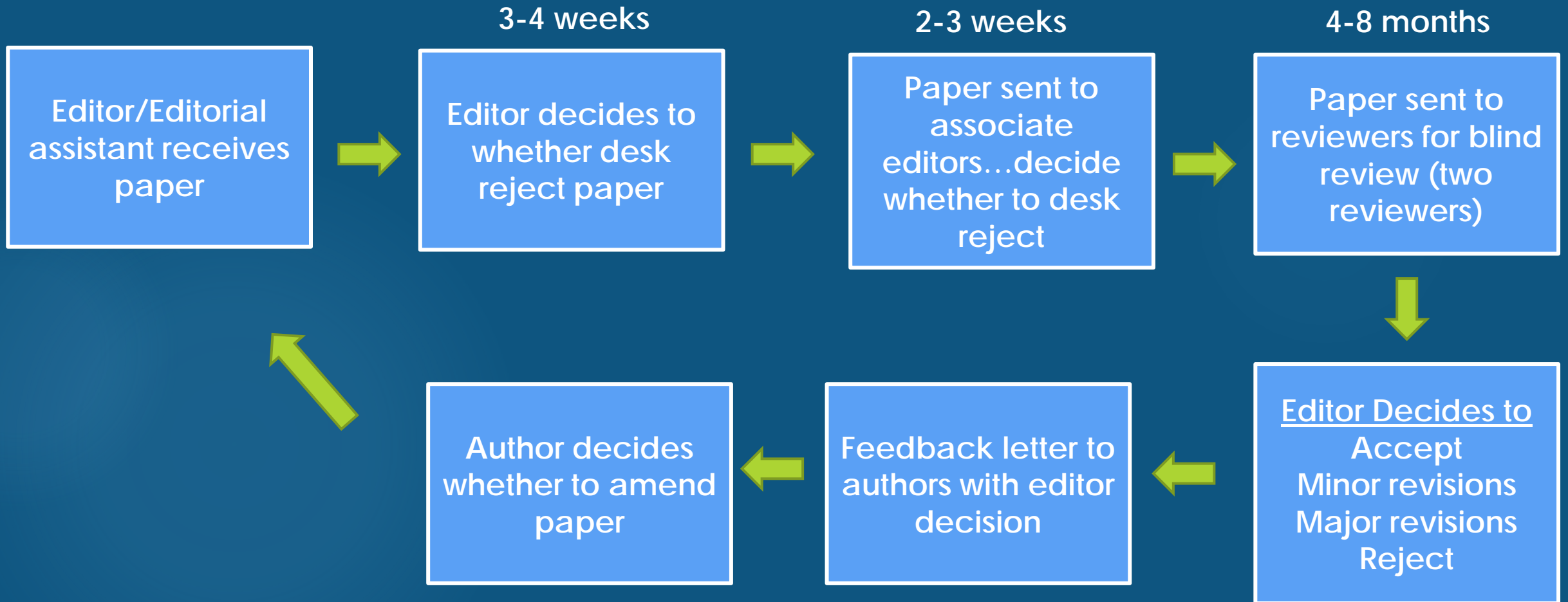
- ▶ Get a job
- ▶ Self-esteem/confidence
- ▶ Your work is important

# Types of academic publications

- ▶  Peer-reviewed journal articles & books
- ▶ Everything else (conference papers, invited book chapters, book reviews, reports, working papers, op-eds, academic blogs)

# Journal Review Process

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# Inside the mind of reviewers/editors

Strong  
Methods



Weak  
Methods



Boring/  
Nothing New

Interesting

# Reviewers/Editors are...

- ▶ Volunteering time
- ▶ Busy people
- ▶ Lazy
- ▶ Unaccountable

Therefore, you have to make the job of reviewing your paper easy.

Anything that makes it harder to understand the contribution or quality of your paper will increase likelihood of rejection.

# Inside the mind of reviewers/editors

- ▶ Every reviewer starts from the perspective that every paper they get should be rejected. You have to highlight why your paper is the exception.



# Identifying an Audience

- ▶ Is your paper aimed at researchers, practitioners, the general public?
- ▶ Is your audience national or international?
- ▶ Is this qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, theoretical, etc?

# Choosing the Right Journal

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- ▶ Should you...
  - ▶ Write for a specific journal (choose the journal, then write your paper)
  - ▶ Write your paper, then select the journal to send it to

# Choosing the Right Journal

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- ▶ Types of journals...
  - ▶ **Generalist journals:** accept papers across a range of topics (*Research in HE, Review of HE, Innovative HE, American Ed Research Journal*)
  - ▶ **Niche journals:** narrower aims and scopes (*JCSD, J of Intercollegiate Sport, J Diversity in HE*)

# Choosing the Right Journal

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- ▶ Do the aims and scope of the journal match with my article?
- ▶ Has the journal published articles on similar topics using similar methodologies to your paper in recent years?
- ▶ Does your paper fit into the journals restrictions (page numbers, word limits, article type, processing fees)?
- ▶ Where is journal indexed?
- ▶ What is the impact factor of the journal?

# Impact Factor

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- ▶ A measure reflecting the average number of times articles in a specific journal have been cited in recent years.
- ▶ Calculated based on the number of citations from a journal relative to number of manuscripts published in that journal.

# Other ways of measuring journal prestige...

- ▶ Acceptance rate
- ▶ Who is the editor of the journal
- ▶ Who is on the editorial board
- ▶ Who publishes in the journal
- ▶ Publication company or organization sponsor

# Choosing the Right Journal

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- ▶ Prestige is nice, but you should select the best journal for *your* paper, not necessarily the best journal in the field.
- ▶ A majority of papers that don't make it past the desk of journal editor are rejected because the paper is sent to the wrong journal.

# Writing Tips

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- ▶ Be clear and coherent. Don't ramble. Succinctly note what the paper is about and why it is important.
- ▶ Don't try to do too many things in one paper. Don't allow your article to get cluttered.
- ▶ You have to sell your idea in the paper
- ▶ Don't over claim. Acknowledge weaknesses in paper.



# Writing Tips

- ▶ Check grammar and spelling. Use university writing centers.
- ▶ Adhere to journal requirements with regard to citations, table, figures, etc.
- ▶ Properly submit the paper.
- ▶ Take time to choose a good title (this can help your paper get indexed and cited)
- ▶ Blind your paper

# Publishing Protocols

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- ▶ Do not submit a paper to more than one journal at the same time.
- ▶ Do not submit incomplete papers to journals just to get feedback on your work.

# Dealing with Revision Letter

- ▶ Decide if you want to resubmit the paper based on the reviews.
- ▶ Look at guidance from the editor's letter to know which reviewer comments to prioritize.
- ▶ Make a list of reviewer comments (I like to number that list).

# Dealing with Revision Letter

- ▶ Send back a letter that has numbered points and details exactly what was done to address each concern (“The Contract”).
- ▶ It is always better to do something than simply argue with reviewer or ignore the concern.

# Dealing with Rejection

- ▶ See if reviews are helpful.
- ▶ Make revisions and sent the paper back out.
- ▶ If the paper keeps getting rejected, consider the opportunity cost of continuing to work on it.
- ▶ Consider moving the paper “down the tree”.

# Why grad students don't publish

- ▶ Fear of failure/Not sending stuff off
- ▶ Not seeking help
- ▶ Not finishing anything
- ▶ Not appreciating the urgency

Questions or Comments?



Thank  
You