Converting your thesis into a research paper

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Introduction and General Principles
Deciding to do postgraduate work

- Personal trajectory
- Motivation
  - Better employment opportunities
  - Curiosity
  - Title
- Reality
  - Time and effort
  - Cost
  - Sacrifices
Being a researcher

• Requirement to publish your work
  – Academic
  – Other

• Importance of peer review
Planning, executing and writing up your post-graduate work
Planning and executing your project

• Identification of a topic
• Identification of a supervisor
• Planning/outline of project
• Funding
• Being realistic
• Critical mass
  – Not working in isolation
  – Trouble shooting
Writing your dissertation/thesis

- Timing
- Planning/outline
  - Content
  - Time required
  - Assistance with writing
  - Supervisor response
Making it easier to publish

• Visualize while writing your dissertation/thesis
  – Article
  – Journal
    • Read similar articles in your target journal

• Quality versus quantity
  – Start slowly
  – Get it right!
Selecting a journal

• Topic
• Impact factor
  – Reflects the average number of citations of articles published in science and social science journals
  – Used as a proxy for the relative importance of a journal within its field
  – Journals with higher impact factors are deemed to be more important than those with lower ones
Article structure

• Title page
• Abstract
• Introduction
• Materials and Methods
• Results
• Discussion
• Acknowledgements
• References
• Figure legends
• Figures and tables
Editor’s advice on how to get your article published

Study the journal. The first step is to know who the journal is for and the kinds of articles it publishes.

Use good English. Reviewers often reject papers because the grammar is bad, rather than on the basis of the content.

Be realistic. Be aware of the value of your results but don’t over-interpret them.

Don’t try too hard to sound important; don’t use a pompous voice.
Editor’s advice on how to get your article published

Tell a coherent story, and don’t make sweeping conclusions if you don’t have the results to support them; i.e. don’t be over-speculative.

Make sure the title matches the content, e.g. don’t use the title “Impact of climate change on bird ecology” when there isn’t a single climate parameter in your paper.

Read lots of papers and learn from them.
Common problems

• The paper is too long
• The paper is not well structured The writing and figures are not clear
• The author has not explained the general interest of the specific issues
• The author assumes too much specific knowledge from the reader
• The subject matter is not suitable for the journal
Key elements to success

• Hard work
• Don’t be afraid to try new things or to enter into previously unchartered waters
• Foster the ability to adapt
  – To ones own circumstances
  – To change
• Respect other’s dignity
Perceived failure

• Challenges
  – Studies
  – Fund raising
  – Publishing
“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

Nelson Mandela
Translating your post-graduate work into a research paper
Why publish?

• Academic requirement
  – Funding
  – Promotion
  – Ranking/rating

• Sharing your ideas
  – Advancement of your domain
  – Recognition

• Intellectual property
Key points

• Tell a story
  – Capture the interest of your reader
  – Keep your reader’s interest
• Focus on the reader and not on yourself
• You need to sell your story
  – It is your work, you must sell it
  – Simply having done the work does not mean it will be recognized
• Be concise – use only as many words as you need and no more
Take-home messages

• When you start your project, do so with publications in mind
• If you are to be recognized as a serious researcher, you must publish
• The importance of peer review
• Practice, practice, practice
• Enjoy what you are doing
Thank you