

2016 BSA Climate Change Study Group Article Prize workshop summary

The BSA Climate Change Study Group hosted a workshop on the 15th March 2016 at the University of Nottingham to celebrate the three winning articles of the Group's Article prize. A total of 17 papers were nominated and judged by the winners of the 2015 Article Prize, the final three where:

1. Rebecca Whittle (2015) Guilt and elation in the workplace: emotion and the governance of the environment at work, *Environmental Values* 24: 581-601.
2. Elizabeth Hall and Todd Sanders (2015) Accountability and the academy: Producing knowledge about the human dimensions of climate change. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. 21(2): 438-461.
3. Murray Goulden and Alexa Spence (2015) Caught in the middle: the role of the facilities manager in organisational energy use. *Energy policy*, 85: 280-287.

Summary of workshop

The workshop adopted an open discussion format with 12 participants with a mixture of insights from the article prize winners and judges combined with discussion and input from the participants. The workshop was divided into two parts: the first focused on how papers came about, whether they were part of a project, what hypothesis/idea they sought to test, insights into the writing process, what it was like to co-author etc. The second part went into more details about the publication and review process itself with again insights and top tips from the authors based on their experiences

Writing Excellent Articles

Each winning author spoke about how their paper came about, what difficulties they encountered, what they really enjoyed from the process, their experiences of writing the articles and suggestions they had on how to do this efficiently and within tight deadlines.

Sole-authored papers and co-authored papers can have advantages and challenges. The participants discussed how for example assembling evidence and reaching agreement on who the audience and messenger ('we', passive/active voice) of the paper can be tricky, particularly if the authors are interdisciplinary. Sole authorship provides complete control over the paper development however this can be quite an isolating and lonely process so discussing ideas with colleagues as well as presenting parts of the paper at conferences can also be useful ways to get early comments on the content.

Co-authoring papers can bring with it a team and increased support in putting together the content and where needed authors can hand over the paper to co-authors if they feel they have run out of steam. Having an interdisciplinary and multi-skilled/experience team can be very beneficial if the roles of each is recognised early on, for example one person may particularly enjoy sorting out the reference list whilst someone else may have extensive experience of writing concise compelling abstracts. This can however be challenging if multiple authors have different visions of what the paper should focus on and reconciling different theoretical frames can be a challenge so coming up with a shared view/aim to being with is useful. It is also important to have conversations early on about authorship and roles as those conversations can become delicate if there is a lack of clarity.

Top tips on writing papers

- Useful to have an internal review process before submitting the paper to a journal as what may be clear and obvious to the authors may not be for others
- Aim for simplicity and find a niche to fill in the literature

- Interdisciplinary work is constantly evolving so its important to keep handle of work underway, assess what the interesting questions are, what needs to be explained and consider within the author team who will be doing what
- Writing: clear chunks of time to dedicate to writing, going to a different space can work, brainstorm first can be advantageous to plan the writing process and adopting different timing methods, such as the pomodoro method can help write effectively
- Have an internal review process in mind before submitting the paper to a journal, this could be by setting up small group of peers to review papers/parts of the paper, presenting parts of the paper at conferences (even asking attendees advice on how to address specific reviewer comments if this for a paper which is being revised and re-submitted)
- Whilst difficult a times, having more than one paper on the go, this can reduce pressure in the long run to increase outputs. Managing reviews and revised articles may also help to build ideas
- Assessing the scope of the paper is important and deciding that not everything has to be said in one paper - what is excluded can be parked and put into another paper
- Trying to get papers out of projects where possible, for example if a project is considered to have been unsuccessful, considering writing a methods paper
- Deciding early on who the author team is and what their roles are (who writes and who contributes)
- Reading fiction can help build skills to construct narratives and communicate the paper's argument more effectively
- Use the acknowledgements section if appropriate to explain and be specific about authors role (this some times is requested in some journals) as well as stating 'we acknowledge we are both joint author' if both considered co-author
- Targeting a paper and knowing your audience can help tailor the paper accordingly but at times let the audience find you

Publishing and the Review Process

Each author spoke about the publication process they experienced, including what was good or challenging about the process with a focus on managing reviewer comment, nominating reviewers and managing co-authorship.

Key tips that emerged from the group discussion:

- Limit personal word count to the paper limit minus 500 words in order to manage challenges of trying to cover more within a paper without increasing the word count. This will help further down the line when response to reviewer comments may increase the word count
- Dealing with a rejected manuscript: important to not take this personally and reuse the rejection comments to revise and resubmit the paper to another journal
- Recommending reviewers: good to assess who is involved in this debate and consider what they may expect/want to see in the paper
- Managing reviewer comments: not all comments need to be agreed with and you can demonstrate certainty in your argument by pushing back on some comments you think don't necessarily require change. Its important to make the case for this and justify not making the change in the cover letter
- Take time to consider reviewer comments as changes don't always require whole sections to be re-written but at times its just issues of clarification
- If you're not sure about where to publish, look at where your references are publishing and read the journal's scope and objectives
- Assessing which journal to publish in depending on impact factor knowing that different disciplines have different impact factors



Winners of the 2016 BSA Climate Change Study Group article prize.