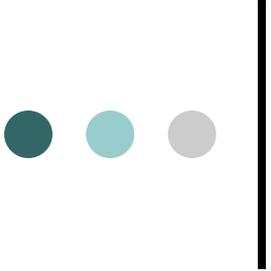# The Publishing Process: An Editor's Behind the Scenes Overview

Presented by Mary Beth Weber, Editor, *Library Resources and Technical Services*

## Turn Your Idea into a Publication

an ALCTS Virtual Symposium • January 14, 2015

The Publishing Process Starts with an Idea

- Your work is the best source of ideas.
- You've developed a solution for an issue in the profession.
- Take a presentation one step further and develop it into a publication.
- Most importantly, focus on something you know.
- *LRTS* website provides instructions to turn a presentation into a research paper.
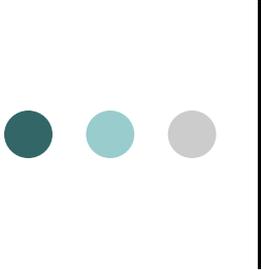
First Steps if You're New to Publishing

○ Okay to start small.

○ Book reviews or media reviews are a good start.

○ ALCTS venues include *LRTS* book reviews, z687, or *ALCTS News*.
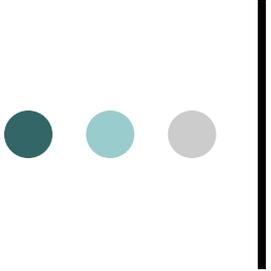
Finding a Venue for Your Paper

- Research potential paper topics in the professional literature to see what other papers have been published on your topic, or are related to your topic.

- Check the journal's scope to see if it includes your topic.

- Feel free to contact a journal editor with your idea and ask for feedback.
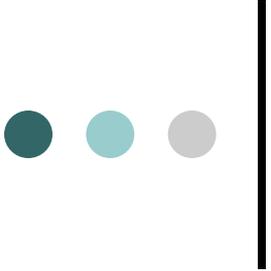
Finding a Venue for Your Paper (continued)

- Review the journal's editorial policy:
  - What type of review is provided?
  - Turnaround time from submission to completion of review?
  - What does editing entail?
  - How much revision will be required after a paper is returned to authors?
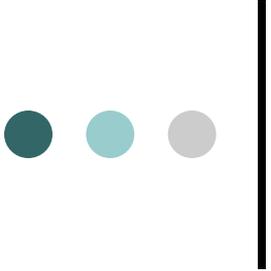
Additional Considerations

- Check the journal's website for information such as impact factor or most downloaded papers.

- Who holds the copyright and what restrictions exist?

- Open Access- Green or gold?

- If gold OA, who pays? Are grants available to the author from his/her institution or a funding source?
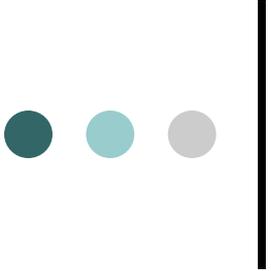
Additional Considerations (continued)

- Can your paper be deposited in an IR? Are there restrictions?
- ALCTS and ALA provide an IR for those individuals who have no other access to an IR.
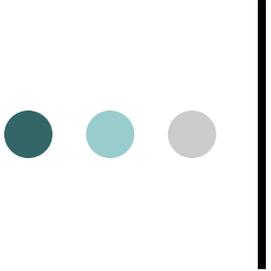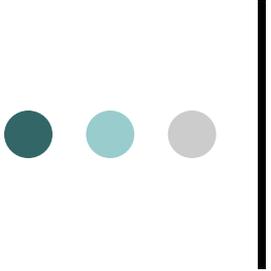
Elements of a Research Paper

- Introduction
- Literature review
- Research method
- Results or Findings
- Discussion and/or Analysis
- Conclusion
- *LRTS* website provides information on how to write a research paper.
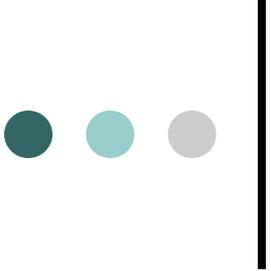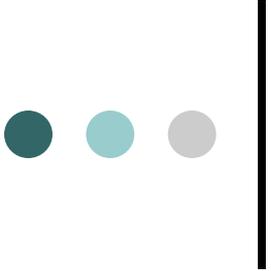
Elements of a Research Paper:
The Introduction

- Sets the tone for the paper

- Explains what will be presented

- Captures reader's attention with a powerful "hook".

- Explains why the author's findings matter to the reader.

Elements of a Research Paper:
The Literature Review

- Review the professional literature to see what has been written on your topic or related topics that support your research.

- Search library and information science databases plus Google Scholar.

Elements of a Research Paper:
Research Method

○ Explain the methods or procedures used to demonstrate the validity of your results.

○ Surveys should be included in an appendix.

○ Take care with statistics and numbers to ensure they are correct.
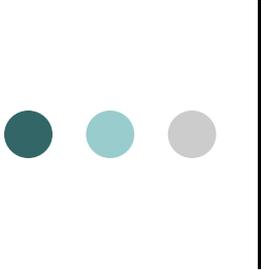
Elements of a Research Paper:
Results or Findings

- Quantitative or qualitative data from your research.
- Tables, figures, or illustrations help to visually present your research and should be clearly labeled and easy to read.
  - Limit these to avoid overwhelming readers.
  - Important! Always this information in your paper. Their significance might otherwise be lost.
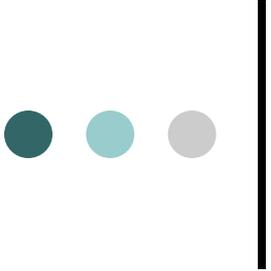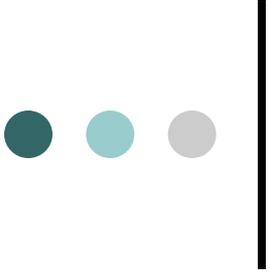
Elements of a Research Paper: **Discussion or Analysis**

- Provide an argument to support your research findings.

- Interpret data for readers.

- Explain how your findings support your research question.

- Discuss how your research compares to what you included in your literature review.
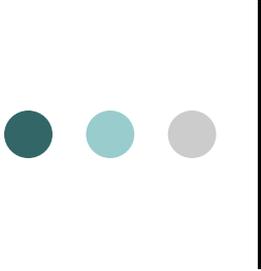
Elements of a Research Paper: **Discussion or Analysis** (continued)

- Discuss problems encountered with your research, including what you could have done differently.
- State if further research is needed.

Elements of a Research Paper:
The Conclusion

- End with a strong conclusion.

- Restate your main points.

- Reiterate why your findings are important and why readers should care about them.
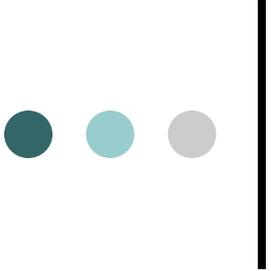
Preparing Your Paper

- Consult the journal's submissions guidelines.
    - Word length?
    - Style manual?
- Submit only original unpublished papers.
- Don't submit a paper to more than one journal at the same time. This is unethical.
- If a paper is based on a presentation, state this in an acknowledgment at the beginning of your paper.
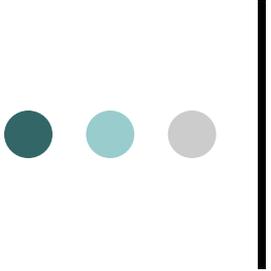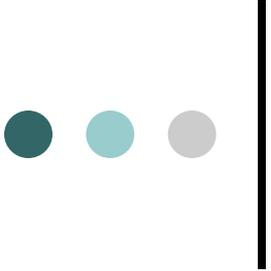
Dos and Don'ts

DO

- ✓ Check facts for accuracy.
- ✓ Ensure citations are complete and accurate.
- ✓ Write clearly and avoid wordiness (in order to, as a result of).

DON'T

- ○ Use jargon, slang, and trendy expressions.
- ○ Use contractions in formal writing.
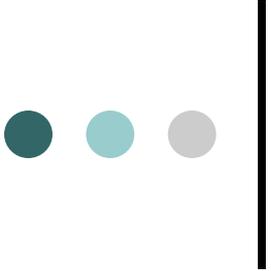- ○ Include identifying information in your paper.

Style Manual

- **Very** important!
- Provides guidance on formatting your paper, including citations, tables, etc.
- Failure to use the required style manual will slow down the process of review and revision.
- You're responsible for making the suggested changes before your paper is considered for publication.
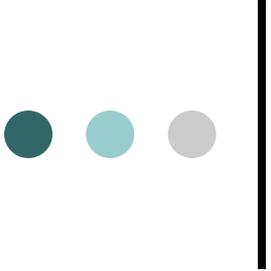
Style Manual (continued)

- If you don't have access to print or electronic copies of the required style manual and price is a deterrent to purchasing a personal copy, Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides an overview and examples for citing resources in APA, MLA, and CMOS.

- Check copies of the journal for examples of how papers are formatted.

Style Manual (continued)

- If in doubt about how to format something, **ask the editor**. This is preferable to guessing and including incorrect information in your paper that **will** need to be changed later.

- If your paper was previously submitted to a journal that uses another style manual, don't recycle it. Reformat it.
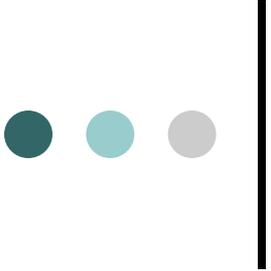
Ethics in Publishing

- Authors are responsible for the accuracy of statements made in their papers.

- Give credit for all content taken from other papers, even if it's from a paper you've published.

- Not giving attribution for papers you've published is considered as self-plagiarism.
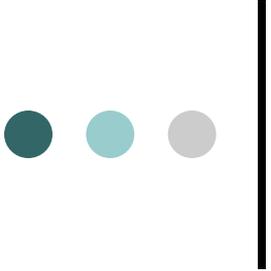
Submitting your Paper

- Papers are submitted to an editor.

- Many journals use an online submission system to track when papers are submitted, reviewed, revised, etc.

- The editor will acknowledge receipt of your paper, that it's been assigned for review, and when you can expect to receive a response regarding your paper.
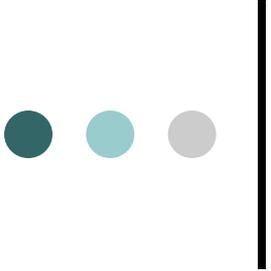
The Review Process

- Editorial boards are composed of experts.

- Double-blind peer-review plus the editor's review.

- Reviewers are given a specified timeframe to read papers and return comments to the editor.

- The editor may contact the author during the process if there are questions or if additional information is needed.
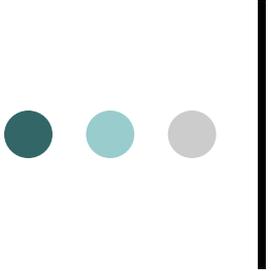
Review Process (continued)

- When reviews are complete, editor returns compiled reviewer comments and a marked up copy of paper to author.
- The majority of papers require revision and resubmission.
- A request to revise and resubmit isn't a guarantee a paper will be accepted for publication.
- Papers can be rejected outright after the initial review.
- The editor's final decision is guided by the reviewers' expertise and recommendations.
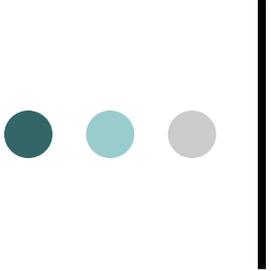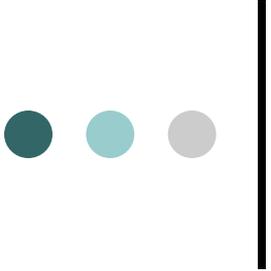
Rejected Papers

○ There are a variety of reasons why a paper is rejected:

  ○ Information not factually correct.

  ○ Plagiarism, including self-plagiarism.

  ○ Lack of stated research question(s).

  ○ Faulty or incorrect research methodology.

  ○ Paper is poorly formatted, difficult to read, lacks convincing argument or supporting information.
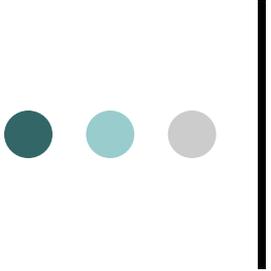
Withdrawn Papers

- Authors may choose to withdraw a paper from consideration.

- Reasons include:
  - Job switch and no time to revise or paper no longer relevant to author's work
  - Requested revisions too extensive
  - Author doesn't agree with suggested revisions

Interacting with Editors

- Do inquire about ideas for papers.

- Contact the editor during the review process or when your paper has been returned for revision.

- Consider contacting the editor if your paper has been rejected. Ask for advice and possible next steps.

- Keep in mind that editors' decisions are guided by the expertise of their editorial board members.
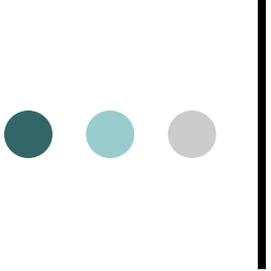
Accepted Papers (Congratulations!)

- Editor notifies the author(s) when a paper is accepted for publication. This should include when the paper will be published and in what issue of the journal.

- The editor and authors typically receive proofs to review and correct.

- Authors may be asked to sign copyright forms that govern who holds the copyright and any restrictions.
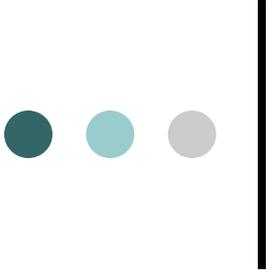
Recap

- The best source of inspiration is your own work.

- Consider getting additional mileage from a presentation by developing it into a paper.

- Reach out to editors.

- Use the required style manual!

- You're responsible for the accuracy of facts presented in your paper.

- Rejection isn't necessarily the end of the road.

Resources

- *LRTS* website
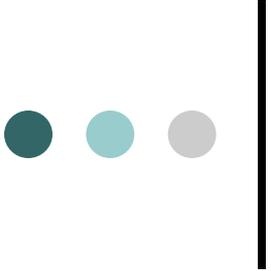
http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/lrts (scroll down to "For Authors")

- *LRTS* Book Reviews lrtsbookreviews@ala.org or

http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/lrts (scroll down to "For Book Reviewers")

- Proposal Guide for ALCTS Authors

http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/info/proposal-guide

- z687 http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/z687
- *ALCTS News* alctsnews@ala.org
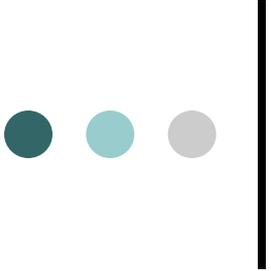
Resources (continued)

- ALAIR (American Library Association Institutional Repository)
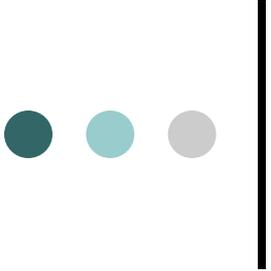
https://alair.ala.org/

- ALCTS' Open Access Statement

http://www.ala.org/alcts/sites/ala.org.alcts/files/content/ianda/ALCTS_Statement_onOpenAccess.pdf

- Peter Suber's Open Access Overview

http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm

Resources (continued)

- Micah Vandegrift and Chealsye Bowley, "Librarian, Heal Thyself: A Scholarly Communication Analysis of LIS Journals," *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* April 23, 2014,

http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2014/healthyself/

- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

- Educational Media Reviews Online (EMRO)

http://libweb.lib.buffalo.edu/emro/

Thank you!

Questions? Please contact:

Mary Beth Weber @ mbfecko@rulmail.rutgers.edu or
lrtseditor@ala.org

Turn Your Idea into a Publication
an ALCTS Virtual Symposium • January 14, 2015