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Publishing Pedagogies for the Doctorate and Beyond (review)

Steven E. Gump

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Albert makes one obvious mistake that will frighten away some academics who would benefit from reading *WPG* when he makes the subtitle address medics. I am a geologist, yet I gained much from reading this book with its alleged medical bias. If an author writes a book that explains the nuts and bolts of some task, whether mundane or complex, but then qualifies it by claiming that it applies only to a restricted group, then the book will fail to reach all of the potential market. A book like *WPG* works across the breadth of academia, not just for the wavers of tongue depressors. If I wrote a book titled *Practical Vicar Strangling for Dyslexic Postmen*, it would undoubtedly contain information of relevance to anyone who wanted to persecute a padre. As in any study, there are basic skills and there are those that, presumably, only the dyslexic purveyors of mail would find relevant; but those basic skills are 90 per cent of the story, and they are important for all those who might be interested. Even if practical tips on stuffing the victim into a postman's sack and concealing it under postcards from Tunisia may not be generally applicable, the underlying principles for concealing evidence are undeniable. Better to call the book *Vicar Strangling* and thus reach a wider audience. The same is true of *Winning the Publications Game*; academics in any field will find much of direct relevance to their writing program between its covers.

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Claire Aitchison, Barbara Kamler, and Alison Lee, eds.

Publishing Pedagogies for the Doctorate and Beyond

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Reviewed by STEVEN E. GUMP

In a piece published in this journal last year, Allan Pasco asks—and answers—the question, ‘Should graduate students publish?’¹ For graduate

students in the humanities, Pasco mentions the competitive edge gained by having a publication or two on their *curricula vitae* when applying for faculty positions. He emphasizes the important role of faculty mentors and describes his own experiences working with students as they prepared manuscripts for submission to scholarly journals. He concludes that because writing for publication is a risky, time-consuming proposition, only students who have genuine contributions to make and whose own progress and work will not be too greatly hindered should expend the effort necessary for publication while still in graduate school.

Now, imagine an edited volume that considers the same question, this time focusing on students in the social sciences, and this time including international perspectives from Australia, Europe, North America, and Asia. This volume, too, emphasizes both the pedagogical role played by faculty mentors and the numerous ‘competing demands’ faced by doctoral students. And this volume also encourages thinking about the nature of graduate education—particularly the types of skills and competencies needed by doctoral students to become successful contributors to the scholarly conversations in their fields. Such is the volume that Claire Aitchison (University of Western Sydney), Barbara Kamler (Deakin University), and Alison Lee (University of Technology, Sydney) have compiled. Their goal is to ‘explore the questions, dilemmas and responses to the increasing expectation that doctoral students publish their research, both after their doctorate is complete and, more and more, it seems, along the way’ (2). Instead of dwelling on the potential negative effects of this development, however, the volume presents an overall optimistic view. ‘Given this reality,’ the three editors seem to have challenged their contributors, ‘what can we—as teachers, mentors, academic authors, and journal editors ourselves—do about it?’ Not a handbook or instruction manual per se, *Publishing Pedagogies for the Doctorate and Beyond* instead reflectively explores ‘ways to build research cultures that incorporate and support student publishing’ (3).

The editors’ concise introduction contextualizes the volume and provides thorough, enticing synopses of the eight chapters that follow. These chapters, which average an easily digestible eighteen pages apiece, reflect the contributions of twelve scholars, most of whose teaching and research focus on literacy, academic writing, or education. Although this book seems to have been written for members of the very discourse community that brought us the concept of ‘discourse community,’ all

chapters are accessible and speak to readers beyond the fields of education and writing studies. (Works by John Swales and Christine Feak on academic writing are referred to in multiple chapters; writing theorist Peter Elbow makes a parenthetical cameo; and theoretical influences from Bakhtin and Vygotsky are hard to miss. For non-specialists, Anthony Paré of McGill University provides a useful crash course on some of the central premises of writing studies in chapter 3, including the writing-to-learn approach of James Britton and Janet Emig and the cognitive process theory of Linda Flower and John Hayes.) Even though this work is essentially about pedagogy—about teaching doctoral students the conventions of writing for scholarly publication—it speaks not only to faculty members but also to editors (many of whom may concurrently be faculty members, of course). For example, Kamler, in chapter 5, explores the role of ‘publication brokers,’ a concept that applies to editors of scholarly publications, as Beth Luey has previously suggested.²

Contributors explore the issue at hand from a variety of perspectives. Lee (chapter 2) describes the PhD-by-publication system that is common throughout Scandinavian doctoral programs, addressing the expectations of graduate education and training along the way. I was struck by how, in the PhD by publication, evaluation is transferred onto a larger network, that of peer reviewers for journal publication, through a ‘generous and generative exercise of power’ (27). Rowena Murray of Strathclyde University (chapter 7) and Aitchison (chapter 6) consider the value of writing retreats and doctoral writing groups, respectively. Aitchison explains how writers must learn to ‘position themselves within their particular discourse community’ (87) in order for their writing to be publishable, an idea related to Murray’s concept of ‘being rhetorical,’ which involves ‘communicating persuasively in specific rhetorical contexts’ (101). Most of Murray’s chapter is a description of a structured writer’s retreat—but the intended length of the retreat is unclear. Is it just one day (111), or is it two days, as mentioned in the introduction to the volume (8)? Also, Murray states that ‘there is little literature’ on the subject of ‘what productive writers do’ (106): she could consult works by Robert Boice and Eviatar Zerubavel, as well as recent publications by Paul Silvia and by W. Brad Johnson and Carol Mullen, the latter of which have been recently reviewed in this journal.³

Appropriately, the two collaboratively written chapters address collaborative practices. Chapter 8, by Amanda Haertling Thein (University

of Pittsburgh) and Richard Beach (University of Minnesota), describes four dyadic mentoring practices: mutual engagement in collaborative research, co-authored research, reciprocal review and evaluation, and networking. These activities should be ubiquitous across doctoral programs in the social sciences—but undoubtedly are not. Underlying them all is a key identity transformation that is expected to take place within doctoral education: that from ‘student’ to ‘scholar.’ In chapter 9, Pat Thomson (University of Nottingham) describes negotiating for a special issue of the journal *Improving Schools*, jointly edited by chapter co-authors Tina Byrom (Nottingham Trent University), Carol Robinson (University of Brighton), and Lisa Russell (University of Huddersfield), all ‘early career researchers’ at the time. This chapter includes reflections on some of the ‘emotional dimensions of the editorial process’ (145)—frequently overlooked, I would argue—as well as Thomson’s descriptive typology of work undertaken by the co-editors: philosophical, market, profile, relational, textual, and secretarial. (Even without explication, that list should be meaningful to most journal editors.) And although the final journal issue was only 112 pages (just seven articles, three book reviews, and a brief editorial), Russell expressed ‘shock about the amount of time and effort’ the editing process took (144). A valuable lesson, indeed—and one that resonates with Christine Pearson Casanave’s (formerly of Keio University) assertion, in chapter 4, that ‘it is not fair to convey the idea to students that writing and publishing can happen quickly, given the drafting, revising, reviewing, and further revising that are essential’ even before the material is ready to enter a publishing queue (60–1).

Casanave advocates in-house graduate-student publications as ‘practice-participatory’ learning experiences (55), yet she astutely expresses some ‘hesitations at jumping on the publishing bandwagon’ for all graduate students (48), especially students like those with whom she worked in Japan, who were navigating the competing demands of work, family responsibilities, and health issues in addition to graduate school. Paré further cautions against what he calls ‘premature publication’ in his chapter, suggesting that the rush to publish ‘often turns writing from an exploration into a performance’ (33) and discourages the taking of risks and chances in one’s writing and, by heuristic extension, in one’s thinking and development as a scholar. Here, Paré’s arguments resonate directly with Pasco’s concern that graduate school should provide a

'risk-free experience of nurturing.'⁷⁴ Paré also emphasizes how fluency in the appropriate discourse traditions is acquired through extended engagement over time, reflecting one of my favorite morsels from Stephen Pyne's *Voice and Vision*: 'technique cannot substitute for genuine vision, or posturing for voice, or data for understanding: a convincing text will require judgment that normally comes from maturity and from life, not libraries.'⁷⁵

Kamler's chapter on publication brokers also explores the correspondence of publication, a topic picked up subsequently by Thein and Beach and by Thomson, Byron, Robinson, and Russell. Through her mentorship experience with Thein, Beach learned that 'carefully crafting a response letter [to the editor] can be just as important as making the requested revisions' in a revise-and-resubmit situation (132); and Thomson and associates consider the importance—and difficulty—of writing positive and constructive rejection letters. Kamler's contribution presents and interprets three revise-and-resubmit cases, with excerpts from reviewers' and editors' comments as well as letters written by the authors in response. Emotions are at play in these exchanges and in the thoughts leading up to them, and editors are challenged to act as mediators. On reading Kamler's chapter I was reminded of the importance of adequately blinding names and identifying details from examples, since the identities of the specific articles described in the second and third cases were not difficult for me to discern. (But then, I am familiar with the contents of the major education journals, and especially with the pieces related to academic writing that all too infrequently appear in them.)

That the volume lacks a synthesizing chapter at its conclusion is ameliorated by both the strong introduction and the effective way in which authors refer to one another's contributions throughout their chapters. Editors who make the extra effort to encourage contributors to read and reflect on each other's chapters in draft form obviously care about how readers will perceive the unity of the finished collection. The chapters in this volume are complementary without being repetitive and are often cleverly juxtaposed to provide the serial reader with enjoyable 'aha!' moments over the intertextual connections. Of course, the chapters need not be read in order; all are complete as stand-alone pieces. Still, that all (and only) the five odd-numbered chapters referred, in some form or another, to the 'scholarly publishing game' must be purely coincidental. That expression rubs me the wrong way (Does it make me

a ‘player’?)—but at least Casanave acknowledges the inherent cynicism behind the metaphor. Ultimately, I could grumble about what appears to be library or textbook pricing by Routledge (the volume is quite slim, after all), but I will instead point out that one chapter, oddly, does not conform to the conventions in spelling or punctuation followed in the remainder of the work. Otherwise, the presentation is generally free of errors, and the brief author and subject index is quite adequate.

In short, although its focus is on the roles of faculty members, Aitchison, Kamler, and Lee’s volume inspired me to think more about the roles that other actors—editors and graduate students themselves, in particular—play as agents in the system that is encouraging earlier and greater levels of scholarly publication. The volume invites such reflection. I hope it will also encourage faculty members in the social sciences to engage in the types of active and reflective publishing pedagogies it portrays.

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NOTES

1. Allan H. Pasco, ‘Should Graduate Students Publish?’ *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 40, 3 (April 2009): 231–40
2. Beth Luey, ‘A Different Kind of Profession: The Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ) Keynote Address, MLA Convention 2006,’ *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 39, 2 (January 2008): 93–108
3. Robert Boice, *Professors as Writers: A Self-Help Guide to Productive Writing* (Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press 1990); Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Clockwork Muse: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses, Dissertations, and Books* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1999); Paul J. Silvia, *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association 2007), reviewed by Stephen K. Donovan in *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 39, 1 (October 2007): 87–91; W. Brad Johnson and Carol A. Mullen, *Write to the Top! How to Become a Prolific Academic* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan 2007), reviewed by Steven E. Gump in *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 40, 1 (October 2008): 123–8
4. Pasco, ‘Should Graduate Students Publish?’ 234
5. Stephen J. Pyne, *Voice and Vision: A Guide to Writing History and Other Serious Nonfiction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2009), 113