

Early Career Workshop

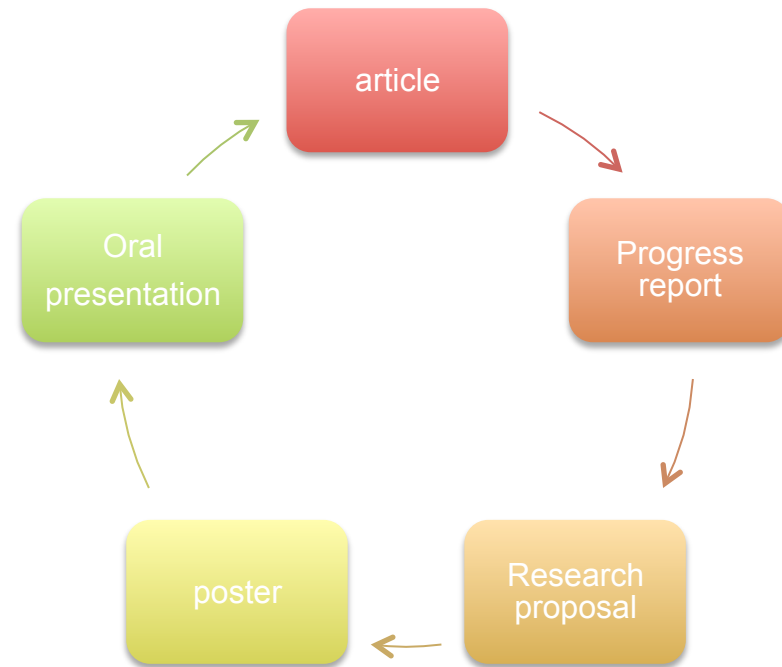
Grant Proposals: How to Write and Argue
Effectively

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S. Miller (1984) described genre as a rhetorical action that recurs within a social setting

The sharing of meaning is **intersubjective** and **negotiated** through discourse among the group

These shared discourses form into typical types of documents (genres)



Genre as social action



Grant proposals follow this general pattern:

What is the problem?

What solution do you recommend?

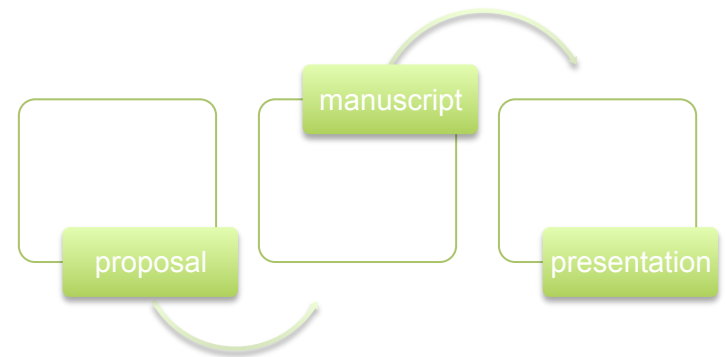
What is your implementation schedule?



Genres typically do not occur alone but instead as part of a set of social actions within a group

The research article is one of a set of genres: a conference presentation, a research grant, research grant reports, peer review documents

Other related documents?



Claim



Link (because)



Reason



Challenges

(How, So what, Why?)



Evidence

(Data, Statistics, Expert opinion, Visuals, Other studies, etc. [What counts is often discipline-specific])

Claim + stated reason:

The gun registry in Canada has failed to live up to its promise of making women safer **because the kinds of guns used to kill women in domestic violence do not require registration.**



- Evidence to support stated reason (Grounds) (facts, data, statistics, testimony, examples)
- Backing = facts, statistics, testimony, examples that support the grounds or assumptions you are working from



- Claim + stated reason rest upon an unstated reason
- Both the stated and unstated reasons rely on shared assumptions of value between the writer and the reader
- Evidence demonstrates the validity of the stated or unstated reasons
- When values are shared, less evidence is needed to convince the reader



Step 1:

What is your research problem? (one sentence)



“A problem exists of social and research importance (**territory**). Some research already exists, but there is also clearly an absence of research in a particular area (**gap**). The researcher(s) is/are well prepared (**means**) to address the problem (**goal**) by conducting the following study (**methodology**).”

Take 5: draft a paragraph



“Recently, Alberta has received much media attention because of its massive drawing power for migrants in a context of unprecedented economic growth (3 references 2007/2006). A less noticed but equally important development is the steady increase of the birth rate in this province, a situation diametrically at odds with the persistent pattern of low fertility in Canada. Most surprising is the apparent lack of scholarly interest to this new development. **My study seeks to address this void** in the demographic literature . . .”



Real world example

Swales (1991) developed the concept of discourse communities to explain the purposes within documents

His concept of rhetorical “moves” within documents—such as “establish a research territory”—leads to one method for establishing the typical purposes or communicative aims for a document.



Discourse communities

What argumentative moves can you perform in a CIHR manuscript?

Sample: "Because Canada's Arctic Aboriginal peoples include diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit cultures in distinct settings, the Aklavik results cannot be presumed to generalize across the north."

Move: X

X is not generalizable because these groups are diverse; therefore we need to study other groups



Sample: "the current risk prediction framework is inadequate for identifying high-risk subgroups and accurately estimating their risk levels. . .Consequently [this leads to] underestimation of the risk for these high-risk subgroups"

Move: Previous methods obscure X ; the proposed method promises to uncover X



“moves” are like tacit questions that grant writers answer

Moves are a way to organize the proposal

Moves create a narrative



Research territory refers to current research issues or problems

“Real world” territory refers to social problems or issues

Connect the two territories: a real world problem exists for which a research area can propose a solution



“[this study] will also be of interest beyond the academic community. The project grows out of the initial steps taken by the office of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TCRM). . . It is essential to know the history of agriculture in First Nations communities in order to understand what the barriers have been and how they may be removed.”



“Particularly worrisome has been the increase in adolescent gang membership. A subset of the offending population, estimated at 68% of institutionalized youth, are affiliated with a gang, yet little research has been done to distinguish gang members from other types of young offenders (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1996); Richter-White, 2003). It may be that young people are turning to gangs for protection from other gangs, as a way to gain respect, to escape from troubled homes, because their friends are doing it, peer pressure, or as a way to earn a living through drug trafficking, illegal weapons sales, robbery, and theft (Lloyd, 2002). However, the reasons why adolescents choose to join a gang remain understudied with no clear answers.

—Nicole Kostiuik, *Attachment in Incarcerated Adolescent Gang Members*, 2007.



Excerpt

Establishes that a problem exists

Provides motivation for the proposed study by implying the gap needs to be filled

“This consolidation appears to be pointing to a ‘two-tiered’ financial system: an increasingly ‘exclusive’ financial world accessible to those with capital and wealth, and high-cost financial practices for those populations who are prevented from accessing mainstream credit (ref. 2005).”



States the aim, general objective, chief contribution of the study

This move responds to the gap or problem identified in the proposal

“My study seeks to address this void in the demographic literature . . .”



“The principal goal of my study is to address these and other related questions and to uncover the underlying social demographic and socioeconomic factors responsible for the recent fertility rise in Alberta.”



How the goal will be achieved, including descriptions of methods, procedures, plans, or actions and tasks

Writers demonstrate their methodological competency:

Presented the specific steps of their study

Named a theory or method that would enable them to reach the project goals



Step 2:

What is your method? (one sentence)

You'll need to elaborate this:

- Citations to others who have used it
- Identify how you might be modifying it/improving it
- Describe the steps/procedure in detail



“Vaccinia virus (VV) is considered the prototypic poxvirus, and is amenable to **genetic manipulation** through a multitude of available DNA recombination tools (450). VV has also been used extensively as a **gene delivery mechanism**, as its large DNA genome makes it relatively easy to insert foreign DNA sequences for protein expression in mammalian cells (50, 100). Despite the fact that the natural host for VV is unknown, **VV remains an excellent model in which to study virus:host interactions due to its complex genome and vast array of anti-immune mechanisms** (169). In response to the selective pressures initiated by the host immune system, poxviruses such as vaccinia virus encode a vast array of proteins which modulate both innate and adaptive immune responses (Table 1.2) (21, 105).”

John Taylor, *The inhibition of apoptosis and Bax activation by mitochondrial antiapoptotic proteins encoded by vaccinia virus and ectomelia virus*, Fall 2007. (bolding added)



Cite sources that support your methods

Addresses writer's credibility and readiness to conduct the research

Strategies:

1. Cite their own past or ongoing research to imply connection between proposed research and their competency

2. Make explicit claims about their competency based on previous research



Nominalizations (a verb changed into a noun)

We investigated the problem to see . . .

A problem investigation showed . . .

Nominalizations remove agency, creating an objective tone

They can improve conciseness.

Warning: Overuse of nominalizations can confuse and bog down a reader's understanding



Techniques that prove a framework or conceptual map for the document (headings, bulleted or numbered lists, etc.)

Help to organize the information for the reader

Help reader retrieve specific information later

Writers use SSHRC headings, as well as their own to guide readers



Research plan/Methodology

1. Historical Context Analysis
2. Mapping Public Discourses of Fringe Finance
3. Narratives of Regulation



Citing others: writers build on others' work rather than demolishing it

Citing oneself: used to enhance writer's credibility



“Although sources of public data relating to corporate structure have been used to assess levels of corporate regionalization (Rugman, 2005, Rugman 2004) and processes of transnational class formation (Carroll 2004; Carroll and Fennema 2002), they have rarely been used in the critical finance literature.”



What is your implementation plan?

Schedule of activities

Sequence of work

Details of work plan



What is the plan?

Each discipline has it's own structures:

- Pharmacy: SOAP
- Business: Problem, solution, implementation
- Science: IMRAD
- Engineering: Introduction, formulation of the problem, results, conclusion

What is the dominant pattern in your discipline?



Each discipline has it's own discourse