

Facilitator Notes

# Titles and Authors

These notes accompany the PowerPoint presentation of the same title by Barbara Gastel.

This module normally would accompany modules on writing other parts of a journal article. If desired, the section on titles and the section on authors can be given as mini-modules at different times.

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| Module Title | Titles and Authors |
| Course title (or analogous information) | This module normally would be part of a workshop or course focusing largely on writing and publishing journal articles on research. It normally would precede the modules on the parts of the article text. |
| Unit Title | Not applicable |
| No. of Unit | Not applicable |
| Session Day/Time | Not applicable |
| Length of Session | This module typically would run about 45 minutes to 1 hour, depending in part on the amount of discussion. |
| Aim | This module is intended mainly to increase participants’ ability to write suitable titles for their journal articles and to include appropriate entities in the author list and acknowledgements. |
| Learning Outcomes | By the end of this module, participants will be able to (1) state characteristics of a good title, (2) state basic criteria for authorship, (3) explain what ORCID is and know how to access the ORCID website, and (4) list at least three types of entities appropriate to list in the acknowledgements. |
| Facilitator Profile | Ideally, this workshop would be facilitated by someone who has experience with research writing (for example, as an author of journal articles or as an editor), because such an individual can enrich the content with examples from his or her experience. However, a less experienced facilitator also can present the module, as the combination of PowerPoint slides and facilitator notes provides sufficient information to do so. Also, the module can be presented jointly by a facilitator and a co-facilitator who provides additional commentary. |
| Participant Profile | This module is primarily for early-career researchers who are starting to publish their work. It also may be useful to mid-career researchers who wish to improve their approach to writing or increase their ability to mentor others in research writing. In addition, it may be helpful to some editors and writing instructors. |
| Pre-workshop Activities | (1) If possible, each participant should bring a set of instructions to authors. Ideally, the instructions should be for a journal in which the participant hopes to publish. If at least some participants will not or might not bring instructions to authors, the facilitator should, if possible, bring some instructions to authors or links thereto.  (2) If possible, each participant should bring a journal article reporting research in his or her field. Ideally, it should report research related to the participant’s research and should be in a journal in which the participant hopes to publish. If at least some participants will not or might not bring articles, the facilitator should, if possible, bring some articles or some links to articles.  (3) If participants are currently writing journal articles, they should bring drafts of their articles. |
| Room Layout | Ideally, this module will be presented in a room layout facilitating interaction—for example, with several small tables, with tables in a U configuration, or with a conference table. However, this module also can be presented in a traditional classroom or a lecture hall. |
| Number of Participants | For optimum discussion, the number of participants should be limited to about 10–15. However, the module also can reasonably delivered to about 25 participants. |
| Files and Materials | PowerPoint file: 08\_Titles and Authors |
| Visual Aids and Resources | Computer with PowerPoint; projector for PowerPoint presentation; Internet connection if possible |
| Potential Embellishments of the PowerPoint | To keep the file small, the presentation consists almost solely of text. Images can be added to make it more visually appealing. For example, decorative images can be inserted between sections to signal a change of subtopic and provide visual relief. Also, relevant images can be added to selected slides if desired.  If desired, the facilitator can divide the material on a given slide into more than one slide or can format some slides for progressive disclosure, in which items on a slide are revealed one by one.  Also, if the facilitator wishes, a slide or slides may supplement or be substituted for one or more exercises. For example, before or instead of the exercise on titles (Slide 4), the facilitator may project a slide listing some real or hypothetical titles and have small groups evaluate these titles. |
| Learning methods and activities | The following notes may help facilitators to (1) elaborate on the content of some slides and (2) elicit group participation at suitable times. In the PowerPoint presentation, similar notes appear in the notes sections below the respective slides.   * (Slide 1 is a title slide.) * Slide 2 (“Overview”)   + Note the topics that the module will address.   + Note the module’s overall aim, which is stated earlier in this facilitator’s guide. (Feel free, of course, to frame the purpose in the way that the group is likely to find most relevant.) * Slide 3 (“Title”)   + Emphasize that the title of a journal article is very important, as it can determine whether people access and read the article.   + Emphasize that titles should be informative but concise.   + Note that titles should be straightforward, not cute, because cute titles can be confusing.   + Ask the group why titles generally should not include abbreviations. (Answer: Readers might not know what the abbreviations mean.) Note that some journals have lists of abbreviations that they allow in titles.   + Mention that journals often request running titles, and that authors sometimes wonder what a running title is. Note what a running title is. (The definition appears in the last bullet in the slide.) * Slide 4 (“Exercise”)   + Have the participants do this exercise in small groups. Then bring the full group together and elicit observations and questions. Perhaps ask near the beginning: How many of you had instructions to authors that said how long the title could be? What did the instructions say in this regard?   + Depending on the circumstances, one or more parts of this exercise may be omitted. For example, if participants have not drafted journal articles, the third bulleted item would be deleted. * Slide 5 (“Authors and Acknowledgements”)   + This slide is just a title slide.   + At some workshops, now could be a reasonable time for a break. * Slide 6 (“Authors”)   + Emphasize that whether one qualifies to be an author depends on whether one has made substantial intellectual contributions to the research, not whether one has physically gathered the data. Some examples of intellectual contributions are coming up with the research idea, planning the research, and interpreting the findings.   + Note that whether one qualified to be an author does not depend on rank. A student or technician who made sufficient intellectual contributions should be listed as an author, and even a department head should not be listed if he or she has not made sufficient intellectual contributions to the research.   + Perhaps ask why it is useful to list one’s name the same way on every paper. Note that it can aid people in tracking one’s work.   + Now can be a good time for facilitators to give examples from their experience with deciding on authors. It can also be good at this point to ask participants to give examples from their experience.   + Participants often have questions about authorship. Now can be a good time to ask for questions.   + If a substantial number of participants are from medical fields, it might be worthwhile to mention the International Committee of Medical Journals Editors authorship statement (<http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>), which includes authorship criteria, and perhaps to add a slide listing these criteria.   + It might be worthwhile to mention that in addition to listing authors, some journals (perhaps especially in medical fields) have a contributor list. The contributor list includes, and states the roles of, all people who contributed to the research, whether or not they meet authorship criteria. For example, someone who collected data on patients but did not have other roles would not qualify to be an author but would be listed, along with the authors, as a contributor. * Slide 7 (“Corresponding Author”)   + Note that in some fields or at some institutions, being a corresponding author is considered an honour, but at others, it is considered merely a task.   + Perhaps briefly elicit participants’ views on or experience with corresponding authorship. If facilitators have experience with or exposure to corresponding authorship, it may be worthwhile for them to comment in this regard. * Slide 8 (“Something Fairly New: ORCID”)   + Note that ORCID is basically an author identification number that one can use on everything one writes regarding one’s research.   + Note that ORCID can aid especially in (1) distinguishing different researchers who have the same name and (2) making clear that an author is the same person even if the person’s name changes or is presented in a different format. (It can be helpful to use some examples to illustrate these points.)   + It can be worthwhile to show the ORCID website, for which a link is provided.   + If time permits during a workshop, it can be worthwhile to have participants register for ORCID if they have not yet done so. * Slide 9 (“Exercise”)   + Have the participants do this exercise in small groups.   + Then bring the full group together for discussion.   + Typically this exercise would take just a few minutes. * Slide 10 (“Acknowledgements”)   + Note the function of the acknowledgements (stated in the second bulleted item).   + Note some types of contributions that may be mentioned in the acknowledgements. Among the possibilities are providing advice on study design, sharing materials, permitting use of equipment, helping to analyse data, providing feedback on a draft, and editing the manuscript. Perhaps ask the group to mention other possibilities.   + Perhaps ask why permission should be obtained before listing people in acknowledgements. (A reason: Some people might not want to be listed, for example if they disagree with the interpretation of the findings.)   + Mention that some journals list sources of financial support in the acknowledgements and others do so elsewhere (for example, in a footnote). * Slide 11 (“Exercise”)   + Have the participants do this exercise in small groups.   + Then bring the full group together for discussion.   + Typically this exercise would take just a few minutes. * Slide 12 (“In Conclusion”)   + If time permits, include a question-and-answer session before ending.   + Perhaps do one or both of the following:     - Have participants note points to remember.     - Summarize the session.   + If the workshop or course will include later modules, note the topic of the next module. Perhaps also note more generally what will follow.   + Perhaps encourage group members to share points from this session with others. |