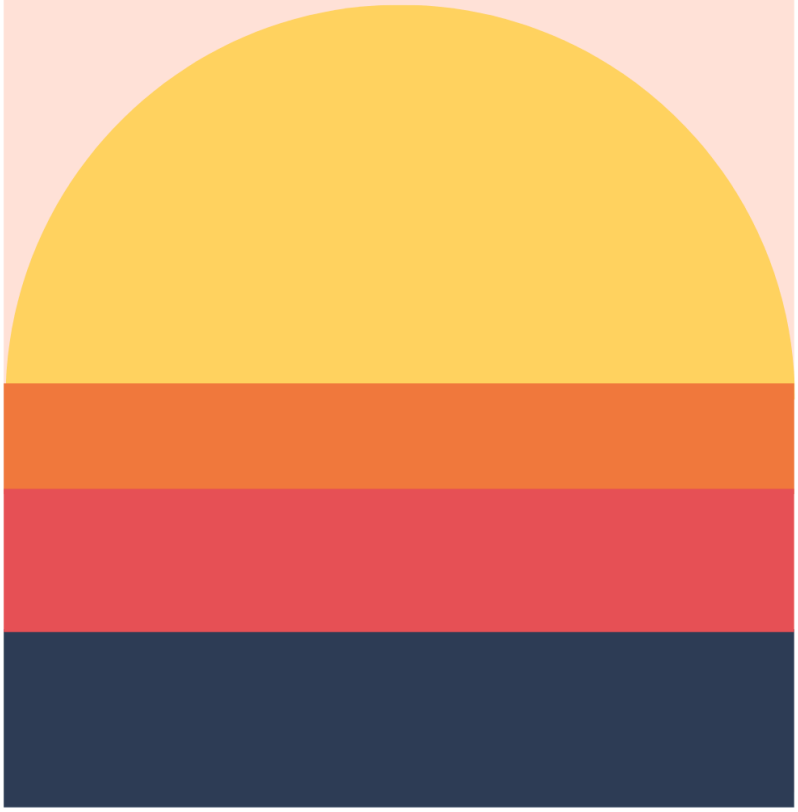
WORKBOOK

Draft Your Journal Article in Seven Steps



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Contents

About this Workbook: 3

About the Author: 3

Section 1: Introduction 4

Section 2: Literature Review 9

Section 3: Methods and Procedures 14

Section 4: Findings 18

Section 5: Analysis and Discussion 21

Section 6: Conclusion 24

Section 7: Audience 26

Closing 30

References 31

About this Workbook:

This living workbook is designed to get you started with writing your journal article. By completing each section, you'll be able to organize the details of your research question and methodologies, findings, analysis, and conclusion. Since this is a living workbook—a workbook that needs your feedback for revisions and additions to grow and thrive, don't hesitate to provide your feedback to Stephanie Liu-Rojas at the Pitzer College Writing Center, based on your experiences using this workbook.

Each section of this workbook is typically found in social science research articles. Whether you're writing a research thesis, a scholarly journal, or a chapter in a book, this workbook will guide you through the process in determining the information you want to convey based on your theoretical approach and the audience you are engaging with.

Although the sections of this workbook are outlined in an order that is generally found in most social science research articles, you, the writer, do not have to complete each section in order. It is best to complete each section based on the amount of information you already have and know. The more information you have on a particular section, the sooner you should begin engaging with that section. For example, if you just finished collecting survey responses, or conducting focus groups and cannot wait to write down your findings and begin analyzing, you may want to begin the research methodology section of this workbook, first. That way you can easily answer the questions and respond with *how* you collected your data before writing *about* your data. Contrarily, if you are too ecstatic to even reflect on your methodological approach, perhaps starting Section 4: Findings, would be more conducive to your writing process. Either way, writing is not a linear process, and neither is completing the sections in this workbook. Start with the conclusion, or the middle, and end with the introduction. Or not. It's your writing process—it's your choice.

About the Author:

With over ten years of coordinating and leading Writing Centers, training and mentoring writing tutors, and working with many writers, I have created this workbook based on my experiences working with a diverse group of students, staff, and faculty at the college level. With a Masters in Teaching in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), I am trained to work with international, multilingual, and English language leaners of all levels to strengthen their communication through speaking and writing.

I also teaching two different writing courses: 1). *Writing Center Theory and Pedagogy* where students learn about the different methods, tools, and techniques to support people in their writing, while simultaneously learning about their own writing processes to strengthen their writing skills. And 2). *Multilingual Writing* where students learn about the different definitions of what it means to be multilingual and translingual, and experiment with their personal approach to style and voice by applying the practices and skills learned in class. In summary, I have a lot of experience working with different types of writing, and supporting different types of writers.

I am currently pursuing a Philosophy Degree in Educational Studies at the Claremont Graduate University to research and study new teaching strategies and approaches that are more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible. This workbook is the product of a final assignment in my class, Community-Based, Participatory Research: Focus on Transformative Movement Organizing.

Section 1: Introduction

Most scholarly articles begin with a clear and catchy introduction—the hook—which is meant to obtain the attention of your reader and entice them to *want* to read more. In my personal opinion, that's a lot of pressure to begin writing with. Therefore, I suggest that you complete this section last so you can have the bulk of your article drafted, and all that's left to complete is your introduction. Additionally, after completing the other sections of this workbook first, you have a better understanding of what and how you completed your research, why you conducted this research, and what you want your readers to gain from your research.

If you're ready to complete this section, please proceed.[1] But if you're not, try completing the other sections of this workbook first, and come back later. 😊

What are you proposing to do? What is your primary research question? Is it tangible, feasible, and applicable? Can you map out both root conditions and large scale end goals as well as smaller scale issues you are addressing and short term aims/results you want?
Who is proposing the research? Did the project emerge from conversation/collaboration with community members or one's own life experience or both? Does the research involve ideas from the local community, the scholarly community or both?

[1] This section is adopted from the Research Design Questions for Participatory Action Research handout created by Professor Tessa Hicks Peterson for the course Community-Based, Participatory Research: Focus on Transformative Movement Organizing.

How is this research relevant? Is the research really necessary? Describe this project's relevance and for whom it is relevant and how does it benefit.
Who benefits from the research? In the best cases, research benefits individual community members, broader communities and/or organizations, students/faculty conducting research, and their research institutions.
What are the risks of this research? Reflect on potential risks emerging from the proposed research and describe how individual community members, broader communities and/or organizations, students/faculty, and the college institution may encounter risks as a result of this research.

What methods will be used in this project and how are these culturally/site appropriate? Describe methods (survey, focus group, interviews, archival research), how methods have been decided upon and how they will be used. Ensure that cultural sensitivity is used (and determined by the community itself) in each method employed.
What action will result? How will you translate this research into impact and action? Considering long term aims and short term results you wish to see, what artifacts/outcomes do you expect will come of this?
Who are the multiple stakeholders/multiple authorities in this project? Address how community involvement or approval for this project has been obtained. Is there an IRB in the organization you're working with? Is there a group of elders within a community from whom to seek permission? How will you ensure that your project respects local voice and authority in each step of the research process?

Where will data be stored and for how long? In some cases, it may be appropriate for data to be stored in the community as opposed to solely with the researcher. In other cases, the data may be stored in multiple locations. How will you be sure to keep confidential data safe and secure.
What timeline and resources are you operating with? Do you have the knowledge, skills, access, resources and support you need to execute this? What more might you need? What is your timeline and step-by-step plan?
How will findings be disseminated? In some cases, traditional forms of disseminating data, such as in an article publication, class paper or senior thesis, may not be appropriate. Consider the anticipated venues for the presentation of research findings, and how permission was obtained for presentation in various formats that are best for community and most impacting.

Section 2: Literature Review

The literature review is a summary of all the scholarship related to your research that has already been completed. In essence, you are discussing the work that scholars before you conducted, what they found, and how that relates, or doesn't relate, to your research.

One of my favorite ways of engaging the readers with the many different articles, books, and research that you are talking about is incorporating 8 Strategies for Critically Engaging Secondary Sources adapted by Mark Gaipa (2004). You can incorporate any, or a mix of these strategies when discussing your literature review:

1. **Picking a Fight** – Knock down a scholar's argument and, in the best version of this strategy, replace it with one's own.
2. **Ass Kissing** (or Riding a Scholar's Coattails) – Agree with a scholar to gain evidence and authority. Possibly go on to defend the scholar from attack by another scholar, thus resolving a larger controversy.
3. **Piggybacking** (or Standing on the Shoulders of a Giant) – Agree with a scholar (i.e., kiss ass), but then complete or extend the scholar's work, usually by borrowing an idea or concept from the scholar and developing it through application to a new subject or a new part of the conversation.
4. **Leapfrogging** (or Biting the Hand that Feeds You) – Agree with a scholar (i.e., kiss ass), then identify and solve a problem in the scholar's work—for example, an oversight, inconsistency, or contradiction.
5. **Playing Peacemaker** – identify a conflict or dispute between two or more scholars, then resolve it using a new or more encompassing perspective.
6. **Taking on the Establishment** (or Acting Paranoid) – Pick a fight with everyone in a critical conversation—for example, by showing how the status quo is wrong, a critical consensus is actually unfounded, or a dispute is based on a faulty assumption.
7. **Dropping Out** (or Finding Room on the Margins) – Focus on an issue in the margins of the critical conversation, illuminating that issue and (in the best version of this strategy) ultimately redefining the conversation itself.
8. **Crossbreeding with Something New** – Inject really new material into the critical conversation to produce a new argument. For example, bring in a theory from another discipline to reinterpret the evidence, bring in new evidence to upset an old theory or interpretation, or establish an original framework (a combination of theories, a historical understanding) to reinterpret the evidence.

List your scholarly sources below:	**Which of the 8 strategies (or a mix of strategies) will you incorporate when discussing this literature?**	**Do any of these texts intersect with each other? If so, which ones?**
Author's Name: **Title of Text:**		**Author's Name:** **Title of Text:**
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Write a summary about each of the sources you reviewed:
Scholarly Text 1: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?
Scholarly Text 2: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?

Scholarly Text 3: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?
Scholarly Text 4: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?
Scholarly Text 5: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?

Scholarly Text 6: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?
Scholarly Text 7: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?
Scholarly Text 8: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?

Scholarly Text 9: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?
Scholarly Text 10: What was this research about? What were the findings? How does this relate/not relate to the work that you are completing?

Section 3: Methods and Procedures

Your methods and procedure section is a detailed explanation of *how* you conducted your research. You want to be as detailed as possible so that anybody can replicate your research without any questions.

Therefore, if your research included people and relied on their participation such as interviews, surveys, or observations you want to tell your readers who your participants were (without releasing any specific indicators so that your reader can identify the participants), if any incentives for participation were provided, how many participants were involved, what questions you asked; etc. Or maybe your research analyzed existing data. What was the data you extracted? How did you obtain or collect the data? What form of data did you collect (tables, charts, survey results, etc.)? How did you synthesize the data? Etc.

All of these details, and more, is exactly what your reader needs to know. You can also include any and all of the limitations that may affect your data in this section. Use the tables below to assist you in thinking about the steps you took in obtaining your data.

Answer the following questions to get started in thinking about your research in a step-by-step process:
Step 1: What type of research was this? Did it include participants? Were you collecting existing data?
Step 2: How did you collect the data from your research (ex: surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, data comparison, fact finding, etc.)

Step 3: What questions did you ask when collecting your data? Who did you ask these questions to?
Step 4a: If participants were involved, how did you find these participants? How many participated in your study? Why did you choose this group of participants? Are there any identifying markers of the participants that make them perfect for your study? If so, what were they (ex: college students, grassroots organizations, etc.)?
Steph 4b: If participants were not involved, what did you do with the data you collected? What did you concentrate or focus on when sifting through your data?
Step 5: How did you synthesize/code your data? What method of coding or categorizing did you use? What theoretical framework grounded your coding method?

Step 6: How long did it take you to obtain this data?
Step 7: Were there any roadblocks when obtaining your data? If so, name them.
Step 8: Were there any limitations when collecting your data? If so, name them.

Step 9: If you could have repeated this process of collecting your data, what would you have done differently and why?

Section 4: Findings

After you have coded, categorized, and synthesized your data for themes, this section will discuss those findings of your research.

Briefly respond to the following questions:	
How many themes/categories/findings did your research produce?	
List the themes/categories/findings:	
For each theme/category/finding you listed above, list 2-3 examples that you found in your data that supports each theme:	
Finding 1:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Finding 2:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Finding 3:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Finding 4:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**

Finding 5:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Were there any sub themes? If so, what were they? Provide 2-3 examples from your data to support your findings:	
Sub theme 1:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 2:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 3:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 4:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 5:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 6:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 7:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 8:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**

Sub theme 9:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 10:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 11:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 12:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 13:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 14:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**
Sub theme 15:	**Example 1:** **Example 2:** **Example 3:**

Section 5: Analysis and Discussion

The analysis and discussion section of an article is one of my favorite parts. This is where you get to, literally, analyze and critique the findings of your research. You get to state your opinions, discuss why you believe the themes and/or trends are occurring, and what your findings mean for the purpose of your overall research.

For example, if your research was determining why people consume fast food, and your research collected data that showcased the average consumption of fast-food within a given household/community, what do your findings say about a household's fast-food consumption habits? Do certain communities consume less or more fast-food? Why or why not? Based on your research findings, what can you tell us about the determinants of fast-food consumption?

Answer the questions below, to analyze your findings:
In 3-5 sentences, write down your findings:
Did your research support or challenge your original research question(s)? Why or why not?

Did anything surprise you? If so, what?
What made sense?
What did not make any sense?
Name three things your audience can take away from this research:

Name three things you learned from this research project:
Name three things that you gained from this project (friendship, community, empathy, understanding, etc.):

Section 6: Conclusion

Many handbooks will tell you that the conclusion is a summary of everything that you just talked about in your paper—to recap everything in a paragraph or two for your reader (Graff & Birkenstein, 2018; Hacker & Sommers, 2015; Hacker & Sommers, 2018). Though this is true as it helps your reader remember what it is that they read, and allows them to continue following you through this project, there is much more to the conclusion than restating what you just said in 10+ pages.

When working with writers, I always advise them to include, what I call, the so-what-factor, which basically explains why your research is relevant and important to your reader: now that you know all this information, so what?

Once the so-what-factor is identified, I advise writers to include, what I call, the so-now-what-factor which discusses what you want your readers to do with all this information: now that you know why this information is important and meaningful, so now what; what do we do next?

Including the so-what-factor and the so-now-what factor elevates your conclusion.

Free-write to the following questions to get you started on writing your conclusion:

What are 3-5 main points of your research?
What do you want your reader to take away from your research?

Now that your reader knows what they should take away from your research, why is this important or relevant to your reader?
Now that your reader knows why your research is important and relevant to them, what should they do with this information? What do you envision your reader, communities, or society adopting from your research?

Section 7: Audience

Determining your audience is one of the most important variables in the writing process. Depending on who you are writing to, will greatly depend on how you write it (Graff & Birkenstein, 2018; Ede and Lunsford, 1984). You are definitely going to take a different approach when writing about your research to a family member versus a professor in the field. For one, the professor knows the theories, jargon, and past research around your work, so you do not have to elaborate on specific ideas or define many terms. But if you wrote the same paper to a family member, you may have to define terms, provide examples to make the theories more accessible, and so forth. Therefore, determining who your audience is for your journal article is very important.

To determine your audience, you will have to also determine which journal or publisher you would like to submit your article to. Conduct a little research by asking a librarian where they think your article would fit perfectly with. Or ask a professor in the field what they think. Once you have a list of possible journals that align with your work, research those journals. Check out when they usually accept article submissions, what their word limitations are, and if they have a particular theme they would like you to incorporate. You might also want to check out some of their past journal issues to get a better sense of the type of style, genre, and voice that was used in past publications. This will not only give you a sense of what type of audience you want to write to, but also a sense of what the journal or book may be looking for.

If you do not know where you want to submit your article you can create your own audience to support you in your writing. If this is the route you are going to take, I suggest that you envision an audience that is familiar with the topic of your research, but not an expert—like a classmate. Therefore, you may want to define your key terms and theoretical approaches, and you might not have to provide too many examples throughout your article to ensure accessibility to your reader.

Use the table below to support you determine your audience:

Name the publications where you would like to submit your article to (ex: journal, book excerpt, etc.):
Does the publication submission have a minimum or maximum word count? Is there a theme that they want you to incorporate? Name all the submission requirements here:

Have you gotten a chance to take a look at past publications? If so, what is the type of writing style and voice used in past publications? How are they similar and/or different than your writing style and voice?
Who are the readers of your publication submission? Academics and scholars? Students of the field? Experts of the field? A mix?
Do your readers have time to carefully read through each section of your article? Or are they likely to skim it? If they are likely to skim it, list the sections where you think tables, charts, bulleted lists, and appendices would be helpful to your audience:

What language(s) do your readers speak? Academic English? A variation of English(es)? Does your research include participants that speak another language? If so, what translations will you need to incorporate?	
Are your readers familiar with the terms and jargon within the field of your research? If not, list the key terms that you will need to define for your readers. How will you define these terms?	
Key terms:	**Definition in your own words:**

List the theories that you will have to define and elaborate on with examples; list your examples along with the theories:	
Theories:	**Examples that can help explain your theories:**

Closing

Huzzah! You completed this workbook. Although you might not have completed this workbook in a linear fashion, note that this workbook structure just gave you an outline of your paper from beginning to end. Now you just have to narrate everything you wrote in each section of this workbook into your first draft. You have all the information written down, so all you need to do is copy and paste (if you completed this workbook electronically), or type out all of your answers (if you completed this work book by hand).

Once you have your draft complete, you can begin the revision process! It always helps to share your work with an advisor, colleague, friend, or writing tutor so they can tell you what they see and understand as a reader. Implementing their feedback into your writing will support you in furthering the writing and revision process so that you are closer in achieving your goals to complete this article.

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