

Publishing in the Academy: Strategies for Navigating the Writing Process

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CONTEXT

In 2015, I helped conduct a survey of **136 grad students** from various disciplines at **UC Davis** and found:

- **40%** of students reported having **little to no confidence in seeking help** on their writing.
- **Close to 40%** of students are **not getting help from their advisors / PIs** on their writing.
- **25%** of students reported having **little to no confidence in academic writing**.

To help build students' confidence in academic writing and in seeking help, I **developed and implemented a three-part workshop series on writing for publication**.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- Introduce common challenges associated with academic writing (or writing for publication)
- Provide an overview of the overall process of writing for publication
- Offer strategies and resources for building confidence with academic writing and seeking help

SAMPLE OF TOPICS COVERED

- Academic language – “They Say, I Say”
- Preparing mentally for the writing process
- Choosing a journal
- Dealing with conflicting feedback from reviewers and/or advisors

WORKSHOP SERIES: 3 SESSIONS

Part 1: Introduction & Strategies for Getting Started

Part 2: Tips for Navigating the Writing & Publishing Process: An Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion

Panelists: Mary Christopher (Veterinary Medicine), Brad Hanson (Plant Science), Sarah Perrault (University Writing Program), and Steve Wheeler (Human Ecology)

Part 3: Workshopping & Troubleshooting



LEFT: Participants talking to one another about their experiences with academic writing and language (Part 1). **RIGHT:** Panel discussion about strategies for writing and publishing papers (Part 2).

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

What, if anything, do you see yourself doing as a result of participating in this workshop?

I'm once again motivated to work on an article submission this summer.

Seeking additional campus resources and the resources Lina provided. I can see myself using the advice she gave!

Seeking out more writing support from fellow students.

Trying out a They Say / I Say activity to spark some ideas for my paper.

Considering one-on-one consultations.

Setting up a writing schedule / form of routine.

What was useful?

Just hearing other relatable stories.

Orienting myself to how other grad students feel with the writing process and hearing honest feelings about it.

To speak with other students who share my concerns and challenges and to receive a list of writing resources!

The workshop provided things I'm not quite familiar with.

The outline of the overall publication process.

I became aware of all the help and resources available.

SOME RESOURCES SHARED

- *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills* by John Swales and Christine Feak (3rd edition, 2012)
- *“They Say / I Say”: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein
- [Google Drive link of resources](#) on writing the literature review, the peer review process, collaborative writing

[Campus Resources](#) (hyperlink)

- One-on-one writing consultations
- Writing retreats

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS

- Offer similar workshop series more frequently and/or institutionalize this (given that more than 60 graduate students and post-docs registered).
- Create internal repository of easily accessible resources on writing.
- Offer separate workshop series for STEM fields and the social sciences/humanities.

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