China Medical Board

Biomedical Writing Course

Lessons on Other Topics:

- Ethics, Rights, and Permissions
- Spoken Presentations and Poster Sessions

Source?

BIOMEDICAL WRITING COURSE

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Lesson Twenty-One
Rights, and Permissions

OBJECTIVES OF LESSON TWENTY-ONE:

By the end of this lesson, you will
1. Be more aware of ethical considerations when writing a scientific paper
2. Be more familiar with copyright considerations
3. Know more about how to write permissions letters

ASSIGNMENTS FOR LESSON TWENTY-ONE

1. Read Chapter 26 ("Ethics, Rights, and Permissions") in the text by Day.
2. Review the section on AUTHORSHIP in Lesson 6 (pages 54-59) of this Course Packet and pages 23-25 in the text by Day.
3. To become familiar with the format of a permissions letter, use the sample permissions letters provided to write one of your own. You can use real citations or you can make up your own.
4. If you are interested in learning more about copyright law, you can read Appendix 2-4-1. You may want to keep this material for future reference.

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 26 IN DAY'S BOOK

Day stresses the importance of originality in scientific writing for obvious ethical and legal reasons. All research journals require that research reported in scientific papers has not been published before. In fact, many authors state in the cover letter that accompanies a manuscript submitted for publication that their work has not been submitted or published elsewhere.

At the top of page 154, Day illustrates the importance of adhering to strict criteria for authorship by referring to a famous case of scientific fraud involving David Baltimore, a famous U.S. scientist. Although Baltimore was not suspected of "fudging data" (which means changing or making up data), his coauthor was. Baltimore's career, although not ruined, was harmed.

Because of the Copyright Act of 1976, authors must sign some type of a copyright transfer form, which assigns copyright to the publisher. This form is signed either upon submission of a manuscript or upon acceptance for publication. Permission to republish tables, figures, and large portions of text must be obtained from publishers. In addition, proper credit must always be given when using reprinted material.

In the last paragraph on page 155, Day talks about the difficulty of proving damages (which usually means financial losses) in a copyright infringement lawsuit. Even when copyright laws have been violated, it may not be possible to sue the violator successfully because it may be difficult to prove that the copyright owner has suffered financial losses due to the copyright infringement.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT REDUNDANT PUBLICATION AND PLAGIARISM

What is redundant publication (also called duplicate or repetitive publication or self-plagiarism)? It is publishing the same scientific paper more than once, usually with only minor changes. Most scientists would readily condemn such duplication. Redundant publication may, however, be more subtle. Often, authors may publish numerous manuscripts from a single very large project. This practice may be justified when data do not overlap and each paper addresses a different question. The problem of redundant publication arises in the gray area between those two extremes. Examples of that gray area would be if the same authors have studied the same problem in different groups of patients, or if they want to report on a different focus in the same patient group. In the latter scenario, the patients may be the same, but the data showing the main point of the paper are different (even though the two papers would have the same demographic data).

How do you decide whether publications would be redundant or whether two manuscripts from the same study are warranted? This decision may be difficult, but there are questions that you can ask (either as an author or an editor).

>Would a single paper be more informative and cohesive than two manuscripts?
>Can you provide all the necessary information in one paper without excessive length?
>Would multiple publications fragment the importance of the findings?
>If multiple reports are published, would readers appreciate the full importance of your finding if they only read one paper?

Remember, the goal is to provide all the essential information in a concise and readable form. If you do submit for publication 2 papers from 1 large study, you should cross-reference the papers and inform the editors of the journals of the related report.

In science, plagiarism can be defined as the use of another's ideas, data, or writing without giving proper credit. Plagiarism encompasses a range of actions. At the worst and most recognized extreme, plagiarism is the direct copying of word-for-word passages without crediting the original author. Other forms of plagiarism include uncredited paraphrasing (which means restating text in other words) of someone else's work or using someone else's thoughts, ideas, or data without providing appropriate credit. Less obvious forms of plagiarism include unknowingly omitting a reference or using references from another manuscript without checking the original citation.

How can you avoid plagiarism?

>Always reference ideas or passages you are paraphrasing.
>If you are directly copying a sentence from a source, set it off by quotation marks and citing it in the references.
>Be sure to copy the quote accurately.
>Use this as a general rule: If you quote more than 500 words (or a relatively large section or important ideas) from an article, you should seek permission from the publisher.
>If you will use published material such as tables or figures in the original format, even if you were the original author, obtain permission from the publisher, and you must cite the original publication.

Figures 1 and 2 are sample letters requesting permission from journals to reproduce published material. When you send such a letter, use stationery with your address printed

on it or include your address in your letter. Thus, the publisher will know where to send the signed permission letter. You need to keep a copy of the permission letter for your records, and send the original to the journal with your manuscript.

The copyright holder may ask that you give a credit line in your publication indicating the source of the material you are using. For example, we asked *The New England Journal of Medicine* for permission to copy the second article in Appendix B of this Course Packet (Nichol et al., which starts on page B:5). A person from their Rights and Permission Department sent us a letter back saying that we could use it for this course, and the following statement was included in that letter:

> The credit line should read: Reprinted by permission of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, and should include the author(s), title, source, volume, pages, copyright (year) Massachusetts Medical Society.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT U.S. COPYRIGHT LAW AND PERMISSIONS

There are some limitations to the rights of the copyright owner. The limitation most pertinent to academic endeavors is the "fair-use" doctrine. According to this doctrine, libraries and academic institutions are allowed to copy copyrighted work without permission for educational or scholarly uses if the copying of material does not affect the financial interests of the copyright owner. According to Stern and Westenberg (1995), four factors are considered when applying the fair-use doctrine to copyrighted material.

1. The material must be used for noncommercial, educational, or nonprofit purposes. In other words, the material must not be used in any way for financial gain.
2. The work should be used to teach or inform and should not be used as part of an original, creative work.
3. The amount of work to be copied is considered. If a large amount of the work is used, especially if it contains the main idea, the fair-use doctrine is less likely to apply.
4. The effect of the use of the material on the economic interests of the copyright holder is considered.

If you want to republish in the original form a table, figure, drawing, or radiographic image, you must obtain permission from the copyright owner. The copyright law does not specify policy regarding republication, so the procedure for obtaining permission may vary among publishers. Some publishers may require that you obtain permission from or at least notify the original author. Even if not required by the publisher, notifying the original author is polite. Furthermore, some publishers may charge a per-page fee to reprint material.

Permission does not have to be obtained from the copyright holder to use data that have been published in a figure or table, unless you use the same configuration. In other words, if you are compiling data from several sources to make an original table, you do not have to obtain permission from each publisher to make your table. You do, however, have to give proper credit to your sources (you can say, "Adapted from: ... " and list your references). If you produce a derivative work (one that has been changed from its original published form), you must obtain permission to publish the adapted, or derivative, work. In addition, you should give appropriate credit to the original work.

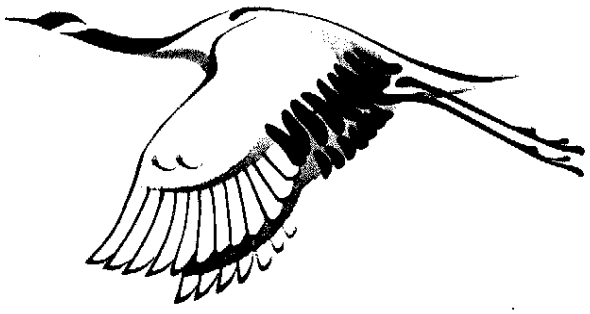
The copyright law was written before the computer era. Thus the question of whether material on the computer is protected under copyright law is debatable. However, most would agree that downloading information from the Internet would be the same as copying, and therefore permission from the author would be required to publish such information. The fair-use doctrine would probably apply to teaching materials on the Internet that were to be used for educational purposes, and permission may not be required. As always, though, proper credit should be given for information you use that is not your own. In cases in which you are not sure if permission is necessary, it is wise to obtain permission.

In summary, you should obtain written permission from the copyright holder if you use published material in any of your manuscripts. Ideally, you should obtain permission before submitting the manuscript for consideration of publication. If not, you will have to get permission before the journal will publish your manuscript. Remember that you still have to give proper credit for information that has been published even though you obtain permission to use it. If you paraphrase from another source or if you use data from other sources in your tables or figures, you do not have to obtain permission but you must give credit to the original source. If you are in doubt as to whether you need to obtain permission for using a published source, it is advisable to go ahead and write for permission ("play it safe" as Americans would say). You can also consult the editor of the journal or book to find out if you need to obtain permission.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Write a permissions letter. Use Figures 1 and 2 as models for yours. You may use real citations or make up figures and numbers. The citation is not as important as learning what information should be included and just practising how to write a permissions letter. Remember that if your stationery does not have your address printed on it, you need to include that in your letter so the publisher will know where to send the permission letter. Keep a copy of the signed permissions letter for your files, and send the original to the journal with your manuscript.

AN ENDING NOTE: Please feel free to contact your local instructor with questions about this lesson or assignment.



Lesson Twenty-Two
Spoken Presentations and Poster Sessions

OBJECTIVE FOR LESSON TWENTY-TWO

By the end of this lesson, you will know more about the Techniques for being an effective speaker at a scientific conference and for preparing scientific poster exhibits that convey essential points.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR LESSON TWENTY-TWO

These assignments are explained in more detail in the lesson below.

1. Read Chapter 24 ("How to Present a Paper orally") in the text by Day.
2. Observe a presentation. List at least 2 strengths of the speaker's presentation technique, and make at least 2 suggestions for improvement.
3. Read Chapter 25 ("How to Prepare a Poster") in Day's book and the booklet by Hanna and Iles, "A Step-by-Step Guide: Preparing Poster Exhibits" (see Supplementary Reading Packet).
4. Read pages 14-20 from "Better Presentations with Slides and Overheads" by Iles and Woods (see Supplementary Reading Packet).

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 24 IN DAY'S BOOK: "HOW TO PRESENT A PAPER ORALLY"

In the quotation by Actor John Wayne at the beginning of the chapter, the word "low" refers to pitch, not volume. A low-pitched voice suggests that the speaker is confident and believes that what he or she is saying is important enough to deserve attention. The last part of the quote ("...and don't say too much")makes a point that many speakers forget: when you have said what you have to say, stop instead of rambling on. A simple, "That is the end of my prepared remarks. Questions?" serves the purpose.

The 3 major topics in Day's chapter are how to organize a paper that will be presented orally, how to prepare easy-to-read slides, and how to understand the special needs of a listening audience. For example, the needs and interests of a listening audience will usually be more diverse than those of a reading audience, so the speaker must take care to be clear and not go into as much detail as writers usually do .

Day says that slides should supplement what the speaker has to say, not restate the speaker's remarks or be used as a substitute for the speaker's remarks . Note that some slides you see at medical or scientific meetings have tables of data that attempt to show everything about a part of a study. The audience doesn't have time to read such tables, and persons at the back of the room can't read them because the print is too small. It is better to use a slide that summarizes tables of data (for example, show the ranges of measurements, the averages, or the statistically significant outcomes).

HOW TO LEARN GOOD SPEAKING TECHNIQUES BY WATCHING OTHERS

If you watch other speakers for the following behaviors, you will probably recognize some strengths of your own speaking, some errors you have made, and some good techniques you could learn. As you attend your next presentation or lecture, make a written note of the good and bad techniques you see. The goal isn't to find fault or to determine who is a poor speaker, but to focus your attention on what makes a good presentation. The lists below contain only examples; try to find other good and poor techniques in the presentation you observe.

Examples of Good Speaking Techniques to Watch For

1. Does the speaker begin the talk by making clear what the subject is and what points will be covered?
2. Has the speaker learned to use the room's sound and lighting equipment?
3. Has the speaker taken time before the talk to organize the slides or overheads?
4. Does the speaker provide the amount of information and detail to suit the audience and to suit the time available for the talk?
5. Does the speaker end with a concise summary so the audience can remember main points?
6. Does the speaker restate questions so all in the audience know what was asked?

Examples of Poor Speaking Techniques to Watch For

1. Is the speaker's voice at times too weak to be heard?
2. Does the speaker seem uninterested in the topic (for example, is there an absence of facial expression or of voice inflection)?
3. Does the speaker seem uninterested in the audience members and whether they are learning? For example, does the speaker look only at the notes or slides? Does the speaker turn his or her back to the audience while talking? Does the speaker stand between some of the audience and the screen so they can't see the slides?
4. Does the speaker wave a pointer aimlessly at the screen or blackboard so the audience can't tell where he or she wants to direct their attention?
5. Does the speaker seem unable to stop talking and instead ramble on after all important points have been stated?
6. Does the speaker make questioners feel they should not have asked for information?

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 25 IN DAY'S BOOK, "HOW TO PREPARE A POSTER"

The quotation at the beginning of Day's chapter is excellent advice, but many poster preparers either haven't read it or ignore it. As a result, they do a great deal more work than necessary, preparing the equivalent of a journal article to pin on their display board. Day emphasizes that poster presentations should be brief, presenting only highlights, and illustrations should be used instead of text where possible.

Two instructions Day gives seem so obvious that readers might overlook them: Before beginning your work, get the sponsoring organization's rules and requirements for poster exhibits, and prepare your material so that it can easily be read in sequence.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKLET BY HANNA AND ILES, "A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: PREPARING POSTER EXHIBITS" (see Supplementary Reading Packet)

This booklet takes you from the beginning of the poster preparation process (when you plan the poster) to the end (when you carry or ship your poster to the conference and affix it to the display panel).

The authors' suggestion on the sequence to follow when writing the parts of a poster does not apply to the order of the parts as they will be displayed. If you start your writing with what you know best -- usually, the Materials and Methods or Results -- the work goes more easily than if you try to begin with the title and work your way through to the conclusions. However, when you put your poster on the display board, the parts should follow the IMRAD sequence or some other sequence that is logical to readers,

Note the example of an organization's guidelines for poster preparation on page 15 of the booklet. The illustrations (line graph, bar graphs, and Figure 3) are shown under the heading "Methods". Such illustrations are usually more useful in the Results section.

The list of journal articles on pages 24 and 25 of the booklet will help you find information on particular topics. For example, Article 7 (by Lugo, Speaker, and Cohen) tells how to use a computer and a printer to prepare posters. Article 10 (by Wright and Moll) presents an analysis of what makes a successful poster, based in part on how much time viewers gave to reading various types.

In Article 12, Tribell tells about using a single large piece of photographic paper on which all the poster is printed. The method has advantages (the poster is a good reproduction that is neat and easily rolled and shipped), but it is also expensive. More importantly, you must change the whole poster if you find an error or want to update your poster for use at another meeting.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOKLET "BETTER PRESENTATIONS WITH SLIDES AND OVERHEADS" BY ILES AND WOODS, PAGES 14-20 (see Supplementary Reading Packet)

Iles begins these pages by describing the 4 big mistakes that speakers make: Failing to rehearse aloud, failing to think about projection or sound equipment, and trying to "perform" rather than simply being oneself. Comedians Rodney Dangerfield and Joan Rivers are known for their exaggerated mannerisms and unique styles, which others should not try to imitate.

After describing what a speaker should not do, Iles also offers advice on what a speaker should do before, during, and after a presentation. He talks about what the speaker can do to draw and hold the audience's interest, such as emphasizing main points with repetition.

The approach that Iles recommends for spoken presentations is similar to O'Connor's (1991) approach to writing journal articles, as mentioned in lesson 3 of this course: "All writers, including scientists, must keep their readers in mind while they are writing, so consider who your readers will be and why they will want to read your paper." What O'Connor says about writers and readers is equally true for speakers and listeners.

If you wish to see the rest of this booklet, please consult your local instructor, who has a copy of the whole booklet.

THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

During the next 2 weeks, observe a presentation. The presentation may be one that you are attending for another purpose. List at least 2 strengths of the speaker's presentation technique. Also list at least 2 suggestions for improvement. Submit your list to your local instructor.

AN ENDING NOTE: Please feel free to contact your local instructor with questions about this lesson.