

# Book Reviews

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## **A Scholar's Guide to Getting Published in English: Critical Choices and Practical Strategies**

Mary Jane Curry & Theresa Lillis

Toronto, ON: Multilingual Matters, 2013, 174 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1-78309-059-4

In this practical and informative guide, Curry and Lillis nicely draw on insights from their own extensive, decade-long, ethnographic research on multilingual researchers' publication practices, and link research and practice, which is rare in other guides of this nature.

The book aims to equip novice and multilingual writers with the knowledge needed to write successfully for scholarly publication. Focusing on social practices, "rather than on language and writing alone" (p. 4), Curry and Lillis offer a helpful set of "critical choices and practical strategies"—as suggested by the title of the book—to successfully navigate the process of writing for publication in English.

The book consists of an introduction and 17 chapters, each dealing with a key aspect of writing for publication. Chapters 1–3 deal with the fundamental aspects of preparing to publish. Chapter 1 is a primer in which readers are asked to revisit their "personal and political commitments" to publish (p. 12). Readers are invited to reflect on their personal and professional motivations in pursuing academic publishing. In Chapter 2, moving from intrinsic to extrinsic motivators, the authors discuss the import of understanding governmental and/or institutional pressures to publish. Extending the discussion in Chapter 3, Curry and Lillis discuss ways of strategically fulfilling one's institutional evaluation criteria—which may or may not "align with ... personal interests" (p. 36).

Chapters 4–6 are centred on the common theme of Bazerman's (1980) notion of "organized conversations of academic disciplines" (p. 13). Whereas Chapter 4 addresses strategic ways of familiarizing oneself with discipline-specific conversations by attending conferences, Chapters 5 and 6 discuss strategies to identify the most appropriate journals, based on their content, methodology, theory, and ranking.

Chapter 7 forefronts the strategic importance of citations, which are demonstrative of one's "familiarity with relevant research" (p. 70). Shifting the focus to publishing book chapters, in Chapter 8, the authors refer to pitfalls and possibilities of publishing in edited book volumes. Potential problems such as delays in publication and the differential value of book chapters (vis-à-vis journal articles) are briefly discussed.

In a smooth thematic continuity, Curry and Lillis first discuss the *material* resources (Chapters 9–11) and then the *social* resources (Chapters 12–14)

required for academic publishing. Chapter 9 addresses common publishing timelines and the time commitment needed to publish. In Chapter 10, the authors discuss the importance of having access to bibliographic and financial resources. Framing additional languages as a resource, Curry and Lillis recommend publishing and/or translating one's work into the local/national language, in addition to publishing in English.

In Chapters 12–16, the authors shift the focus to address the importance of networking, collaborating, brokering, and communicating with publication gatekeepers. In Chapter 12, conceptualizing text production as a “networked activity” (p. 116), Curry and Lillis discuss the affordances of a transnational network of practice, as a key catalyst in the process of producing academic publications. In a continuation of the discussion, Chapter 13 deals with issues surrounding collaborative writing, and Chapter 14 addresses enlisting the help of “literacy brokers,” who can provide content-related and/or language-related support and scaffolding. Chapter 15 addresses the oft-daunting task of communicating with journal editors and reviewers. This chapter refers briefly to ways of preparing a manuscript, composing a cover letter, and responding to revisions. Chapter 16 discusses the potential benefits in taking on editing and reviewing roles. In Chapter 17, the authors conclude with a recap of the tips and strategies that can help scholars “in navigating the complex world of writing for academic publication” (p. 161).

In summary, this book is a value-added, strategic guide for academic publication. It integrates writing-for-publication research and practice through the use of numerous illustrations. Also noteworthy is that, unlike other similar guides, this book has a nonprescriptive and dialogic tone, and invites readers to reflect on and learn from their own experiences and those of other scholars—whose stories are referred to throughout the book.

I found this guide pragmatic and replete with practical strategies. Specifically, the sections “Useful Resources” and “Information Box” in each chapter encompass an array of key information that can otherwise be difficult to find, particularly for graduate students or scholars “outside of Anglophone contexts” (p. 2). Overall, this book is an excellent guide for novice and multilingual writers seeking to gain a practical understanding of academic publishing.

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### *References*

Bazerman, C. (1980). A relationship between reading and writing: The conversational model. *College English*, 41(6), 656–661.