

[SLIDE 1/2]

Awish:

Hello Everyone! Welcome and thank you for joining us for the second Professional Development Webinar of the Winter 2020 Series.

[SLIDE 3]

Awish:

My name is Awish Aslam and I am the Chair and Central Rep for the CSA Student Concerns Subcommittee. Our committee also our Eastern Rep., Emma Kay, and our Western Rep., Nicole Malette.

We'd like to thank the Canadian Sociological Association for sponsoring this initiative and Sherry Fox, the Executive Director of the CSA, for working with us to plan and organize this series.

[SLIDE 4]

Awish:

Today's webinar is titled, "**From Draft to Article: The Process of Publishing in an Academic Journal**," and our guest speaker is Dr. Patrick Denice. Patrick is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Western Ontario. He received his PhD from the University of Washington in 2016 and his work explores inequality in education and the labour market. Patrick has published in American Sociological Review, Demography, and Sociology of Education, among others. He has also been a reviewer for a number of journals, including the American Journal of Sociology, the British Journal of Sociology, and Social Science Research. Patrick also has experience on the editorial board for Social Problems. Thank you very much for joining us today, Patrick.

[SLIDE 5]

Awish:

Before we begin, I would like to invite audience members to submit any questions you might have for Patrick during his presentation or during the formal Q&A section of the webinar. You can pose questions by using the Q&A function, which you can find at the bottom of your screen. Your questions will be visible to all attendees and panelists and you may also 'like' questions to prioritize them for Patrick. **Now, I will turn the webinar over to Patrick.**

[SLIDE 6]

Patrick:

Great thanks Awish. I'm very happy to be talking to you all about publishing and academic journals but before we get started and we've got just a couple of questions just to see where people are in terms of their experience with publishing and so if you wouldn't mind taking a quick second to answer these two questions.

First, have you ever submitted an abstract to an academic journal and then if so, has one of your submitted papers been extended an invitation to revise and resubmit. Commonly referred to as an R & R. I'll give you a few seconds to answer that question.

All right. So, it looks like most folks here probably have (not unexpectedly) have relatively little experience in publishing an academic journal which I think is why a webinar like this is so important.

Note: Audio difficulties experienced at 3:10 in the recording. The webinar resumed at 5:41.

[SLIDE 7]

Patrick:

Our apologies. For some reason my computer flipped out but we press on!

Before we get started talking about sort of the nuts and bolts of the publication process and I just wanted to briefly cover and why we might want to publish in academic journals. There are lots of reasons and I think the two of the most important include;

1. Publishing advances good science. When we publish, we engage in the existing body of knowledge around our topic of interest. We provide our own unique contributions to that knowledge and the publishing process as we'll see helps to validate and control the quality of that research and
2. Publishing looks good on our CV. Many search committees - whether you're looking for a faculty job or whether you want to work as an analyst at a research or policy center in the government or in some other organization - will want you to demonstrate evidence of your potential as a researcher Publishing serves as proof of that potential you will have demonstrated your ability to ask questions of the research community finds interesting and important and you will have answered those questions with appropriate data and methods.

[SLIDE 8]

Patrick:

Especially if you're just starting out in academia you might not be aware of all of the potential outlets for your work and there are a lot of options out there to help you think about the journals you might submit to. I have three recommendations.

1. Look to professional association websites. For instance, the American Sociological Association manages 14 sociology journals. Their website also includes yearly editor reports which can give you a sense of what the editors of those journals are looking for, how many submissions they get a year, and how they go about making their editorial decisions.
2. Check out the CVs of colleagues, faculty and authors you either cite or who you know work in your area of interest. If I'm working say on a paper about the gender wage gap and I know of a few scholars who also work on that topic, in part because I'm citing and engaging with their work, I might look at their CVs to see which journals have been receptive to their papers and maybe they're good fits for my work too
3. There are also listings of journals online. I've included the links here of two of my go-to sites which helpfully organized journals by subject area like demography and education and they allow for easy searching so you can search for particular journals. These sites also include metrics about the journal's reach which brings me to my next point still on this line.

When you've identified a journal or set of journals that you think might be good outlets for your work there are some things to look out for.

1. As I've already alluded to, you'll want to have a sense of how good the journals are. Journals certainly vary in their quality. A common metric used to judge a journal's quality is the impact factor. It's not a perfect measure and there are others out there but the impact factor is one measure. It's a measure of how often the average article in the journal has been cited in a given year in sociology. Impact factors around 1.0 are pretty good but there's a lot of variation. Our flagship journal the Canadian Review of Sociology, has an impact factor of over five.
2. Pay attention to the scope and aims of the journal. Most journals clearly lay these out somewhere on their website. This information tells you what kind of research the journal is interested in publishing, what topics or research questions are appropriate to the journal, whether the journal specializes in a particular discipline or region of the world, or methodological approach it focuses on. Is the journal open to different kinds of articles so in addition to the usual empirical studies, does the journal also accept book reviews theoretical pieces or overviews of past literature.
3. I also scroll through the recently published articles by the journal; both those contained in the past few issues and those that have been accepted but not yet assigned to an issue. On journal websites these are often under a heading like 'online first'. Looking at these recently published articles well help give you a sense of the topics, style, and the methodology preferred by that journal. These are after all articles that the current editor and editorial board have selected so they're probably a good signal of what they're interested in. I'll also say here though that the flip side may also be true. If you've got a paper that is very similar to a recent article in a journal you may want to look elsewhere. Journals have a limited number of pages so if they've just published something on your exact question they may take a pass on the next one they receive.

Finally, beware of predatory journals. There are many legitimate places to send your work but there are also many, many outlets out there that just want to make a buck. How can you tell if a journal is predatory? Well there's two websites that I've listed here that give a list of some of

those journals. Generally, if you get an email from a journal and the email feels fishy and the email sort of all but assures you that they're going to publish your work, they ask if you'll publish a paper that's already been published elsewhere, or they ask for a hefty fee up front, it's probably a scam.

[SLIDE 9]

Patrick:

After I get a sense of what journals are out there, I like to narrow them down by asking myself a series of questions. I start with the big picture.

What discipline am I writing in? I do work that sometimes crosses disciplinary boundaries so is the particular paper I'm writing now more sociology, more education, more urban affairs. What's the broad discipline I'm writing within?

Next, think about whether the paper is better suited for a broad or generalist journal or one in a specific field or subfield. If I've decided that the discipline is sociology then do I try to get my work published in a generalist sociology journal like *Social Science Research* or the *American Sociological Review* or do I think it's better suited for a subfield of sociology like *Sociology of Education*. The aims and scope sections on journals websites can help you narrow your choices here.

Finally, I look at my own reference list. What journals am I citing for this particular paper? If I'm constantly citing articles from a particular journal or journals, then it's reasonable to think that my paper will be a good fit there. Kind of as an added bonus, journals really appreciate when you cite their own articles.

I'll share with you one of the most helpful pieces of advice that I've received. Always have a list of three journals for a particular paper and link those journals. For instance, I'm working on a paper now. In my ranked list for now (subject to change) are *Social Problems*, *Sociology of Education*, and *City and Community*. I'm going to start by submitting my paper to the first journal on my list. If it gets accepted great if not well, I've already thought about and done the research into other journals that might be appropriate places for my paper. If it gets rejected by our top choice, I'll just turn the paper around pretty quickly and submit my paper to the next journal on my list and I'll come up with a new third journal.

[SLIDE 10]

Patrick:

Now that you've identified some journals that you think would be good fits for your work, what comes next? Well it's time to finish writing and then submit your paper. Just as recently published articles can help you decide on what journal to submit to, once you've chosen a journal it can also help you properly format your paper. Look for instance at those recently published

articles and how those articles use headings and subheadings, whether they explicitly list hypotheses and expectations, how many tables and figures do they generally have, and how long are each of the sections. Journals will vary in their preferences.

Take a look at the general style and format of recently published articles in that Journal. You'll also want to pay attention to any formatting requirements that the journal has. Most journals have explicit instructions for authors about things like formatting, references using end notes or footnotes, whether to embed tables and figures into the main body of the manuscript or compile them all at the end in a separate section.

Next, know that when you go to submit a manuscript, many journals will ask you for a few other things. For instance, they might ask you for a cover letter addressed to the editor that briefly lays out the aims and contribution of your paper and why you think it's a good fit for their journal in particular. You might also have to prepare a title page with the title, the abstract, your contact information, and some keywords that describe the paper.

As well, most journals will also ask for a blinded copy of the manuscript. Most journals conduct double-blind reviews. That means, you won't know who your reviewers are and your reviewers won't know who you are. The copy of the paper that gets sent to reviewers should have no identifying information. Not your name anywhere.

Finally, just be aware that most journals do charge a small submission fee usually on the order of \$20-\$50 and often there are many journals out there that will waive this fee for graduate students.

[SLIDE 11]

Patrick:

What happens next? You have submitted your paper to a journal. What do you do now? Will you wait how long? That really depends and sometimes that information can be found on the journal's website. In the case of the ASA journals, you could be waiting for as little as a couple days or several months. If you don't hear anything after about 12 weeks of submitting your paper it is okay to very politely send an email and to the editor of the journal asking about the status of your manuscript.

What are you waiting for? Well, you're waiting for the editor to make a decision about your paper. Journals vary widely in the precise details of the process but I thought in this next part that I'd walk you through a typical process.

[SLIDE 12]

Patrick:

I'm going to use an example from the journal *Sociology of Education* and specifically we're going to look at what happened to the 264 new papers that journal received in 2018. Of those new manuscripts, the editor makes a decision. They'll either decide to send those papers out for

external review or what we call desk reject them. Basically, send them back to you the author without sending them to reviewers. This initial decision of whether to send them out for review or whether the desk reject the paper is usually pretty fast. It usually takes about 1 to a few weeks.

We can see here that in 2018 the Sociology of Education editor sent out about 80% of all new papers received and desk rejected 20%. I'll just note here that there's lots of variation among journals. Many journals for instance will reverse those two percentages. They'll opt to send out for review only about 20% and desk reject 80% but this varies widely. But again, we are going to walk through this particular example. At this stage what's the editor looking for? Well, they're looking for formatting. Is your paper formatted in the way that they prefer? Does the paper generally fit the journal scope and aims? Is there a sort of baseline level of quality? Is it reasonably well written? Is there an interesting research question or the data and methods appropriate to that question? Often though the editor at this stage is just skimming your paper. They're probably not reading it in depth.

For those papers that do get sent out for review, you'll likely have to wait a couple months to hear anything back. You probably won't even hear that the paper has been sent out. You just won't have heard that it has been rejected. If a paper gets sent out for external review then the question is, what are those external reviewers looking for? At this point, usually between two and four reviewers (that is other researchers in the field) read your paper much more closely and they provide comments and a recommendation to the editor. They're looking for things like; is there a compelling research question? Is the contribution clearly articulated? If there are theoretical and conceptual framework? Does the paper demonstrate a strong grasp of the literature and where this study fits our the data and methods appropriate to the research question? Is the paper accurate and does it accurately describe the data the findings? Are the tables and figures accurate and the findings interpreted in a way that's grounded in the data? Are tables and figures helpful and clear and do the conclusions synthesize the findings and discuss implications without speaking too far beyond the data?

Each reviewer will submit between one and several pages of comments for the author this is feedback that will be returned to you so you'll actually get to see what they think. Each reviewer will also submit a set of confidential comments and a confidential overall summary recommendation for the editor. They'll tell the editor whether they think the manuscript should be accepted or rejected. The editor takes all of this information from the reviewers into account and makes one of three decisions.

1. They can conditionally accept the paper. The paper is more or less perfect as it is and the reviewers found no need for further revision. The editor might have some small suggestions for you but otherwise it's good to go. At this stage, at most journals this outcome is vanishingly rare.
2. The editor might also decide to offer you as the author and opportunity to revise and resubmit your paper. The reviewers like your paper and they see some promise in its contribution but they recommend a number of changes. Sometimes those are pretty minor but other times they'll ask for substantial conceptual or methodological improvements.

3. Finally, the editor may decide to reject your paper. The reviewers weren't sold on the way the paper is written and they don't believe that simply revising this paper will improve its chances of being accepted at this particular journal.

In this example at the Sociology of Education, no papers were conditionally accepted at this stage. About 1 in 5 were offered an opportunity to revise and resubmit and 80% most are rejected at this stage. When you do get an R & R (a revise and resubmit) you'll have a period of time generally a few months to make those revisions and resubmit your paper for additional review.

When you resubmit your paper, the paper will get sent back out to reviewers often the same ones who reviewed the original submission but sometimes a new one or two reviewers. Again the reviewers will read the paper closely and consider how well you responded to their initial suggestions and concerns. They'll provide feedback to you and an overall recommendation to the editor and the editor then makes one last decision. They'll either conditionally accept the paper, offer another opportunity to revise and resubmit, or reject the paper.

In our example, at the Sociology of Education most papers at this point are conditionally accepted about 20% are returned to the reviewer for to the author for more revisions and another 10% are rejected.

[SLIDE 13]

Patrick:

When a decision has been made on your paper at any stage you'll probably get a heart-wrenching and sort of ominous sounding email with a subject line something to the effect of 'a decision has been made on your manuscript'. Take a deep breath and open the email. If your paper is rejected - I'm not gonna lie it's not gonna feel great and it doesn't really get easier - don't take it personally. Your paper will find a home. Sometimes it just takes a little trial and error. Look back to your ranked list of target journals and take what you can from the editor's and reviewer's feedback. Maybe they have some good suggestions for how to improve the paper before you submit it to the next place. In fact, you might get the same reviewer at the next journal so it's generally a good idea to at least consider their comments seriously.

If your paper on the other hand is extended an opportunity to revise and resubmit count this as a win and update your CV. Here's what I generally do when I get an R & R;

- I read through the reviews just to get an initial sense of what the reviewers did and didn't like about the paper and
- Then I put the paper and comments away for at least a day more often a few weeks. I know that I need some distance in time to reflect on the paper and think about what I need to do to make it stronger and increase its chances of publication in the next round
- After some period of time I go back to the reviews and I make a plan. I put all of the reviewer's suggestions, comments, questions, and concerns in a new document so that they're all organized in one place
- I think about which I'm going to tackle first and which I'm going to save for later

- I give myself a deadline. The journal will often give you a deadline but I set my own as well and I think concretely about how I'm going to budget my time over the next few weeks and months
- I work through the revisions. As you're working through the revisions and responding to the comments and questions from the reviewers be sure to take notes. When you go to resubmit your paper (in addition to the revised manuscript itself) the journal will often ask you to prepare a memo to the reviewers that outlines how you responded to each of their questions, suggestions, and comments so it's helpful to take notes as you do this along the way

[SLIDE 14]

Patrick:

I'm going to wrap up here and then I'm happy to answer your questions and I just want to offer a few pieces of other advice.

- Be patient! Academic publishing takes a long time (years in fact) and you'll often have to wait a while before getting feedback in the form of reviews and decision from the editor
- I can't, and I've already said this, don't take rejection personally. It's going to happen and it happens to the best researchers. Just know that most reviewers and editors are operating in good faith they're committed to the scientific enterprise and many see reviewing as an important part of their service to the discipline
- Celebrate the wins and getting an R & R is a huge win
- Talk to your advisor throughout the whole process of publication from an initial idea of a paper you have and to how to respond to editor's decisions and reviewer's comments
 - I'd recommend that you ask your advisor to see a full publication packet for one of their papers ask to see the initial submission, the reviews they got, their revision of that paper, their revision memo that they wrote to the reviewers, and the final published article
 - I think this will take some mystery out of the process and it will show that more likely than not the initial submission looks very different from the final published article which I think is a good thing generally speaking since it represents progress and the incorporation of some usually helpful feedback along the way

I will end my presentation here but I'm excited to hear what questions you have!

[SLIDE 15]

Nicole:

Thank you so much for an excellent presentation Patrick! We will now turn the questions from the audience as well as some of the questions we received in advance of the webinar

Question 1 -

Can publishing ever look bad on your resume if it's not a good journal?

Answer -

Almost every question I answer we'll start with 'It depends' so just assume that I say it depends but like I said before journals do vary widely in quality. It won't necessarily look bad if you're if the journal you submit to has say a slightly lower impact factor or is slightly lower ranked provided that it's a journal that your work speaks to. It is best if the journal is in your discipline or subfield and that it's not a predatory journal (and again I've given a couple links and that give you known list of many of those) most publications are going to be good news for you and your CV. Of course, you want to try and get your paper into the highest quality journal with the farthest reach and that's the most well regarded in your discipline but there's variation even there. For instance, when I think through what might be good generalist or broad journal, you know my first instinct is I'm going to try and get this in the American Journal of Sociology. But I know that's probably not going to be realistic for me and so I will probably start looking a little bit lower down in the list and knowing that it's still going to send a signal that my paper or was deemed interesting and important by a set of external reviewers.

Question 2 -

If you're looking for a career in academia is it better to hold off on publishing if you're not confident that it can be accepted in a good journal? Or is it better to have a large volume of publications on your CV? Can publishing ever look bad on your resume if it's not a good journal?

Answer -

Yeah, this question of quality versus quantity is a good one. And generally, I think I'd lean towards quality. Certainly the aim, and when you complete graduate school, that is when you complete your PhD and go out on the job market, is to have a couple papers that have been published. Doesn't mean you have to have 10 or 15, or enough to get tenure, right? But you should aim for at least one or two or so. You sort of want to balance quality versus quantity. So definitely aim for quality. Try and get your paper as strong as you can get it and send it to the best journal that you think is a good fit for that paper. But recognize that there's a ton of journals out there, so every paper has a home somewhere.

Question 3 -

Are book reviews less prestigious to publish? And is there a type of publication that is more valued in academia?

Answer -

So there is generally a hierarchy of publications. Whether it's quantitative or qualitative, an empirical study is sort of the gold standard. That's what we should be aiming for. Papers that you submit to edited volumes that will come out as chapters and books, those are useful on the CV, but certainly if we were to rank them, they'd be ranked under an empirical journal article. And book reviews are certainly evidence that you're engaging with the literature, you're engaging

with the body of scholarship that's out there in your field, but they too would be ranked as sort of a little bit under and the usual empirical journal article. That's not to say don't do them, but if you're faced with the choice between getting a book review out, or sort of drafted and published, and making progress on turning, say your MA thesis into a journal article, go with the MA thesis to journal article.

Question 4 –

Are you familiar with submitting non-empirical papers to journals? And could you maybe speak about them? Is it possible to submit theoretical essays from graduate level coursework that doesn't use data?

Answer –

Yeah, there are definitely journals out there which accept a variety of kinds of work. So when I recommend sort of to look at the aims and scope of journals you might be interested in, that section on the journals website should give you an idea of what kinds of articles or papers they accept beyond the traditional empirical journal article. So there are definitely journals out there that except theoretical pieces, there are whole journals dedicated to what are essentially literature reviews. And yeah, so I would suggest if you've got an idea for something that you'd like to develop into a publishable paper, chances are there is a journal out there that will publish that kind of work, even if it doesn't fit, you know, our definition of a traditional empirical article.

Question 5 –

What are the kinds of things that you think that we should include in our cover letter?

Answer –

That's a good question. So the cover letter should be really brief. If they go over a page, you've probably written too much. When I approach a cover letter, I usually have three very quick paragraphs. The first paragraph does the usual, "I enthusiastically submit my article titled "X" to journal "Y." The next paragraph, very quickly, certainly not as long as the abstract of the paper, but very quickly, tells the editor what this paper does. What research question does it answer? Sometimes, what data does it use to answer that question? And maybe what the high-level findings are. So very quick, couple of sentences paragraph. And then the final paragraph, for me, tries to convince the editor that their journal is the right home for my paper. So if, say, I'm submitting to the sociology of education, I will want to look at the aims and scope of that journal, in particular, and think about what elements of my paper make it the right fit for those aims and scope. So real quick, three paragraphs, it's very short, but it just gives the editor a quick idea of what my papers all about, because again, they're probably not reading your paper in-depth.

Question 6 –

What happens if once your paper is accepted for an R & R and you get that feedback back, if there are two reviewers providing conflicting comments?

Answer –

Yes, that is a great question! And it happens not infrequently—that is to say it happens a lot. There are a couple different strategies. So first, there are some editors out there which will try to help you adjudicate between the two reviewers conflicting suggestions. So some editors will actually take a pretty active role in their decision letter to you to try and guide you toward one reviewer's comments or the other, because they have an idea of what they would like your paper to look like. If they do that, then really on what the editor is saying. Because they're the ones who are ultimately going to make the decision on your paper. If the editor doesn't do that, and they sort of leave you as the author to fend for yourself against these conflicting reviewers, well then use the reviewer memo, the memo you write to reviewers outlining all of the changes you made, to just sort of dive into that contradiction. So what I'll do sometimes, in those cases, is I'll engage with both reviewers. And sometimes I'll try and answer both of them. Here's an example. Let's say one reviewer is asking for more analyses or like a different kind of model, and another reviewer says, you know, "You need to scale back. Your paper tries to do too much. You need to do less." Well to the reviewer who's asking for more, maybe I'll actually run the analysis that they recommend, not put it in the paper, but put it in the revision memo. So the reviewer can see that I took their comments seriously, but then I'll explain why it's not the right decision for my paper as I see it. Perhaps what they're asking for is beyond the scope of this study. Perhaps what they're asking for is in direct contradiction to what the editor or another reviewer said, but I will at least have shown them that I've been taking their suggestions seriously. And if they're really interested in that additional analysis, say that it's in the revision memo. So I try to use the revision memo, and for me, they can be quite long, to engage with all of the reviewers' comments, while making it very clear what ends up in the revised manuscript and what doesn't.

Question 7 –

When you're doing an R & R and maybe you've become really overwhelmed or maybe this piece has been rejected by several journals, when do you abandon the process?

Answer –

Yeah, that's a good question. If you get an R & R, you should probably not abandon the process. Your paper at the R & R stage, if you've been invited to write a revision of your paper, that's a really good sign. Right? The editor has committed, in some way, they've invested in your paper. They want to see your papers succeed. Otherwise, they would have rejected it, either without sending it out for review or after getting some reviews and taking in the reviewers' feedback. If you've got an R & R, stick with it. Try and respond to the reviewer's comments, and get the paper back to the journal. The editor wants to see a revision. Now, if you're feeling overwhelmed and you come up against the editor's deadline for the R & R, just emailed the journal and asked for an extension. Chances are, when you email the journal, you're not actually emailing the editor themselves, you're probably emailing another graduate student who's managing the journal. And the deadlines are pretty arbitrary anyway. If you're feeling overwhelmed and you think another week or a couple weeks might help you respond better to the reviewers, ask for more time. Now, if you're not at an R & R stage, if your paper has been rejected by 3, 4, 5 journals, first, recognize that that's not uncommon. You're in good company. And second, think about what might not be working about your paper. At that point, now, you

have a number of journals, a number of reviewers, and a number of editors have seen your paper and they're all responding to it in a similar way. Is there some way you can think about how to refine your research question? Can you better articulate the existing literature and how your paper offers a contribution to it? Maybe you need to add some more data? Maybe the case you're making, the argument you're making, isn't being effectively supported by the data you have? So maybe you need to collect more data. These are things, I think, that if you get rejected from multiple journals, to try and think about because you've gone through the sort of trouble and labour of writing a paper. It may not have found a home yet, certainly there's a home for it out there somewhere, but you may have to do some revising before sending it out to a new journal.

Question 8 –

What kind of considerations do journal editors have in relation to submissions from non-native English speakers or writers?

Answer –

That's a really good question! So, to be honest, when the editor first sees the paper and is making a recommendation, they're probably not reading it closely enough to know one way or the other. They're really deciding whether to send it out for review or to desk reject the paper based on, "Does it ask an interesting question?" "Does it use data and methods that are appropriate to the question?" And "Does the topic under consideration by the paper fit with the aims and scope of the journal?" The reviewers are the ones who are going to read the paper much more closely. And I can tell you, from at least my experience as a reviewer, but also my experience an editorial board reading reviewers comments about a lot of different papers that vary widely in style, in grammar, in sort of writing clarity, whether or not someone's a native English speaker or not. I can say that the reviewers are generally going to give the benefit of the doubt to the author. That is, even if the paper could use some editing, and copy editing comes later in the process anyway, if the paper can use some editing, most reviewers will try and look past that and see what the paper is actually about. We'll take the paper on its substantive merits more often, I think, than they will on the style of the paper. Again, once the paper is fully accepted to a journal, it then goes through another more intensive copy-editing process, where, you know, issues like that can sort of be cleaned up.

Question 9 –

You mentioned previously that you had experience as a reviewer, can you tell us, for you, what differentiates papers that you think should be put forward or get a solid R & R and ones that don't?

Answer –

Yeah, that's a really good question. For me, and this varies a little bit by the journal, right? If I'm reviewing for a broad generalist journal, like Social Science Research, or the American Sociological Review, I'm looking for papers that develop and strongly support an argument that speaks to the discipline of sociology in full, right? Versus if I'm looking at a paper and reviewing a paper for Sociology of Education, then sort of the focus and the literature that it

needs to speak to is a little bit narrower. Regardless, what I'm looking for is really some of the things that I mentioned before. Does the paper make a clear case for its contribution? That is, does it use the literature review to identify an important gap in the literature and specify pretty clearly how their paper starts to fill that gap? I'm looking for not only an interesting research question, but one that's answerable by their data and methods. And so, I especially look for a match between data and methods and the question being asked. I also look for whether the front end of the paper, so the introduction, background, and literature review, whether those help prepare the reader for what comes next in the findings. That is, the literature review should have a goal. And that goal should be first, again, to convince the reader that there's this important gap in the literature. But second, to try and build toward a set of hypotheses or expectations that will be tested by the data, tested by the methodology, and findings. What I'm looking for overall is that the paper flows really nicely. That the introduction, the background and literature review, the data and methods, and findings all build toward the same end.

Question 10 –

I'm just going to remind everyone that we have only a few more minutes to answer questions, and if we don't get through them all, we will answer them online for the transcript recording. For the next question, will academic journals accept submissions from people not in academia? For example, will they accept papers for someone who wrote during grad school, even if they've graduated?

Answer –

Absolutely. Yes. You do not need an academic affiliation to submit a paper to a journal.

Question 11 –

Can somebody tweak the same paper and publish it more than once in different papers, although the bulk of it is similar? Or can they break it up in parts and then send it out to different journal as different papers?

Answer –

The papers that you submit for publication need to be sufficiently different. If they're answering the same research question, that's one thing—I mean, a lot of papers out there answer the same general research question, right? But if they're answering the exact same specific research question, the papers are probably too similar. If they're using the same data and methods, that's probably okay, provided you're using those data to answer sufficiently different research questions. Certainly, when we write our first drafts of papers, they may be too big, right and may cover too much ground for a single journal publication. And then it's important to think about how do you break it up so that the two resulting papers are sufficiently different? They should not ask the same exact question. And they should not provide the same exact pieces of evidence. I keep using the word “sufficiently different,” and that's a little bit vague, but they should be sufficiently different.

Question 12 –

Can you speak about open access publications and edited volumes? Are they worthwhile in terms of publications for grad students?

Answer –

Yeah, that's a great question. So yes, I think they are worthwhile. And there's a couple ways to think about open access, right? Open access can refer to the process which is becoming more popular in sociology where we post a working paper on some hosted website, like SOCARXIV is one that's becoming really big. And that's not the same as publishing a paper. That's posting a working paper that you hope to get some feedback on, to make it more ready to publish. So that's one way of thinking about open access. The other way of thinking about open access is when your paper has been submitted to a journal, you decide whether at that journal to host your paper open access, in which case you'll often have to pay the open access fee to the journal, or to leave the paper behind the journals paywall. That's the kind of question that's probably best dealt with on a case by case scenario. You might ask your advisor specifically about that. I don't have any strong feelings one way or the other. But that'll usually refer to, your papers already been submitted, and so you're deciding whether or not, at that particular journal, you're going to let it be open access or not. And then finally, about edited volumes, certainly they do count toward peer reviewed publications, and so they're good lines on your CV. I would maybe think about whether your paper is a really good fit for that edited volume, in which case absolutely pursue it, or whether it's a little bit broader and so might otherwise find a home in a peer reviewed journal. I think the sort of hierarchy distinction isn't so strong between journal articles and edited volumes, but it does exist, with journal articles being a little bit above.

Question 13 –

Do you have any other notes or comments that you'd like to pass along to our attendees?

Answer –

I don't think so, beyond, you know, keep at it. I think for me, one of the most rewarding parts about the publication process, even though it can take a long time, is that other researchers out there are engaging in your work. And again, they're often doing it on good faith, trying to make the work better, and so that can be a rewarding part of the process, even if it takes a long time and can be frustrating.

Nicole:

Okay, great. Thank you so much. And I think we'll just go ahead and we'll wrap everything up. Thank you all very much for attending. And thank you, Patrick, for your presentation. It was really helpful and really informative, and for addressing our questions. A recording of the webinar will be posted online at the CSA@Students web page along with responses to any questions that we did not have time to address here. Audience members will also be receiving a feedback survey from us, so we'd appreciate it if you could please fill that out. See y'all next time and thank you so much for taking part. Bye bye.