



The FORUM

The Newsletter of the SPSP Graduate Student Committee Summer 2004

Submit Wisely and Publish Early

This is the first in a series of articles focused on career development. If you have ideas for a topic, or wish to submit an article, please contact at GSC member

We've all heard the academic mantra "publish or perish," just the same, as beginning researchers we may be hesitant to publish our work thinking *it's not important enough* or *I don't know where to submit it*. Chances are that you've collected data that you haven't attempted to publish and you may have even written manuscripts using your data for an assignment in a course. What about the data from your undergraduate thesis or your first year project? Considering that it usually takes a year or more from submission to acceptance you may find yourself on the job market without even an *in press* manuscript listed on your vita.

With the possible exception of null findings, nearly everything is publishable—somewhere. One of the biggest factors in getting your paper accepted is making sure that is a good fit for the journal you have chosen—both in quality and substance. One paper may be rejected by one journal but

accepted without revisions in another that is a perfect venue for the paper. To pick the best venue for your manuscript you may want to look through recent copies of the journal to see if they have published something on a par with your paper and if they publish papers on your research topic. The key articles that you cited—where were they published? It is also helpful to ask faculty with similar research interests for advice on where to submit your manuscript. Ask them to give the paper a quick read and suggest the most appropriate journals.

Ideally the process of choosing a venue for your work begins when you have analyzed your data. According to Bem (2004), many researchers write their results section first. He advocates this approach, saying that you should write *not* the paper you planned to write before you collected your data, but the paper according to *the story* that emerges after you have collected and analyzed your data. That is, you should learn from your data. Once you know your results and have a journal in mind you can write the remainder of the paper that is most appropriate for the journal you have chosen. For example, the introduction and

discussion sections of a paper in a journal with an experimental focus will be very different than those same sections of a paper in a journal with an applied focus.

Lastly, to increase your manuscript's chances of acceptance, submit a polished manuscript; don't submit the first draft. Drawing on his own experience as a journal editor Bem says: "the difference between the manuscripts accepted and the top 15-20% of those rejected is frequently the difference between good and less good writing" (2004, p. 205).

References

Bem, D. J. (2004). Writing the empirical journal article. In J. M. Darley, M. P. Zanna, & H. L. Roedinger III, (Eds.). *The compleat academic: A career guide* (2nd ed., pp. 185-219). gton, DC: American Psychological Association.

President's Corner

Greetings! I hope this summer finds you productive, yet (relatively) stress-free! I thought I would take this space to update everyone on what's happening here with the GSC committee.

We currently have several initiatives in the works. First, you've likely noticed a slight change in the format of the FORUM—in addition to the articles we normally include, we are now including room for recurring articles on training and development tactics. One finding from last year's GSC web-based survey was that student members desire more information on training and development topics. To address this concern, we have instituted this special column. If you have any suggestions for future columns, please contact us at spspgsc@yahoo.com with your ideas!

Second, we are continuing to regularly post non-academic job opportunities on the SPSP student listserv. If you haven't already signed on to the listserv, consider doing so to receive these job opportunities! Often, the available opportunities are ones that are not distributed via the general SPSP listserv. Additionally, if you hear of any great job opportunities for student members—non-academic or otherwise—please forward them along to us!

The annual SPSP convention is fast-approaching—only 6 months away—and we are working hard

to use this year's convention to provide graduate students with increased training and development opportunities. First and foremost, plans are in the works to sponsor another mentoring luncheon and networking social. In response to feedback received from last year, we are working to make this year's mentoring luncheon available to a larger number of students and run more smoothly. Second, we are busy planning another academic pre-conference. This year's pre-conference will likely include not only information on academic and non-academic job opportunities, but also more detailed training activities on preparing for such job opportunities. We also are hoping to include a special session during the pre-conference on postdoctoral training opportunities. Finally, students attending the 2003 and 2004 SPSP conventions have been able to compete for the Graduate Poster Award, and this year will be no exception. Other possible plans are in the works for student social or networking hours. If you have any suggestions for additional activities you'd like to see at the next convention, please email one of the committee members with your ideas.

Last but not least, this year's committee is also tossing around several other ideas that might be of interest to student members. We are currently considering developing a student directory or interest groups centered around core

topics and themes. Any feedback you may have in planning future initiatives would be greatly appreciated...what types of things would you like to see the GSC offer? We are here to represent you, and therefore are looking forward to your suggestions. Again, please drop us an email at spspgsc@yahoo.com and let us know what you think!

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Alternatives to Large Conferences

Do you ever feel like many of the conferences we attend are overwhelming and impersonal? I do at times. Don't get me wrong, I thoroughly enjoy going to large conferences where I can hear about new research, catch up with people I haven't seen in a while, and network with new folks. But one thing that has been missing for me is the opportunity to really get to know other researchers in my area of interest. Oftentimes the large conference venue makes this difficult, despite many of our successful attempts on the graduate student committee to organize events for students.

A few weeks ago, I took advantage of an opportunity to go on a "retreat" of sorts with 11 other assistant professors, post-docs and graduate students who are studying relationships. Having a conference

with such a small group of people was a fantastic experience! Of course, the idea to have a small, informal conference is not a new one. Since 1981, Nags Head conferences have been held by small groups of social and behavioral scientists as a way to exchange new ideas, form long-lasting collaborations, and create new developments in their fields. Having an informal setting to meet and discuss research and theoretical interests with a small group of mutually minded (but still diverse) people was perhaps one of the most rewarding professional experiences I have had. Not only did I learn a lot about the work others are doing and form collaborations, but we all got to know each other on a personal level that is hard to accomplish at larger conferences.

How did it work? Nine months ago or so, the organizers talked about getting young, pre-tenured scholars together who were interested in close relationship science. After deciding to meet at the Sea Frolic resort (<http://www.seafrolic.org>), they then invited a number of people to join them, and in no time, 12 people committed to the meeting. We spent the first day talking a little about our work and what we wanted to accomplish, and then spent the remainder of the time discussing specific topics that came up in our conversations. There was, of course, time to relax on the beach, sit in the hammock, talk (and gossip a little of course), laugh, eat, drink, etc. I highly recommend this type of experience, and organizing an event such as this is not that hard to do. If you are interesting in hearing more, please feel free to contact me (jennifer.harman@uconn.edu), and I would be happy to share what I know!

Spotlight on...

Teresa Robbins

Teresa, a student in Claremont Graduate University's doctoral program in Applied Social Psychology, has research interests in racism, intergroup relations, and ethnic identity development. She was specifically attracted to the discipline of social psychology because of the applicability of the field. "I've always been both idealistic...and concerned with social problems... I've always been interested in racism, intergroup relations, and in the negative effects of stigma and how people deal with it. In my research I get to look for ways of reducing racism,

improving intergroup relations, and overcoming stigma. In teaching I get to raise students' awareness of all kinds of social problems and encourage them to think about how they can make a difference in what matters most to them."

Teresa says that the strengths of her program are its "applied focus and its flexibility to students' individual career goals," including the ability of students to take a role in outlining their graduation requirements. Although graduate school can in many ways evoke "grad student guilt," she feels that "in

many ways this is a charmed life. I am constantly busy, but my time is flexible. And I get to spend almost all of my time working on things that I really care about."

For those just beginning their graduate career, Teresa's advice is to "hit the ground running. It's important to find good, supportive faculty advisors and get involved in research projects as soon as possible, (and) to build collaborative relationships with your peers."

Teresa is a sixth-year graduate student working with Dr. Amy Marcus-Newhall.