

“If We Knew What We Were Doing, It Would Not Be Called Research, Would It?” (Albert Einstein): Paying Forward Publishing Pearls of Wisdom

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In this scholarly narrative, we pay forward pearls of wisdom learned while navigating the research publishing landscape. The reader is introduced to our academic journey, paying homage to #ResearchMountain (see @DoctorSizzle, Twitter). Using thematic description and selected personal narratives, it is our goal to provide neophyte researchers, and anyone considering authoring a scholarly publication, tangible guidance in their publishing pursuits.

Keywords: narrative scholarship, #ResearchMountain, publishing

There was a day when both of us were standing at the bottom of what some might have seen as an insurmountable mountain. As our eyes scaled the landscape before us, and with some degree of naivety, each of us said, “I’ve got this. I’ve got this. I have climbed so many peaks before—as a figure skater and as a student. I’m sure I’ve got this one too.” With our confidence and our might, little did we know then what summiting the mountain, aptly coined #ResearchMountain (see @DoctorSizzle, Twitter), would involve. The many terrains, myriad of climates, challenging obstacles, and indeed a path that would take us up, around, and at times, have us hoisted in the same spot for what sometimes felt like perpetuity.

Our first climbs up #ResearchMountain were thousands of miles apart, with an ocean between us. We were educated and trained by advisors, of separate programs, on entirely different continents. Individually, yet collectively, we were both climbing toward the summit with the shared goal to push our field, *psychology of sport, exercise, and performance*, forward. As we ascended up the valleys and conquered the peaks of #ResearchMountain, still unknown to each other,

Figure 1. The Great Wall of China, Huairou District, Beijing, China; Image Taken in 2013. 长城 (Chángchéng / channng-chnng/ ‘Long Wall’); Official Length: 21,196.18 km (13,170.7 mi).



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we would soon find ourselves situated professionally as tenure-accruing scholars, at very distinct academic institutions, with categorically discrete research foci. Our paths would not cross until the summer of 2013 in Beijing, China. There, at the International Society of Sport Psychology World Congress, where we each were presenting our latest research findings, through shared cultural explorations and travel survivals, we would find a hiking partner in one another. Quite literally, after hiking a section of the Great Wall (see Figure 1), our professional titles, Dr. Monna Arvinen-Barrow and Dr. Amanda J. Visek, along with those of our other research submitting friends and colleagues, were emblazoned on silk scrolls in Chinese writing.

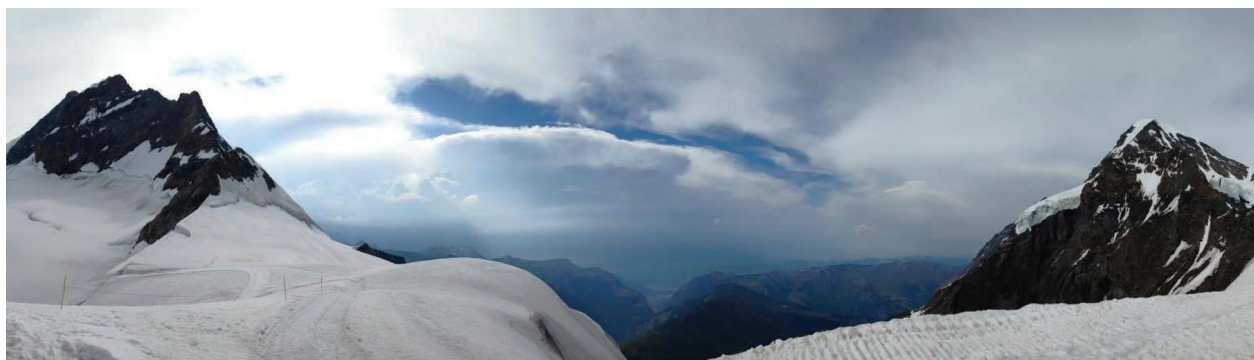
Not long thereafter, in 2015, together with friends and colleagues during the European Federation of Sport Psychology Congress (FEPSAC), our next overseas research travel destination, we would hike together again. This time, the Bernese Alps in Switzerland. Elevated 11,371 ft above sea level—a place where the sky meets the earth, and you can eat melted cheese from a pot with bread and no remorse. We explored the Jungfraujoch – a glacier saddle between the two highest peaks of the Bernese Alps (see Figure 2). Rather than solely by foot, we trekked the glacier ascending by train also. Later in the week, we discovered our Airbnb was located serendipitously close to the Albert Einstein Museum (see Figure 3). As science enthusiasts, we thought, surely this was meant to be. There, we found ourselves lost in the fascinating life stories and scientific discoveries of this infamous Nobel Prize physicist, Dr. Einstein. Hours later, we would emerge from the museum in utter awe of his authenticity, and the passion and curiosity that fueled his pursuit of finding answers to the unknown. Einstein famously stated: “Ich habe keine besondere begabung, sondern bin nur

leidenschaftlich neugierig.” That is, “I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.” *Passionately curious*. A simple combination of an adverb and an adjective that so cleverly captures the epitome of a remarkable researcher.

Fast forward to 2018. The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) Annual Conference had made its way across the north border, for the first time, to Toronto, Ontario, Canada. It was against this backdrop the Establishing Editor-in-Chief was announced, Dr. Monna Arvinen-Barrow, for a new unnamed student-centered journal that would become the *Journal for Advancing Sport Psychology in Research (JASPR)*, and an invitation to serve as the Establishing Associate Editor was extended, Dr. Amanda J. Visek. This time, there was no Great Wall to climb, or glacier saddle to admire, but instead, #ResearchMountain called us, as two scholars, to ascend, together. As we spearheaded *JASPR*’s development with no summit yet in plain sight, the call to climb echoed resoundingly. The beauty in accepting, and embracing, this new climb was the opportunity to lay a new path up #ResearchMountain for students to follow.

Over the past two years of *JASPR*’s development, we have scaled many peaks and have been humbled by the terrain (see editorial Arvinen-Barrow & Visek, 2021, this issue). This paper, befittingly in *JASPR*’s inaugural issue, is intended to serve as the first of narrative scholarship meant to guide students as they navigate #ResearchMountain. Like many climbers before us, our lessons learned are indeed more common than they are varied. The same is true for student scholars, climbing for the very first of times. Strategic and smart, the most successful of climbers who set out to reach the world’s greatest summits, are often not without the guide of a Sherpa who intimately knows the mountain’s peaks

Figure 2. Panoramic View from the Jungfraujoch, the Glacier Saddle Connecting the Jungfrau (4158 m/13642 ft) and the Mönch (4110 m/13480 ft) of the Bernes Alps; Switzerland; Image Taken in 2015.



and valleys. Herein, we pay forward to students, and anyone embarking on the publishing climb for the first of times, pearls of wisdom that guided us during our early #ResearchMountain climbs. Some of these pearls are credited to those who have guided us, while others are lessons learned while navigating numerous peaks and valleys without a Sherpa in sight. What follows is a thematic description of our collective pearls augmented with selected excerpts of personal narratives.

Figure 3. The Einstein Museum of the Bernisches Historisches Museum (Bern Historical Museum); Bern, Switzerland, Image Taken in 2015.



Pearls of Publishing Wisdom

Pearl 1: Early On, Determine Your Publishing Author Name

A name precedes a reputation. We are all given a name at birth, or soon after, as a symbol of our identity. Our name is a permanent way we place ourselves into the world, and more specifically, as authors into the publishing world. When preparing for the first publishing

climb, an important consideration often overlooked, or taken for granted, is one's author name. It is important to ask, how do I want to be known in the academic world? What will be my publishing name?

For those with common given and surnames, recognizing you from another who shares your name, can create confusion in academic and publishing circles. Thus, when determining your publishing name, whether you share your name with others in the field, across disciplines, and more broadly in the world, is worthy of consideration. Importantly too, consistency in name use, over time, allows you and your work to be recognized. Use of a middle initial, for some, is all that is needed to distinguish them from others with the same name. At times, with very common names, the use of one's middle initial does not entirely delineate you from another and you may end up sharing a publication name with another person. When deciding on your publishing name, consider all such possibilities and assess what feels right to you. There is no right or wrong way to decide how you want your name to appear, and what may guide your decision can be both personal and practical:

Globally, there is only one Monna Arvinen-Barrow (fact). When I married, I wanted to both preserve my Finnish heritage and carry on my family surname used by less than 100 people worldwide. Taking my husband's name alone, and becoming Monna Barrow, for me, just did not sound or feel right. At the time of my first publication, I felt the combination of an unconventionally spelled first name, and hyphenated maiden and marital name, would not require the use of my middle initial to distinguish me. Post divorce, I decided to stick with my marital name even though globally, Monna Arvinen would have been equally unique (another fact). This decision was partly fueled by a desire to maintain a consistent publishing profile.

Other times, choosing one's publishing name is very personal, including the use of one's middle initial:

I have always loved my middle name, Joy, in part because it is my maternal grandmother's given name, and because it is uncommon, it has always felt distinctly mine. It also embodies the way in which I live my life, with joy. My last name is even more personal—it is a name my father gave me when he adopted me. This gift, and the only identity I have every really known, has truly been my namesake. I decided in graduate school, marriage or not, and published or not, it would be the name I would keep. My father always signed his signature using his middle initial, which stood for the same middle name he shared with his father. For these reasons, I have always penned my name Amanda J. Vissek.

For women in academia, one's author name can be further influenced, and challenged, by societal expectations to take the man's name in marriage. Although rooted in patriarchal history, doing so is common, even in Western countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Finland, a country which prides itself on gender equality. As recent as 10 years ago, a national study in the United States by Hamilton et al. (2011) found 72.3% of the sample surveyed indicated it was generally better if a woman gave up her maiden name upon marriage; and, of those, half believed giving up her maiden name should be a legal requirement, not a personal choice. In addition, a large-scale study that examined United States name change data from the Social Security Administration, combined with Census Bureau data on marriage between 2010-2013, found over 70% of women took the man's name in marriage (The Upshot Staff, 2015). As people are generally marrying later in their lives than ever before (EuroStat, 2021), it is possible for a woman to become published before being faced with deciding whether, or how, her name may evolve in marriage.

We acknowledge the custom for a woman to take a man's name (e.g., United States, United Kingdom, Finland) or the legal requirement to share a surname (e.g., Japan) is not necessarily relevant globally. For instance, some areas of the world legally restrict women from taking the man's name (e.g., Greece, France, Ethiopia, and Quebec, Canada). In others, it is customary for women to keep their maiden surnames, though they could take the man's name if they chose (e.g., Chile, Gambia, Korea, Malaysia), though most do not. In other areas of the world, women have some flexibility in their name albeit under unique circumstances (e.g., Netherlands, Italy). We recognize, too, how one's name is approached in same-sex marriages is also varied and can be influenced by laws governing the country, state/province, or even county in which the marriage takes place. Our intention, here, is to provide women, and men, with the opportunity to thoughtfully consider their name, early on, to give it due process personally and professionally.

The publishing names we use can be the product of hap chance, practicality, or even significant forethought and personal meaning. As you summit #ResearchMountain, throughout your academic career, consider the name you want to be known by in the publishing world. It is important for identifying you and recognizing your work. At the start of your very first #ResearchMountain climb, the question to consider before summiting is: What is the name you will want to be known by?

Pearl 2: In Team Science, Use Roles and Contribution to Determine Authorship Order

Summitting #ResearchMountain, for the first time as a student, is a team effort guided by one or more advisors in the roles of Sherpas. Subsequent climbs are also rarely solo. Much of the work conducted in psychology across sport, exercise, and performance is team-based and interprofessional in nature. The committee you are required to form in pursuit of a thesis, or a dissertation is, metaphorically, your climbing team. This team should be formed with careful thought and consideration. The faculty advisor or chair, also known as the main supervisor in some countries, serves as the primary Sherpa. The additional required committee members, which can vary in number greatly across programs, universities, and countries, should each bring an expertise, skillset, or external perspective that strengthens the team, and thus the science being conducted, with the best interest of the student in mind.

Over the course of my sport psychology focused PhD research in the UK, I had several changes in the supervisory team. When I started, my team had a health psychologist, Dr. Gillian Penny as my director of studies. In the UK, a director of studies is usually an esteemed academic who is mainly responsible for the operational management of the supervisory team, and not necessarily actively involved in the research planning, design, and execution. I also had two sport psychology trained content experts as supervisors, Dr. Brian Hemmings and Dr. Daniel A. Weigand. Early on, Dr. Weigand left the university, thus my supervisory team was cut down to two. For the next couple of years, Dr. Hemmings guided me through all four of my PhD research studies. Dr. Penny provided significant input solely on methods and results in studies three and four. Eighteen months before completion of my PhD, Dr. Hemmings left the university for private practice, and as a replacement, Dr. Susan Corr, an occupational therapist, joined the team. As I had already published two of the studies, Dr. Corr served as a critical reader for the entire thesis. In the end, my PhD resulted in four peer-reviewed journal articles (Arvinen-Barrow et al., 2007; Arvinen-Barrow, Hemmings et al., 2008; Arvinen-Barrow et al., 2010; 2014), and the author bylines of each accurately represented my supervisory team changes and each individual's varied contributions to the PhD work.

Indeed, in student-led work, like a thesis or a dissertation, the role and significant contributions made by faculty advisors and other committee members will typically qualify them for authorship on published works resulting from the project. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (from now on, referred to as the APA Manual), clearly delineates

publication credit and guidance regarding the author order in the published byline. The general rule to follow, according to the APA Manual, is that the principal contributor's name appears first, followed by subsequent names that appear in order of decreasing contribution.

Before beginning the writing of the first manuscript resulting from a student's thesis or dissertation, we discuss authorship order so that all contributing parties know their roles and responsibilities up front. For the majority of students that I have guided through the completion of their graduate work, as the chair of their committee and primary advisor, my name has appeared second behind the student (e.g., Jones, Vissek et al., 2018; Olson, Vissek et al., 2012; Lentino, Vissek et al., 2012). In these instances, among the student's committee of faculty, I contributed the most to leading the student's work and was the most senior contributor. That said, I have recently had a case in which a student, mid-manuscript writing, decided not to do the additional re-analysis and re-writing required for the work to meet the scientific mark required for publication. Her committee and I have resolved to do the revision. In doing so, the study has evolved significantly, and the manuscript has morphed so considerably that it no longer resembles its beginnings. The student's name will still be credited, though their name will appear last in authorship order.

The above is an example of how authorship order that was determined at the outset of manuscript writing shifted significantly, based on the work needed to see the research study and manuscript writing through to completion at a high level of scientific rigor. As a consequence, authorship order had to be reevaluated among the research team, and changed, to accurately reflect the relative contributions of each author.

When navigating conversations about authorship, there are several resources available to help steer the

path. First, we encourage you to gain a broad overview of ethical publishing guidelines on authorship and co-authorship. Some journals publish their own criteria, which can be a great place to start understanding relative authorship order with respect to a specific journal. Many academic journals have also started to use [CRediT roles](#), a high-level taxonomy for evaluating, and denoting, author contributions in a systematic way. The APA also provides excellent resources for determining and negotiating authorship and a helpful how-to authorship determination scorecard.

Finally, it is important to recognize not all disciplines follow the same rules regarding how author contributions and seniority are represented in the byline order. For example, in other fields, last author denotes seniority and even who contributed the most, second to the first author or lead investigator. In the case of interdisciplinary team science, to maintain consistency and standardization in denoting authorship order, members of the team may desire their name to appear in a specific order based on their role and contribution relative to reporting standards in their fields. For example, the psychological or behavioral scientist, whose published work conforms to APA Manual standards, may want to remain second author when denoting senior authorship rather than appear last so as not have their work mistaken by their same-discipline colleagues as lesser in contribution by appearing last.

There have been several instances in which I have served as a primary mentor and senior methodological contributor of particular studies to a nutrition science colleague. In our published manuscripts and conference proceedings, she has wanted to give me due credit as the senior author by placing my name last in the authorship bylines which, correspondingly, is appropriate in her discipline. However,

Table 1. Elements Needed for a Cohesive Alignment of a Research Study

Cohesive Alignment Elements
1. Ground the research study theoretically; ensure the study variables are theoretically, and even practically, connected.
2. Provide an empirically supported, and strong, rationale for the research study.
3. Make certain the research questions and hypotheses are empirically supported and appropriate for the study's purpose.
4. Confirm the research design, methods of data collection, and planned analyses are appropriate for the purpose.
5. Follow the methods planned, meticulously executing the study with precision; carefully document change, planned and unplanned to the methods, to ensure accuracy and reliability in methodological reporting for the manuscript(s).

in these cases, I have asked to be placed second (e.g., Sylvestsky, Visek et al., 2020) for the simplicity of ensuring my work, seen by colleagues in my field, and for the purposes of reviewing my curriculum vita, is in accordance with the way in which my field tends to denote seniority and relative contribution.

When in doubt, discuss these nuances with your research team members early in the publication process. You should also revisit the conversation, as needed, to ensure the final published byline order accurately represents each author's contributions while also honoring discipline specific standards in interdisciplinary team science.

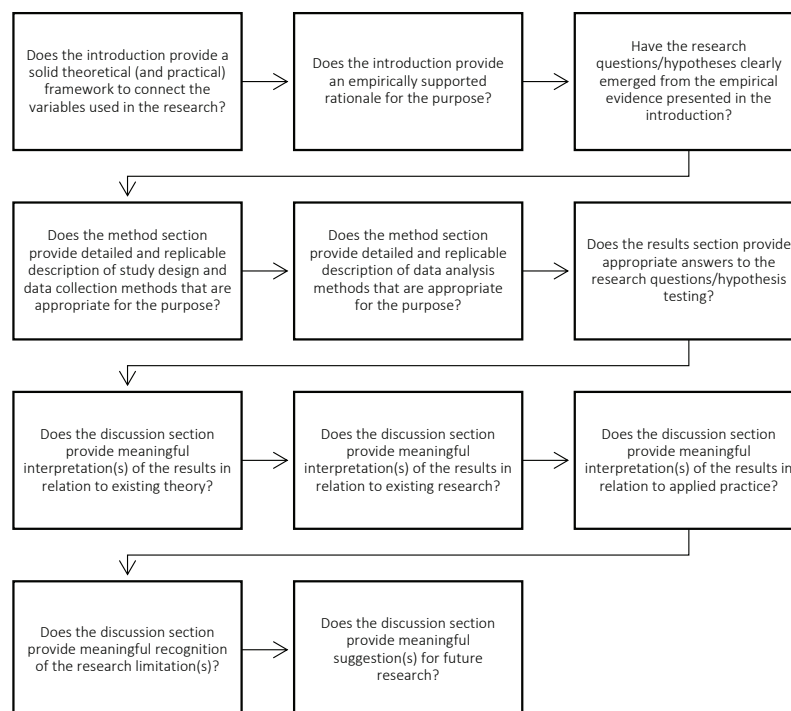
Pearl 3: When Planning and Preparing, Pay Attention to Details – They Matter

Successful climbs to the summit of #ResearchMountain require thorough planning, due diligence, and careful preparation of a research project before it commences, followed by an equal amount of attention to detail in its execution. Insufficient preparation, and poor execution of the project, will indeed be glaringly evident to editors and reviewers of your manuscript. Proper planning can help ensure better performance outcomes, whereas tempting shortcuts and ill-preparation will only make the climb longer, harder, or even impossible.

A robust research project should *always* be theoretically and empirically grounded. The more theoretical constructs you are interested in measuring and studying, the more literature you will need to review before you start fully conceiving and designing your research study. A solid research project will also be characterized by a cohesive alignment between the study's rationale, purpose, research questions and or hypotheses, research design, methods of data collection, and analysis. Equally, the alignment of these elements should, just as cohesively, be presented in a manuscript, followed by the results and a meaningful discussion. That said, among novice #ResearchMountain climbers, it is not uncommon for there to be a lack of cohesive alignment among the manuscript elements. This, often, will lead to an immediate desk rejection by the Editor-in-Chief of the journal, halting a student's further ascent up #ResearchMountain. To help ensure success, we advise our students, early in the research process, and continually throughout, to check their work for its cohesive alignment (see Table 1).

Submitting any mountain will place specific demands on its climbers and #ResearchMountain is no different. Preparing a manuscript, like research planning and execution, also demands impeccable attention to detail. Each manuscript should be prepared in strict accordance

Figure 4. Critical Questions for Manuscript Preparation



with the journal's submission guidelines for authors and written in a way that adequately represents the research in terms of its robustness, and cohesive alignment, between the research elements. While preparing each section of a manuscript, it is important to ask critical questions along the way (see Figure 4).

In addition to ensuring cohesive alignment between the different manuscript elements, it is equally imperative to pay attention to the small details required of a manuscript. *"Every PhD needs to stand the flicker test."* Eight potent words from a distinguished professor in the United Kingdom during doctoral training that have stuck for 15 years. The professor further clarified the sentiment (and we paraphrase) by saying:

If you take a print of the final work, and flick it from beginning to the end, the reader should find immaculate consistency in margins, font size and style, use of headings, references, grammar, and spelling. These are all easy fixes. Time consuming, yes, but easy fixes. And if they are not right, one is left to wonder: What else is sloppy?

Before you submit, check your work, and recheck your work. As a first author, you should be responsible for attending to tedious details such as accuracy of references, digital object identifiers (doi), text formatting, and adherence to journal guidelines. Ensure you have the above correct before you submit—failure to do so sends the message to your co-authors, and reviewers alike, that the work is slapdash. Equally, it is disrespectful to expect co-authors and reviewers to spend time on correcting and fixing errors in presentation that could have been avoided by simply following submission guidelines and paying attention to details. Submitted manuscripts should be incredibly polished and a representation of best work. Careless attention to manuscript preparation and coherence in research design elements, and sloppy adherence to publishing guidelines, like the APA Manual, which most psychology of sport, exercise, and performance journals require authors follow, makes research all the harder to get published. As we remind our students:

Preparing a manuscript for publication is not at all like a quick run to the grab-and-go buffet in the city. You cannot just haphazardly pick which required elements you will attend to in research or manuscript writing as you might hurriedly, and randomly, make your lunch selections from the buffet based solely on your immediate sustenance preferences, and rush back to your office. Such selections usually end up being no more than a messy mirage of varying foods seeped into one another that probably never really quite complemented one another to begin with.

Instead, preparing a manuscript, and all aspects of conducting research for that matter, is akin to what is required to prepare a five course Michelin Star meal. From the first course to the final course, each is carefully thought and planned, in perfect palate alignment to the next, every plate polished in its presentation. As a culinary masterpiece, the visual, olfactory, and gustatory experiences are outstandingly aligned. Research is no different. Every study requires thought, planning, and precision in carrying out the research, and equally, so does the manuscript that follows.

Pearl 4: When Selecting a Target Journal, Do Your Research

Systematically Search

For the novice research climber, feeling lost deciding which journal to submit the manuscript to for peer-review is not unusual. Like climbers who plan where precisely they will set up camp, a novice research climber also needs to know what each location offers. Scientific journals are much like potential camp locations, and there is no one right way to identify the perfect one. The soundest search is usually an amalgamation of several approaches. To know what type of journal is a good fit for your manuscript, it is worth reviewing your own reference list; or, if you have not yet populated your references in their entirety, where are the works you are citing most often in your paper published? Upon review, more than likely, some journals will appear in name several times, or at the very least, a pattern in the types of journals emerges. Based on your observations, start a list of potential target journals. Next, explore online platforms like [Jane \(Journal/Author Name Estimator\)](#) that can be helpful for identifying a journal to submit your paper to, in addition to finding relevant articles and authors to cite in your paper. Although certainly not a perfect system generator (i.e., Jane indicates its limitations), resources like Jane can at least broaden the scope of your search and the journals you may consider.

As you contemplate which journals you will add to your list, consider the vision, mission, and scope of each journal in order to identify which may be the best fit for your paper. For instance, some journals will have a target audience of readers. Knowing this may help you identify if the intended audience is someone who can benefit most from your work. Some journals may focus on particular types of research, such as basic, applied, or developmental. Some journals may also be specific to a type of methodology by, for example, only publishing qualitative studies. Some journals may be broad in the types of research they publish and instead have a greater concentration on the area of research foci. Journal fit can also be identified based on whether the work completed

can be presented coherently, and succinctly, within the select journal's guidelines. For example, in some instances, strict limits on allowable manuscript pages for submission can be a decisive factor in choosing one journal over another.

Examining how many issues a journal publishes, per year, can also help you gauge the rate of published works and a sense for how competitive it may be to publish in that particular journal. Some journals have a quick turnaround for peer review and others are notoriously slow. The timeline from acceptance of a paper to publication can vary considerably as well. If such publishing timeline metrics are not available, it would behoove you to check with your faculty advisors about their experiences with the journals on your list. Importantly too, consider whether a journal charges submission or publishing fees. Journals that are subscription-based, often offer open access options, at a fee. Sometimes, these fees can be quite costly, and without grant funded support, may not be financially feasible to pursue. If your work is federally funded, it will be subject to federal open access policies that require the accepted-for-publication version of the paper be uploaded to PubMed for unrestricted public access. The allure of open access, and thus open science in the modern digital era, has also given rise to predatory journals that are not reputable scientific publishing platforms. While publishing open access can have a positive impact on author Hirsch-index (an author-level metric that measures author productivity and citation impact of their work), it is important before publishing in an open access journal, to do your due diligence in researching the reputability of the journal.

Consider Mechanics of Style

Another consideration is the mechanics of style required of different publishing outlets. Most psychology of sport, exercise, and performance related journals conform to the APA Manual, whereas some sport science and coaching journals, that may be a good fit for your work, might adhere to the American Medical Association Manual of Style. Consideration of the amount of work needed to convert work already in one style, to another, is sometimes considered when narrowing down where to submit a manuscript. This process, and the burden of conversion, can be significantly reduced by using commercial reference management software packages (e.g., [EndNote™](#) or [RefWorks®](#)), or free web-based reference management systems (e.g., [Mendeley](#)), when preparing your manuscript for publication, but only in terms of in-text citations and reference list management.

Weigh Journal Metrics

Lastly, though certainly not the least of significance in academic publishing, are consideration of journal-based metrics that are an evaluative assessment of a journal's value, impact, and overall success of the research. In many fields, journal-based metrics weigh quite heavily in making decisions on potential publication outlets. While journal-based metrics such as impact factor and acceptance rates may be indicators of quality publishing outlets, they are not universally comparable across disciplines. For example, the world's leading general medical journal, *New England Journal of Medicine* (established in 1812), has an impact factor of 74.699, with 328 publications, and 347,451 citations in 2019-2020 alone. Correspondingly, *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* has an impact factor of 2.827, with 169 publications and 5465 citations, and the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* an impact factor of 2.150, 27 publications, and 2062 citations, respectively (<https://www.bioxbio.com/>). By comparison, research in the psychology of sport, exercise, and performance that has more of a public health approach may find publishing outlets with slightly higher metrics, such as the *American Journal of Public Health* with an impact factor 6.464, 213 publications, and 41,023 citations. Impact factors should be interpreted relative to discipline and can be used to guide selection of journals to submit your work. For instance, authors of rigorous scientific work often target higher impact journals first and then make their way down their respective journal lists following publication decisions and revisions in preparation to submit to the next journal.

Short List and Rank

It is good practice to select multiple target journals and rank them in the order of preference to generate a short list. There is no one right way to rank, and we recommend considering all the factors that helped you narrow down potential target journals. There is also no "right" number of target journals that you should identify either, though be prepared to receive the publication decision of reject and make your way down your list. In the quest to publish, when moving down your short list of journals, selecting a new journal to submit your manuscript to often will require adaptations, sometimes substantial, and the rewriting and restructuring of a manuscript to fit the next journal's target audience and mission. It is common for manuscripts to be rejected from multiple journals before acceptance. Sometimes it might involve several journal submissions before a manuscript is accepted

for publication. That said, diligence in researching the potential publication outlet does pay off.

I do not remember how many outright rejections I have received for my manuscripts. One was epic though (e.g., Arvinen-Barrow et al., 2019), as I ended up having to add to my target journal list twice – and finally it was journal number seven that became the home for a paper on career-ending injured cricket players' stories. While the methods and result sections remained, for the most part unchanged, the published introduction and discussion sections are drastically different from the first submission. And might I add, a lot better.

Dr. Samuel Zizzi, creator of the #ResearchMountain concept, has also said many times, *“Every paper, grounded in good science, has a publication home.”*

I remember Sam saying this, clearly, and early in my doctoral studies. During my PhD work, and even as an early career professional, I had been fortunate in my publishing pursuits never having had to submit to more than a couple journals before getting my work published. It was not until mid-career that I experienced what felt like perpetual rejection of two papers, both of federally funded research. At the time, it was hearing other's publishing woes, that put things in perspective for me – I had not, until then, truly experienced what was so common in academic publishing. One of my early and mid-career professional mentors, a leading physical activity scientist and Editor-in-Chief of an internationally known journal, shared with me the double-digit rejection hits of one of her papers before she got it published. This was incredibly humbling to me. And, as a result of sharing my frustration with other respected colleagues, they too shared their stories with me. What I had internalized no longer felt personal. I did not want to give up on these two papers; and, I had always felt Sam's saying to be true. I was unwavering in my belief the research findings of these two papers would be significant contributions to the field. However, it was hearing the stories of others that made publishing them feel all the more possible rather than impossible. Re-examining the papers, I decided to take a diametrically different approach to where I was going to submit them next for peer-review publication. They were published soon thereafter.

Publishing is as much about good science as it is perseverance. With each submission, rejection, and revision, consider the evolution of the manuscript from a developmental perspective and appreciate its transformation. When selecting a journal, it pays to do your research. We also recommend having a ranked short list of possible outlets prior to first submission – as having a “back-up plan” will help you respond to the publication decisions that follow more quickly and in a constructive way. Be systematic in your search for possible publication

outlets, ensure you pay attention to different mechanics of style, and consider how journal metrics may, or may not, influence your journal selections.

Pearl 5: When Receiving a Decision, Work with It

The three manuscript decisions, i.e., reject, revise & resubmit, and accept, are typically met with differing emotions. Here, we acknowledge the human experience of each and map a general path forward, up #ResearchMountain, for each of these outcomes.

Reject

Receiving a decision of *reject* never feels good and at the very least it is certainly disappointing. Sometimes it might feel deflating and even defeating. These are all normal emotions. Remembering that a decision of *reject* is part of the publication process and that it is, in fact, not personal. Rather, it is the outcome of a combination of factors ranging from journal fit, to coherent alignment, to quality of writing presentation, and so on. In most instances, the peer-review process is double-blind, meaning both the author and reviewer are blinded to each other. In some rarer instances, the review process is fully transparent, the authors are privy to the identities of the reviewers, and the reviewers will know who authored the manuscript. In our experiences, both review processes result in a review that is focused on enhancing the readability and overall quality of the manuscript, neither of which is personal. In the end, choose to adopt the growth mindset that reviews are intended to strengthen the overall and specific presentation of the scientific writing in a way that will, in the end, reflect well on you and for you.

After receiving a decision of *reject*, it is important to read the reviewer and editor feedback objectively. Upon the first read, it is normal to feel defensive in response to what you are reading. Putting some distance between the manuscript decision and the accompanying reviewer feedback is a solid step in enabling your ability to be objective and approach the feedback from a constructive vantage that will allow you to consider all the ways addressing the reviewers' feedback, and revising the manuscript, will strengthen it. In other words, it can be a healthy and productive move for the mind, and the heart, to take time away from a manuscript decision. Once you have taken the space you need to return to the manuscript, use this opportunity to decipher through which of the suggestions you will take to better the in its writing and presentation, and which of the feedback you will let pass. Not all reviewer feedback

is helpful, nor is it always relevant. It is however, a valuable opportunity to receive feedback on your work with the goal of improving the manuscript in a way that upon publication, the work is polished and stands the flicker test from start to finish. With each review, remember that someone took dedicated time to devote to your manuscript and to improving its presentation. Once you have made sense of the review, independently and with the guidance of your Sherpa, map your plan for resubmission to the next journal on your list. Though you may feel stuck, the reviews, and particularly lengthy ones, can be a step forward for a manuscript. Your subsequent revision and submission to the next journal is progress up #ResearchMountain.

Revise and Resubmit

Receiving a decision of *revise and resubmit (R&R)* should be exciting. As our PhD advisors reminded us time and again, an *R&R* is your foot in the publication door, so use it, do not lose it. This means, navigate the path upward, meticulously and carefully, taking the guidance from your Sherpa in your revision work. To start, read the reviewer and editor feedback, i.e., *the review*, objectively and make edits, accordingly. At times, the review may *feel* harsh, but when examining *cognitively* for content, it serves the purpose of making the manuscript better and more accessible to readers. Where we all often fault in our writing is the assumption that our writing presentation is clear. Reviewers help to unearth portions of the research and the writing that are not clear to an external person unaffiliated with the study.

There are two things we tell our students when they receive a decision on a manuscript. First, *strip your emotions*. Reviews are critical for a reason—aimed to ensure your research is both conducted and presented in a self-explanatory way. Emotions halt you from seeing the message of the review objectively. Give your emotions the care and attention they need early in the process. When approaching the revision, leave them at the door. Your path through the door will be better for it. Next, denote the difference between a *review* and a *reviewer*. As authors, focus on the review and avoid personalizing. It is easy to fall into saying, “Reviewer 2 said...” and we sometimes inevitably create personalities for each reviewer based on the content of their review. This is common and we are both guilty of it too. However, it can hinder our ability to see a review objectively and we instead attach emotion to it. When we change our language to “The second review states...”, we shift our thinking to focus on the content of the review, rather than personifying who wrote it.

It is okay not to agree with everything in the review. The feedback provided is not necessarily always “right”—however, you should be prepared to address all feedback objectively. If you are choosing not to incorporate certain suggestions for change, you need to provide the reviewers and editors a full rationale as to why. It is also helpful to acknowledge when a reviewer’s feedback has been incorporated and the way in which it has strengthened the work. Much like your manuscript, the response to reviewers should also be prepared with care and presented in a systematic and structured way. It should also be toned appropriately to show appreciation of the reviewer’s time and recognize the value of their suggestions to improve the manuscript. Be sure to thank the reviewers and acknowledge their contributions by using complimentary language such as “Thank you for the suggestion” or “The manuscript is considerably improved because of the suggestion to...” in your responses. Some journals have a specific way to address reviewer feedback, and in such cases, you should follow the guidance just as meticulously as you followed the submission guidelines. Lastly, in the spirit of using and not losing the revise and resubmit opportunity, resubmit the manuscript within the invited resubmission deadline. If you do not, the manuscript is considered a new submission, and is treated as such, which means commencing the review process with new reviewers.

Accept

Receiving a manuscript decision of *accept* can be exhilarating and most certainly should always be accompanied with celebration. Be proud, as you have successfully reached the summit many attempt but never accomplish. Reaching the top is a testament to your hard work, great attention to detail, and typically, persistence. Rarely does a decision of *accept* come instantaneously following a first submission, but rather after several rounds of major revisions, followed by minor revisions to the manuscript. Proudly pat yourself on the back, do a happy dance, pop the cork, and delight in what you have achieved. By publishing your work, you have made a scientific contribution to our field.

Before you stick your flag atop #ResearchMountain, there is one last, yet important task to complete. The publisher will now convert your manuscript into the journal’s publishing template, a process which often results in errors in both formatting and content. Your manuscript will also undergo final copy editing and proofreading by someone who may, or may not, be a content area expert but possesses a great command of the English language and its mechanics. These two

processes will typically lead to several *author queries* embedded in the PDF version of your manuscript known as the *author proof*, all of which you are expected to address in what is usually a very tight turnaround before final publishing.

We cannot stress the importance of this last, yet significant small climb. While it is important to address all the queries, it is equally important for you, and sometimes additionally your co-authors, to carefully read through the entire manuscript sometimes several times. Check your work and be meticulous in your approach. Is your author name spelled correctly? What about your co-authors? Are all institutional affiliations and contact details still accurate? Are the tables and figures free of errors and correctly formatted? Has your use of italics been applied consistently throughout the manuscript? Are your references complete? Do all your hyperlinks work? Ensure the final proof, just like the manuscript you submitted, stands the *flicker test*. After all the work you have put into the manuscript, you want the final, published version to reflect *research excellence*.

To Ascend and Summit Requires Refinement

In this scholarly narrative, our purpose was to pay forward publishing pearls of wisdom we always share with students as they begin their novice ascents up #ResearchMountain as climbers. If there is one word that can embody these five research publishing pearls, *refinement* comes to mind. Einstein famously said: “The whole of science is nothing more than a refinement of everyday thinking.” Refinement so cleverly captures what is shared, herein, for successfully conquering #ResearchMountain. *Refinement* is also the way in which we have chosen to present the pearls, each in accordance with the APA Manual’s Journal Article Reporting Standards for qualitative design, so this paper may also serve as a model to students for presenting narrative stories as thematic data in academic publishing.

Like publishing in general, for us, ascending #ResearchMountain together has been as much about curiosity and the desire to innovate through *JASPR*, as it has been about passion to teach students through mentorship. It has been our desire to push the field forward in new ways, whilst challenging ourselves and always pursuing excellence while having fun. *Reject, revise and resubmit, and accept* have all been, and will continue to be part of our research lexicon and lived publishing experiences. As we were told by our coaches, many times: “Every figure skater will inevitably fall on more jumps than they will ever land; this is the nature of

a sport performed on a 1 to 1.5 mm blade of steel on ice. Laying on the ice only gets you wet. Keep getting back up.” We are humbled with every fall, and resolved in our approach to correct and refine, always learning along the way. As Einstein said: “If we knew what we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?”

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