

WHY AND HOW TO PUBLISH YOUR MEA WORK IN A PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL

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This session is intended to encourage research in marketing education from the perspective of work that is first presented at the Marketing Educators' Association (MEA) Conference. Its purpose is to open a dialogue on marketing education research and inspire and help MEA attendees to develop their special sessions and competitive papers beyond the discussions that take place at MEA to become publications with the potential to reach a wider audience.

We believe that much more pedagogical research presented at MEA can and should be turned into peer-reviewed journal publications. There are at least three benefits to doing so. First, the comments received from MEA reviewers and session audience members can be used to further develop the topic, make it more interesting to marketing educators, and enhance the work's potential contribution. Receiving advice, suggestions and cooperation on research are primary goals for any academic conference, including MEA. Second, publishing in a peer-reviewed journal expands the audience for the research. Journals reach scholars beyond MEA participants and are retained permanently in libraries to be accessed and cited by others who share interests and concerns. Third, publishing in the area of marketing education can be helpful for academic careers. For most, the publication of peer-reviewed journal articles is necessary for retention, tenure and promotion. Pedagogical research in marketing can provide marketing scholars with a secondary research stream and opportunities to publish work which has grown out of teaching interests and responsibilities. Given these benefits, the following advice is offered.

Waste Not Want Not

Many MEA special sessions and almost all MEA competitive papers can be developed into journal articles with additional work. Authors should not discard their work after an MEA presentation simply because the original work is of conference paper rather than journal article scope or quality. If the topic is of sufficient interest to warrant a conference session or paper, its potential contribution can be extended through additional literature review and theory

development, use of more rigorous methodology, and/or development of interesting and practical implications. Research that may seem too limited in scope for a top journal may find a good fit in a more specialized journal or in a special issue. If positioned correctly, almost any pedagogical topic can find a receptive audience among marketing educators. Additionally, researchers may find after additional work and refinement that a study's findings have interesting practical applications not previously discerned.

Research can follow the progression of an MEA special session one year, MEA competitive paper the next, and then concerted development toward a peer-reviewed journal article. This progression has worked well for the authors of this session, and is especially helpful when researching new topics. Preparing for a special session can allow authors to explore a new topic and conduct some initial and less formal inquiry. During the presentation of the MEA special session, interested audience participants may provide helpful suggestions and comments that can later be applied to more formal research. The next year, this early more formal research, perhaps as a pilot or first study, may be presented as an MEA competitive paper. Audience suggestions and ideas in response to that paper can be useful input as the authors further develop the research agenda for an eventual manuscript to be submitted to a journal. The study originally conducted for the MEA paper, if methodologically sound, may be referred to in the journal article manuscript as a "pre-test" or "Study One." Lessons learned from early "mistakes" may inform a more methodologically sound and rigorous research design for one or more studies that will form the basis for the eventual journal article.

Be Interesting

As instructors we know that we need to be at least somewhat interesting in the classroom or we will "lose" our students. Interest is equally important for research. Interested reviewers are motivated reviewers who attend to a submitted manuscript and want to keep reading. Even if the manuscript has flaws, if the research and its presentation are interesting, reviewers will be more willing to be helpful. If the paper is not interesting, even if fairly sound, reviewers will be more likely to recommend rejection rather than take the time to offer constructive suggestions to improve it and move it toward publication..

There are many ways in which a research paper can be interesting. It may be in the topic itself, in the finding or results, or in the implications. One advantage of pedagogical research is that it almost always has some potential practical application of interest to other

marketing educators for their own academic careers. Of course, it is up to the authors to make those practical applications apparent.

Shorter is Better

All things being equal, it is usually better to be on the briefer end of the acceptable word count or page number range for the targeted journal. Overly long articles are more tedious for reviewers. Reviewers want to be satisfied that the research is appropriately informed by prior research, to understand the methodology and analysis used and be satisfied that it is suitable and correct, to understand the results and be satisfied of their validity, and to believe those results have meaningful implications. With these key points covered, it is preferable not to bog down the paper with every detail of the research design or overload reviewers with a complete history of literature on the topic. Likewise, editors have limited page space as well as the same preferences for clarity and conciseness. Finally, both reviewers and editors have potential readers in mind. Readers of pedagogical research are typically looking for useful ideas and insights that will improve some aspect of their teaching and academic careers. As academic readers go, they are results oriented with a strong interest in practical implications.

Rejection Doesn't Mean the End

Now, let's say you have submitted what you believe is a fairly well-crafted research article, only to have the reviewers disparage it as flawed, criticize it as offering too limited contribution, or both, resulting in rejection by your first choice journal. Our advice is simple. Go to your second choice journal and try again. (And if it is rejected there, try yet another journal, and so on.) Authors with interest in a topic should not discard their work. Correct anything that is a true flaw and reposition for another journal. The options are quite numerous for those looking to publish pedagogical work (see Table 1 for examples).

Repositioning and submitting to another journal may require new effort, but your basic work should not be discarded. Rejection most often occurs not because the manuscript is without value, but because the manuscript is not the right fit for a particular journal. Many good articles, widely cited articles, were first rejected by one or more journals. The key to successful publication is to avoid getting too frustrated and discouraged after a rejection. If you have put this much time into your work, it likely has value. Consider the feedback from reviewers and editors, incorporate constructive suggestions that can improve your work, and revise your paper to fit another journal that may be more suitable.

The same advice holds with an invitation to revise and resubmit. Papers are rarely accepted outright. Revisions are required for even the best papers. Unfortunately, invitations to revise and resubmit are sometimes accompanied by reviewer comments that authors receive as harsh, unfair, clueless, and even cruel. Again, don't get too frustrated and discouraged, and do not take the criticism personally. An invitation to revise and resubmit is a hard-won prize and it means you are almost there! To accomplish the revision may mean a lot of work, but now the editor and the reviewers are telling you what needs to be done. As much as possible, do exactly as they advise. Answer all their queries. Do the work they ask you to do. It will be worth it. If a specific suggestion is truly unworkable or based on a misunderstanding, politely and knowledgably explain this in your response. The editor has invited you into a dialogue intended to culminate in the publication of your paper.

Congratulations! You are here at MEA, likely presenting a special session or competitive paper that advances the practice and scholarship of marketing education. Now, go continue your work and we will look forward to reading it in publication!

Table 1: Pedagogical Journals: A Partial List

<u>Marketing Education</u>	<u>Higher Education</u>
Journal for Advancement of Marketing Education	Academic Exchange Quarterly
Journal of Marketing Education	Active Learning in Higher Education
Marketing Education Review	Adult Education Quarterly
	Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education
<u>General Business Education</u>	College Teaching
Business Education Forum	International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Journal of Education for Business	International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
Journal of Teaching in International Business	Journal of Excellence in College Teaching
Journal of the Academy of Business Education	Journal of Faculty Development
	Journal of Higher Education

	Journal of Online Learning and Teaching
	Journal of Student Centered Learning
	Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
	Review of Educational Research
	Review of Higher Education
	Teaching in Higher Education