

Action Research Project

Ana Teles, January 2026



Background

Visual Arts

Journal of
Contemporary
Painting

Volume 11 Number 1

Special Issue
'Carol Rhodes: Seen
and Unseen'

 Intellect Journals ISSN 2052-6695



Story

Preparing For Publication, Peer Review Group



Context

How can I (and UAL) better support students writing for publication?

What does *writing for publication* mean for students?

What are the main barriers to writing for publication?

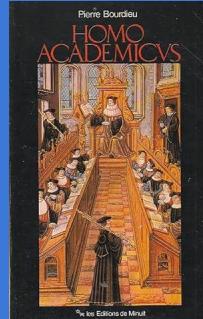
What existing support and resources are available?



Rationale

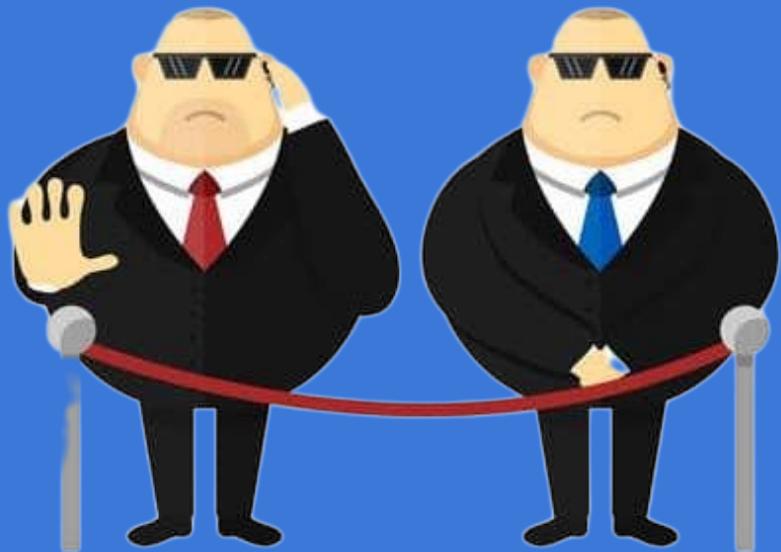
Why it matters:

- Publishing benefits: professional development, career progression, recognition, advancement of knowledge.
- Removing barriers supports **diverse voices, experiences, and forms of knowledge.**



Barriers to publication:

- Writing challenges
- Limited understanding of publication processes and expectations.
- Fear of rejection and self-doubt



Research Methods

Semi-structured Interviews:

- PhD students (various levels and experiences)
- Academic tutor supporting writing for publication

Review of literature:

- Pedagogical strategies
- Understand barriers

Analysis of resources available:

- Academic support, Doctoral School, etc
- Peer review group

Testing/intervention (trying out ideas in practice)

Reflexivity (drawing on my own experience as a practitioner-researcher)

Analysis

Semi-structured Interviews:

- complex and emotionally demanding;
- anxiety of rejection;
- peripheral to the PhD;
- disconnect between PhD writing and publication writing;
- community-based, peer support combined with expert guidance;
- support through the process of publishing.

their work public, but they are often the subject of the text rather than its author. Translating practice into a written academic article is more complex, and many artists/students find this particularly challenging.

AT: And when did you start becoming interested in publishing yourself?

XX: I read a lot of publications, and they're a major source of inspiration and knowledge for me. Being part of that conversation feels important. Publishing feels like a way to enter dialogue with other researchers and debates, rather than just working alone.

At the same time, research can feel overwhelming and very personal. I feel a strong need to protect my ideas and my knowledge. Once something is public, it no longer belongs only to you, and that's frightening—especially when research draws on personal experience. This taps into anxieties around publication, particularly fears of losing control over one's ideas.

AT: So there's a tension between sharing and protecting?

XX: Yes, very much. I'm inspired by people who share personal stories as part of their research and turn them into publications. I've seen people whose PhDs became multiple publications, and that brought them opportunities, funding, and visibility.

But for me, sharing personal material feels embarrassing and risky. I'm still at an early stage in my research, and I worry: if I share everything, what will be left? What is my original contribution if everyone is using similar references?

AT: What makes publishing appealing despite those fears?

XX: Research feels very isolating. I expected that doing a PhD would create a sense of community, but after three years I still feel like I'm working alone. I'm hoping that publishing could help me connect with people who share similar interests and create future collaborations.

I've self-published before—small books combining drawings and diary writing—but that feels very different. It's more personal and contained.

AT: Are you interested in academic journals specifically?

XX: Yes. I want to understand how academic publishing works—peer review, journals, expectations. My research sits between movement, improvisation, drawing, embodiment, and choreography. I don't know where it fits, but I imagine journals in performance or dance would make sense. Not understanding the publication process, or knowing which journals are available, is a common experience. While the UAL Doctoral School's Padlet lists a range of journals, this is not extensive, and additional guidance from someone researching in the same area could be particularly helpful.

I haven't published yet because writing feels very hard. Publishing demands originality, argument, structure, and rules. You put something very personal into the world and then wait months for feedback that could be very harsh. This is very common: at the beginning, all stages of publishing

can feel daunting, particularly without prior experience of the process or involvement in academic publishing.

AT: What kind of support do you feel you need?

XX: Community. Support during different stages—choosing where to submit, writing, waiting, receiving feedback. A group where people can talk honestly about difficulties and

XX: Honestly, I don't know. Being invited was a huge boost to my confidence. I never really saw myself publishing academically.

AT: Why was that?

XX: I come from a journalism background—writing reviews, arts and culture pieces, opinion writing. I associate writing with something reactive and current. Academic writing feels very different, especially within practice-based research. Understanding and articulating practice-based research is so challenging that it shifts how you see yourself—you don't quite feel part of an academic community.

If my PhD had been by publication, I might see myself differently. Most of my engagements have been workshop-based or practical. Even conference contributions were presentations, usually PowerPoints. Over time, research gets reduced to slides, and writing becomes secondary. Again, this taps into how writing for academic publishing is so different from other types of publishing—and support is needed.

AT: Because the work is so visually led?

XX: Exactly. Visuals do a lot of the work for us, which actually undermines confidence in writing. Writing feels difficult because images carry the meaning.

AT: So how did you approach writing for the Routledge publication?

XX: It was after my confirmation, and only two images were allowed. I had to think purely through text. That forced me to see writing as its own medium, not as support for visuals. The text had to convey everything—argument, problem, analysis—without relying on images. That shifted my mindset away from storytelling toward articulating a clear research problem.

AT: So you had to foreground the argument.

XX: Yes. Images encourage slick storytelling, but storytelling isn't the same as argument. Writing forced me to analyse and pull out strands properly.

AT: What stage of your PhD are you at now?

XX: I'm writing up and preparing for submission. I haven't had my viva yet.

AT: Had you published before this?

XX: I had presented at conferences—maybe three or four over the course of my PhD—but not published academically. This opportunity aligned perfectly with work I was already doing, which made it possible.

AT: I'm trying to understand how institutions like UAL can support students in writing for publication.

XX: What's widely publicised are conferences, but what's missing is visibility of publication opportunities—calls for articles, journals, edited volumes. If I hadn't presented at that conference, I would never have known the reader was being updated. Publishing feels random and inaccessible unless you're already inside those circles.

AT: Yes, and sometimes editors just invite people directly.

XX: That's fine, but people still need to know what publications exist. Doctoral students should have an overview of major journals and platforms relevant to their fields.

AT: Who do you think should provide that support?

XX: The doctoral school is best placed to do it. Not by doing the work for students, but by

Analysis

Orientation: Understanding Publishing Opportunities

Discover why publishing matters, the benefits it can bring to your academic and professional journey, and how to take your first steps in identifying, preparing, and submitting your work. You'll also find practical tips, useful tools, and UAL-specific resources to support your publishing ambitions.

Start mapping your path to publication journey today!



Find more information here (core knowledge 20min read).

Orientation Resources

Understanding Different Types of Publications: [download here](#) (10min read).

The Value of Publishing: Why It Matters for Study, Progression & Employability [download here \(10min read\)](#).

What Should I Research? Finding Your Authentic Voice: [download here \(10min read\)](#).

Peer Review and Exchanging Writing

Workshop materials

Issues in Writing

Academic Publishing

Help with Academic Referencing

Postgrad Interest Group: ongoing peer review opportunity

Uncommon Writing Workshop exercises

Writing about images

Padlet with Academic Publishing resources (courtesy of Dr Michael Eden, LFC Academic Support tutor)

Nuts 'n' Bolts of Referencing slide 1

Peer Review

Splenic Writing workshop

JAWS is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes new art and writing from early- to mid-career researchers and practitioners working across creative disciplines. JAWS publishes writing about art and writing as art. We welcome practice-based research, visual essays, book reviews and interviews by emergent practitioners and researchers. Supporting criticality and experimentation in arts writing, the journal connects authors to an international audience. JAWS welcomes divergent and/or unconventional forms, as well as more traditional submissions.

Padlet

Bob Whalley + 1 items

Publishing in academic journals

Here you will find a series of lists, calls for papers etc for peer-reviewed journals, which are updated regularly.

Introduction: 1

These lists do not intend to capture everything, so please be kind. And let us know if you have been successful, or have any suggestions for further journals, CFP etc

Bob Whalley b.whalley@arts.ac.uk
Ailison Green a.green@csu.ac.uk
Director of Doctoral Training and Research

Specific calls for Papers (CIP), and Special Issues 1

Special issue calls for papers:

Special issue calls for papers are often time specific, and the carefully framed text for 'Calls for Papers' often offer exciting keywords, links to funding, and framing of materials. Some deadlines are an ask for abstracts, and some for entire articles, please check.

[+ Add comment](#)

Open calls for Paper (CIP): in alphabetical order 1

Open calls for Papers:

'Open calls' are an opportunity to publish work, and mean that you can frame your research thinking towards the aims and scope of the journal. Some of these journals listed are new, and some are very well established. All come out of a rigorous peer-review process.

[+ Add comment](#)

Practice Research open calls for papers (CIP) 1

Call for reviewers:

Academic publishers in particular journals are reviewed by editors and experts in the field through a multistage process known as 'peer review'. These processes call for rigorous academic review, and often require providers feedback on proposals and submissions: this can be a rich learning process (and you often learn so much about your own style of writing as well).

[+ Add comment](#)

Calls for peer reviewers 1

Certified Peer Review (free):

The Elsevier Research has a free certified peer reviewing. By taking Peer Reviewer training, you receive a thorough introduction to the principles and of refereeing. Co-creators, and in part delivered academically, the course specifically design who have not yet peer who feel they would training in this area confidence to acc

Peer-reviewed articles: 1

Peer-reviewed articles, also known as peer-reviewed journal articles, are articles that have been evaluated by other experts in the field before being published. This process, known as peer review, helps to ensure that the research is of high quality and relevance. Peer-reviewed articles are often used as evidence in academic writing and research.

[+ Add comment](#)

Special Issue: Journal of Contemporary Painting: The Practice Research Call for Papers / Call for Researcher 1

Open Call for Papers: Active Learning in Higher Education (online) www.brunel.ac.uk/eduweb/...

[+ Add comment](#)

Pathways to Publication

Introduction

Here, you can explore opportunities to share and publish the research you've conducted throughout your studies, whether through coursework, projects, dissertations, or more.

Sharing and publishing your work is an excellent way to enhance skills relevant to education, employment and self-development, like critical thinking, research, literacy, and both visual and verbal communication. It also fosters essential attributes such as confidence, creativity, and professional independence. In our increasingly communication

Analysis

Support and resources available:

- extensive resources and support
- short-term support
- variable depth of staff knowledge (academic support)
- superficial, reactive engagement with texts
- seen as insufficient by some students (paddlet)

UAL Doctoral School Winter Writing Retreat: Middling – Writings in the Middle

Thursday 18 December

9.00–11.00 | Shut Up and Write (SUAW) (Peer-led online)
A structured, quiet writing session supporting focused drafting alongside others.

9.00–11.00 | Doctoral School Writing Space (Self-initiated, in person)
An open in-person space for independent writing in the Doctoral School rooms.

11.00–11.10 | Welcome (Dr Bob Whalley / Dr Alison Green, in person and online)
A brief welcome framing the retreat's focus on writing in the middle of research.

11.10–12.00 | Middling along (Sukhehpreet Sufi, online)
An invitation to explore the 'middleness' of PhD writing.

12.00–13.00 | Finding Your Companions / Detectives (Ayodeji Alaka, online)
A reflective writing session that brings theorists, specialist writers, and journalists as active commentators into the research thinking.

13.00–14.00 | Lunch: Moving with, and away from the page (Self-directed)
An invitation to step away from writing and allow thinking to shift through movement or rest.

14.00–14.45 | MICRO-MIDDLE: Revisiting a formative text (Julia Schaeffer, online)
A short reflection on returning to an early formative text can re-orient research in the middle stages.

14.45–15.00 | Intermezzo Writing: Experiments with Disappropriation (Dr Mark Ingham, in person and online)
A collaborative creative writing workshop exploring collective authorship and writing from the middle*.

15.00–16.30 | Closings (Dr Bob Whalley, in person and online)
A reflective closing on how researchers recognise when to pause or end writing for the day.

UAL Doctoral School Winter Writing Retreat: Middling – Writings in the Middle

Friday 19 December

9.00–11.00 | Shut Up and Write (SUAW) (Peer-led online)
A second morning of supported, focused writing time.

9.00–11.00 | Doctoral School Writing Space (Self-initiated, in person)
An open in-person writing space for independent work.

11.00–11.10 | Welcome (Dr Bob Whalley, in person and online)
A brief micro-welcome thinking about writings in the middle of research.

11.10–12.00 | Space: Muddling Through the Middle (Kathy Thompson, online)
An autoethnographically informed session exploring affect, space, and strategies for navigating the middle of a research project.

12.00–13.00 | Publishing in High-Ranked Journals (Professor Sunisha Gupta, online)
A practical overview of identifying journals, shaping submissions, and navigating the peer-review process.

13.00–14.00 | Lunch: Moving with, and away from the page (Self-directed)
Time away from the screen to support reflective and embodied thinking.

14.00–14.45 | Observing Better (Shreya Minocha, online)
A session on how everyday experiences beyond academia can inform and extend research practice.

14.45–15.15 | Writing as Practice of Trembling Language (Ana Vicente Richards, in person and online)
A generative writing workshop using auto-fictional texts to experiment with language and unsettle normative forms.

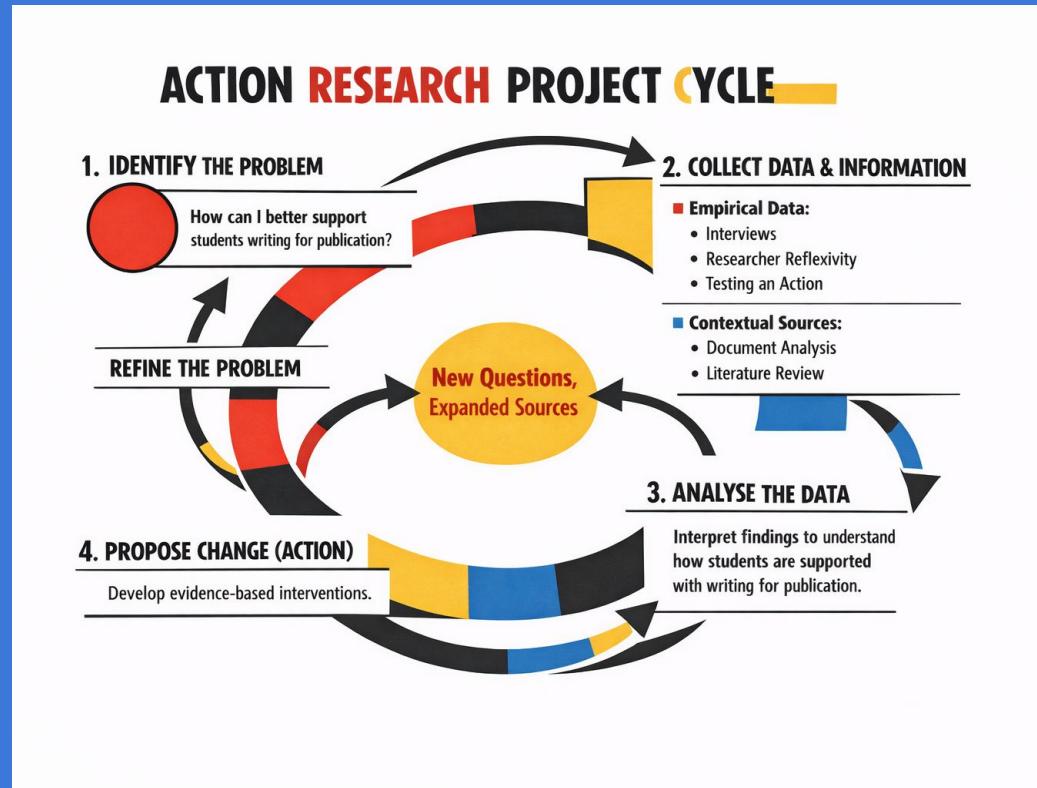
15.15–16.30 | Closings and Take-away (Dr Bob Whalley, in person and online)
A short closing introducing a self-led, movement-based reflective method to continue beyond the retreat.

Action

1. Peer Review Group (Small-scale, realistic actions)

- Share anonymised peer-review examples;
- Expand participation to build a supportive community;
- Run more regular sessions;
- Where possible, connect students with other academics.

2. Real-situation publication/conference (more ambitious intervention)



Conclusion

Main findings

- Practice-led research hard to translate into written outputs;
- Publication unfamiliar or peripheral for many PhD arts students
- Run more regular sessions;
- PhD Students want individual guidance and peer community support.

Limitations

- Peer review group not embedded in curriculum
- Small sample (three students)
- Research shaped by my positionality and timeframe

Next steps

- Continue the action plan
- Pilot student-led conference/publishing
- Encourage further research on arts-based knowledge production

Bibliography

- Andronic, O. (2020) Why should Student Publish? *Journal of Surgical Sciences*. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344174821_WHY_SHOULD_STUDENTS_PUBLISH
- Banerjee, P. (2023) Connecting the dots: A systematic review of explanatory factors linking contextual indicators, institutional culture and degree awarding gaps. *Advance HE*.
- Bourdieu, P. and Collier, P. (1996) *Homo academicus*. Reprinted. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Clarke, V. & Braun, V. (2018) Thematic analysis – an introduction. Lecture, University of the West of England, Bristol. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv7C53yvLqk> (Accessed 3 January 2026)
- Creswell, J.W. (2018) *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. 6th ed. Sydney: Pearson Education.
- Du Plooy, B. et al. (2025) 'Academic writing for publication: The experience and facilitation of liminality for developing higher levels of scholarliness', *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 62(3), pp. 1060–1072. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2024.2363899>.
- Duff, Diane. (2001). *Writing for publication*. Axone (Dartmouth, N.S.). 22. 36-9.
- Elliott, J. (2001) *A practical Guide to Action research in Action research for educational change*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Farrell, A. & Grgensohn, K., 2021. Supporting and encouraging writing: An interview with Dr Alison Farrell (Maynooth University) and Dr Katrin Grgensohn (European University Viadrina). *Educare*, 2021(1), pp. 57–68. <https://doi.org/10.24834/educare.2021.1.5>
- Green, A. (2024) Personal communication, 5 May.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M. and Namey, E.E. (2012) *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Hirst, S., Jeffs, C., Paris, B.M., Arcellana-Panililio, M., Charles, A., Hill, L. and Hilman, B. (2019) 'Something to say: Writing for publication', *Papers on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching: Proceedings of the University of Calgary Conference on Learning and Teaching*, 3, pp. 9–16.
- Kara, H. (2015) *Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide*. Bristol: Policy Press. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.56687/9781447320258>.
- Lillis, T.M. and Curry, M.J. (2010) *Academic Writing in a Global Context: the politics and practices of publishing in English*. London: Routledge, pp. 186-188.
- McNiff, J. (2013) *Action research: principles and practice*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.
- O'Farrell, C., 2013. Supporting academics to write for publication: A holistic approach. *AISHE-J: The All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 5(1), pp.1031–1057.
- Rodriguez, E., Shofer, S., Harter, M. & Clark, N., (2018). First guiding process: Problematizing what you know for new-self insight. In: E. Rodriguez, S. Shofer, M. Harter & N. Clark, eds. *Autoethnography: Process, product, and possibility for critical social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ross, A., Colthup, R. and Jenkins, R. (2024) Publish or Perish: Barriers faced by Early Career Academics trying to find an outlet for their voice. *Innovative Practice in Higher Education*, 6(1).
- Saha, A. and van Lente, S. (2020) *Rethinking 'Diversity' in Publishing*. London: Goldsmiths, University of London and Spread the Word. Available at: https://www.spreadtheword.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Rethinking_diversity_in-publishing_WEB.pdf [Accessed 2 Dec. 2025].
- Shamsi, A. F., & Osam, U. V. (2022). Challenges and Support in Article Publication: Perspectives of Non-Native English Speaking Doctoral Students in a "Publish or No Degree" Context. *Sage Open*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221095021> (Original work published 2022).
- Silva, J. A. T. (2021) 'Challenges that early career researchers face in academic research and publishing: pre-and post-COVID-19 perspectives'. *Exchanges: the interdisciplinary research journal*, 9(1), pp. 77-106.
- Skains, R. L. (2018) 'Creative Practice as Research: Discourse on Methodology', *Media Practice and Education*, 19(1), pp. 82–97.
- Tomal, D.R. (2003) *Action research for educators*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press.
- Tremblay-Wragg, E., Vincent, C., Mathieu-C., S., Lison, C., Ponsin, A. and Déri, C. (2022) 'Writing retreats responding to the needs of doctoral candidates through engagement with academic writing', *Qualitative Research in Education*, 11(1), pp. 29–57. <https://doi.org/10.17583/qre.9195>
- Year, C. (ed.) (2022) *The Routledge international handbook of practice-based research*. Abingdon, Oxon New York, NY: Routledge (Routledge international handbooks). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429324154>.