

Journal of Information Literacy

ISSN 1750-5968

Volume 8 Issue 2

December 2014

Conference Corner

Silvey, E. 2014. Event report: Writing research proposals and publications. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 8(2), pp. 147-148.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/8.2.1955>

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

Event report: Writing research proposals and publications

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On 12 September 2014, I attended the 'Writing research proposals and publications' event run by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Information Literacy Group (ILG) and Library and Information Research Group (LIRG). Held at CILIP headquarters in London, this interactive event included presentations, workshop exercises and a question-and-answer session with journal editors, covering all stages in the research process from planning to publication.

As a new professional, I was keen to learn more about research in the library and information science sector and to meet other professionals with an interest in this area. In my current role as Assistant Librarian (Resources) at Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, it is also important for the library team to engage with and support the information needs of researchers. I therefore felt that, by attending this event, I could also improve my understanding of the research process in general and help enable the library to offer more effective support to researchers at the Trust.

The day was structured into three sections, followed by question-and-answer sessions. Firstly, Dr Alison Brettle (University of Salford) spoke about 'Getting started with research', outlining different types of research and the kinds of research question associated with each type. The second presentation, 'Writing a research proposal', was led by Dr Geoff Walton (Northumbria University) and Dr Graham Walton (Loughborough University), who emphasised the importance of a strong research proposal and an original concept to support funding applications and also spoke about strategies for disseminating research. Finally, Dr Jane Secker (editor of the *Journal of Information Literacy*) and Angharad Roberts (editor of *Library and Information Research*) presented on 'Writing for publication: tips for aspiring authors', highlighting the need to consider what kind of article to publish and where, considering the scope of each publication alongside its intended audience.

In the first session, Alison considered how to translate a topic idea into a suitable research question and select an appropriate methodological approach. I found her explanations of commonly confused terms particularly helpful, such as the distinctions between aims and objectives, and methodology, methods and design. She also spoke about the value of a spirit of enquiry, organisational and writing skills, which are transferable from other areas of life rather than being research-specific. To conclude, she considered research ethics, outlining the importance of ethical research both from a moral standpoint and to comply with ethics guidelines and requirements from institutions and funding bodies.

Geoff and Graham similarly emphasised how a research project must be both realistic and original, with practical issues like timescale and costings considered from the proposal stage, alongside a creative abstract to summarise the project and demonstrate its potential impact. Both presenters strongly emphasised how research can contribute to wider practice, such as through evaluating or raising suggestions for innovations in service delivery. They then considered research dissemination, suggesting that traditional forms like journal articles and conference presentations retain their importance, but that a novel dissemination strategy can also be highly effective for raising awareness, particularly outside the researcher's direct

community of practice. Furthermore, they emphasised the need to consider dissemination throughout the research process, for example posting online updates as the project progresses rather than solely following its completion.

In the final session, Jane and Angharad considered writing and publication in more detail, for example explaining the peer review process for the journals that they edit and discussing the different potential outcomes of this process for authors. They emphasised the need to maintain focus in a research article by always keeping in mind the central research question, whilst also noting that different types of publication require different writing styles.

A common theme running through the day was the need to consider the research process as a whole, right from the planning stage, including its practicalities, theoretical underpinnings, implications for practice and dissemination. Similarly, each presenter emphasised focus and clarity of expression. Geoff and Graham, for example, suggested avoiding jargon and overuse of acronyms, especially at the proposal stage, and breaking up blocks of text with headings or bullet points to improve readability.

Each session also included interactive activities. Alison contextualised her presentation with a group activity where participants first formulated a research question, then discussed how to translate this into feasible study objectives and select appropriate data collection methods. In the second session, Geoff and Graham gave the example of 'punchy' first sentences used in news pieces and invited participants to formulate a succinct introductory sentence, in a similar style, for their group's research topic from the earlier session. Later, participants also worked in groups to think of creative research dissemination strategies, with suggestions including blogs, videos and infographics. Finally, Jane and Angharad led an activity where participants considered the extra components required for expanding a short report into a peer-reviewed article, plus a short discussion about steps towards getting published.

The final part of the day was a question-and-answer session with five journal editors - the day's five presenters - chaired by Christine Irving. This was an excellent opportunity to hear more about a range of journals in the librarianship, information literacy and education sectors, as well as to hear the editors discuss key current topics like open access publishing.

Overall, I found this a highly useful and informative event. The presenters were knowledgeable and enthusiastic and the series of talks and activities was cohesive and well-structured, covering the whole research process but with key themes running through all the presentations. In particular, I have gained a better understanding of the wider context of research, which I feel will help me and my colleagues to make informed decisions about how to engage in dialogue with and provide effective library services to researchers at Southend University Hospital. I also feel that I now have a much stronger knowledge base should I undertake my own library or information science research in the future.

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