Publishing Your Dissertation Research

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In this webinar, you will learn how to revise your dissertation research for publication as journal articles or a book.

You will learn to:

- Reconceive your audience
- Reconceive your authorial voice
- Reconceive the purpose of your writing
- Revise your content to fit your new purpose
- Choose appropriate journals and presses
- Navigate peer review
Reconceive Your Audience
How Will Your Readers Differ?
Audience Shift

Identity: Who are they?
Purpose: Why they are reading?
Expectations: What do they expect?
Timing: When they are reading?
Textual Approach: How they are reading?
Look through the Lens of Scholarly Publishers: Journals

Read the submission guidelines of journals.
Compare the guidelines with recent articles from the journals.
Look through the Lens of Scholarly Publishers: Books

Read the book proposal submission guidelines on university press websites. Compare those guidelines to reviews of recent books published by those university presses.
Reconceive Your Authorial Voice
Moving from Student to Author

Is your voice overshadowed or buried in quotes from others?
Absorb and Subordinate—Don’t Just Cut

As Dr. James Mulholland writes:

I needed to absorb and subordinate other scholars rather than cut them out. . . . I became more comfortable with relating scholars’ ideas to my arguments rather than just worrying about whether I had faithfully represented them.

Select What Supports Your Argument

By spending less space on explaining their positions, I devoted more time to making them serve my claims. . . . I became ferociously selective about what was truly needed for me to make my arguments.

Moving from Student to Author

Let’s look at a “before” and “after” text from an author I recently worked with to consider the shift in voice Mulholland describes.
Introduction to the Dissertation: The “Before”

André Lefevere writes the following in the introduction to his book, Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame:

This book deals with those in the middle, the men and women who do not write literature, but rewrite it. It does so because they are, at present, responsible for the general reception and survival of works of literature among non-professional readers, who constitute the great majority of readers in our global culture, to at least the same, if not a greater extent than the writers themselves. (1)

Anne Hébert is one of Quebec’s most widely read and celebrated authors, known in the English-speaking world primarily through translation. She is one of Quebec’s most-translated authors into English (see Koustas “Loaded Canons” for the comparison). Accordingly, there exists a large corpus of critical works concerning the author in English (see Godard, Sirois, Hayward and Lamontagne). This study “deals with those in the middle,” those who are responsible for Hébert’s image as a poet in English.
Introduction to the Book: The “After”

Anne Hébert is one of the best-known 20th Century Québécoise authors. Her poetry and prose have transcended formidable regional and linguistic barriers to become part of the canon of world literature. This book traces the remarkable journey of Hébert’s shifting authorial identity as versions of her work traveled through complex and contested linguistic and national terrain from the late 1950s until today. Though the impact of translation, editions, and archival work has been largely ignored in studies of Canadian literary history, the treasure trove of such paratextual records in Hébert’s case allows us to better understand the reach of her work. More importantly, it provides insight into and raises critical questions about the textually mediated process of nation-building and literary canon formation.
Assert Your Voice into the Scholarly Conversation

Introduce key points in your own words.
Keep the focus on the trajectory of your argument.
Reconceive the Purpose of Your Writing
From Dissertation to Articles and Books

A common shift in purpose is:

- **from** demonstrating your mastery of the field
- **to** arguing for your contribution to the field.

What do you want this publication to do for you?
**Articles or a Book?**

Publishing articles in respected journals is valued across disciplines, but the:

- Humanities tend to emphasize book publication and
- Sciences and Social Sciences tend to emphasize articles.
Work Smarter, Not Harder

*Never write a conference paper. Always write a draft of an article to be submitted.*

Think about the “Big Picture”

How does this publication fit into the big picture of your career?

Do you publications share themes with your other professional activities (such as teaching, presenting, and reviewing)?
Reconceive Your Content
to Support Your New Purpose
Expand or Refocus

James Mulholland, on the process of revising his dissertation into a book manuscript, writes:

My dissertation, by design, required me to demonstrate my mastery of a specific discipline and a field. My book, however, needed to advance the field, pushing those boundaries that my dissertation had sketched out.
The Evolution of a Dissertation to a Book

Expand the data.
Redesign the structure.
Hone the argument.
Happy Ending to This Journey

Starting to Re-envision Content

Jot down what is new information or a fresh perspective in your dissertation. Did your research lead you to realize the need for different kinds of approaches or different questions? What excited you most or what seemed to excite your readers or cause controversy among your committee?
Identifying Topics to Develop

Bullet point key facts and findings. Ask:

- Does the reader really need to know this?
- Or, is it already known to some readers?
- If so, what’s new in theory, application, or interpretation?
- Does it matter in particular now because of changes in the field or other circumstances?
Making the Editing Process Manageable

Revise for one issue at a time.
Tackle substantive issues first.
Plan multiple and regular editing sessions.
Digital Dilemmas

The current reality of digital access to dissertation research makes revision essential.

Why should publishers duplicate available material?
Should You “Embargo” Your Dissertation?

Controversy erupted in 2013 over a call by the American Historical Association to embargo PhD history dissertations.

This embargo would delay electronic access to new dissertations in history for 6 years after filing the dissertation.

Embargoes May Not Be the Best Solution

Authors may be better served by thinking about:

• How to expand and improve their work’s impact on their field.
• How to appeal to target audiences through journals and presses.
Choose Appropriate Journals and Presses
Selecting Publication Outlets

Consider the reputation of the journals and presses:

- Do authors you admire publish there?
- Are the journals indexed in research databases?
- Are the presses recognized for tenure and promotion at your university?
Selecting Appropriate Journals

Pick your best chapter or argument from your dissertation. Look at two or three journals that address your topic. Read several articles in each journal. Jot down differences between those arguments and your own. Look at how the authors provide context, establish credibility, and use supporting literature.
Evaluating the “Fit” with a Journal

Does the journal appeal to a broad readership within your profession or does it aim at a particular subfield?
Is there a methodological fit with your work?
Does your research respond to a dialogue or controversy that has been discussed in other articles in the journal?
The “Fit” Matters with University Presses Too

Evaluate the “fit” between a particular academic press, your topic, and your career goals.
For tenure and promotion: is this press respected by your university and department?
To gain a wide audience: does this press have a track record of reaching the readers you want to reach?
How passionate does the editor seem about your project?
Navigate Peer Review
The Basics of Peer Review

- Acceptance,
- Revise and Resubmit, or
- Rejection.
Responding to Peer Review

Listen carefully.
Look for themes in feedback.
Reach out to editors as “brokers” (interpreters of the feedback).
Don’t be too discouraged by negative or partly negative reviews.
Webinar Tasks: Next Steps

Consider how to reconceive your dissertation in terms of:

- Audience
- Voice
- Purpose
- Content

Research and target an appropriate publishing venue for your audience.
An Academic Writing Coach Can Help You:

• Identify areas of your research that have potential for publication.
• Work out how to re-envision your arguments.
• Develop a plan for publication that will advance your career goal.
• Think through how best to package and present the contribution your work makes to the field.
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Resources


Questions?
Thank You!