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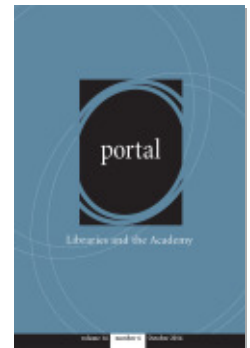
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## Instruction to Faculty and Graduate Students: A Tutorial to Teach Publication Strategies

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# Instruction to Faculty and Graduate Students: A Tutorial to Teach Publication Strategies

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Jennifer E. Knievel

**abstract:** Although online information literacy tutorials have proven to be a popular method of delivering instruction to undergraduates, there seem to be relatively few that are targeted toward junior faculty or graduate students. Librarians at the University of Colorado have created an online tutorial for junior faculty and graduate students. "Publish Not Perish: The Art and Craft of Publishing in Scholarly Journals" is an online tutorial that addresses the information literacy needs of junior faculty regarding the subject of publication strategies. It also presents an opportunity to further familiarize junior faculty with the concept of open access publication.

## Introduction

Online tutorials enjoy widespread use in information literacy instruction. These tutorials are primarily targeted toward undergraduates, although graduate students and junior faculty appear to be underserved populations as recipients of information literacy instruction. These two groups are in particular need of instruction regarding publication strategies, which many of them must understand in order to be successful. Librarians on the Boulder, Denver, Colorado Springs, and Health Sciences campuses of the University of Colorado (CU) have created an online tutorial concerning such publication strategies. "Publish Not Perish: The Art and Craft of Publishing in Scholarly Journals," <http://www.publishnotperish.org>, fills a gap in the landscape of information literacy instruction and offers as an additional benefit the opportunity to provide instruction about the subject of open access publishing.

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## Publication Strategies and Instruction

Information literacy instruction has been important to librarians for many years. In 1999/2000, the “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education” were formalized and approved by the Association for College and Research Libraries. The standards enumerated five criteria for successful information use. They are:

- Standard One: The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.
- Standard Two: The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.
- Standard Three: The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.
- Standard Four: The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
- Standard Five: The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, information literacy can be briefly summarized as the ability to understand one’s information need and to find, evaluate, use, and to accurately give credit for information used. Each competency standard includes between three and seven performance indicators that further elaborate the standard. In the context of undergraduate instruction, information literacy instruction most frequently focuses on research instruction that helps students with such skills as identifying source types, developing keywords, searching databases and library catalogs, evaluating source quality, and citing sources.

Information literacy for junior faculty and graduate students, however, is more complicated than refining research strategies. The subject of publication strategies is a legitimate information need of theirs and deserving of instruction. One performance indicator associated with Standard Four (“The information literate student...uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.”) reads: “The information literate student communicates the product or performance effectively to others.”<sup>2</sup> One of the outcomes for this performance indicator includes: “Chooses a communication medium and format that best supports the purposes of the product or performance and the intended audience.”<sup>3</sup> For undergraduates, Standard Four is most often addressed via some sort of paper or research project, in which the course instructors define the audience, method, and format. For graduates and faculty who are being pressed to publish, the appropriate medium and format to support the product are less easily defined and yet critical to the success of their research agenda.

Faculty may know that, in order to communicate their product effectively, they need to publish a journal article that others in their discipline will read—but where? How? What steps are involved? They may be clear that the specific purpose of the information they have gathered is to further the knowledge of their discipline, but they may not be completely clear on the best method to accomplish it. For junior faculty, publication and dissemination of their research defines the “specific purpose” described in Standard Four



(“An information literate student uses information to accomplish a specific purpose.”). Instruction about publication strategies can provide the tools that allow junior faculty to make choices that facilitate publication and dissemination of their work. This element of information literacy is not often treated as an opportunity for instruction, even though—based on the response to one publication-related tutorial—there appears to be strong interest among faculty and graduate students for instruction of this kind.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the lack of instruction in this area is that librarians often do not get deeply involved with Standard Four. With undergraduates, this standard may be more appropriately addressed in class or maybe even in a writing center. Some teaching faculty may see a librarian’s involvement with Standard Four as a pedagogical intrusion, making it wiser politically for librarians to focus their strongest efforts on standards one, two, three, and five. However, faculty themselves could benefit from instruction about this standard. Faculty frequently enjoy a strong foundation, even expertise, in the first three standards and most of the time with the fifth, needing only minor assistance to develop familiarity with new tools or to locate specific items. Librarians do not frequently get involved with publication strategies because, in some ways, publication is so narrowly discipline specific; but there is a need for instruction about publication processes and strategy, independent of discipline. It is this need that the “Publish Not Perish” tutorial aims to address.

One might argue that, in the case of undergraduates, evaluation of resources (standard three) resides more appropriately with the disciplinary experts, the teaching faculty. Yet, instruction about source evaluation is all too infrequently provided by teaching faculty. This is probably due as much to faculty reticence to devote class time to what is seen as a basic literacy skill as due to an unawareness of students’ difficulties with successful evaluation. Thus, librarians have been willing to fill the void and have adopted instruction about source evaluation, integrating the concept into the information literacy standards.

In the same vein, one might argue that publication strategies and processes might be more appropriately taught by senior faculty to junior faculty—that this, too, belongs with the disciplinary experts. However, junior faculty still struggle to understand and enter the publication cycle.<sup>4</sup> Librarians, as participants in that cycle, understand it and possess the ability and expertise to provide instruction about it. As disciplinary generalists, instruction librarians are in a position to see and teach about the consistencies in publication across the disciplines. Librarians should be willing to fold this subject into their repertoire of instruction to their user populations.

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Faculty and graduate students are an altogether different audience from the usual undergraduate consumer of information literacy instruction. They tend to have a highly sophisticated understanding of the quality of research; in short, they are typically “information fluent” in their particular subject area. Faculty are acutely aware of the fact that their tenure case will mostly likely depend on their publication record.<sup>5</sup> Yet, their

information fluency does not necessarily transfer to other areas outside their particular sphere, and they need help obtaining information about such things as purchasing a car, choosing a restaurant, or identifying a journal in which to potentially publish.

The high demand displayed thus far for “Publish Not Perish” suggests perhaps a lack of guidance, direction, or knowledge about the publishing arena. A partial explanation may be that research and publication are highly individual pursuits. Each faculty member’s publication case is unique. There appears, however, to be a need for help understanding the publication processes that are largely universal and generic. There is also a need for guidance in developing strategies that can be applied to most situations, such as developing a list of publishing projects and possible publication outlets.

Many resources for locating publication opportunities in specific subject areas exist.<sup>6</sup> These guides are frequently printed and quickly go out of date. Even the online versions are often left to grow stale in the absence of frequent updates. These publication guides are almost always targeted to a specific discipline, necessarily making the audience a limited one. The focus on discipline tends to result in lists of journals, their scopes, and their editorial contacts, which change often. “Publish Not Perish” approaches the topic from a more general perspective that is relevant in more contexts.

### **Junior Faculty—The Neglected Population?**

Volumes upon volumes have been written discussing instruction for undergraduates. Information literacy librarians have access to standards, best practices, discussion groups, and scores of online tutorials in the form of projects like PRIMO (Peer-Reviewed Instructional Materials Online) and MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resources for Learning and Online Teaching).<sup>7</sup> Undergraduate information literacy practice has come into its own. Use of these tutorials, strategies in administering them, and their effectiveness in learning have been widely discussed in the literature.<sup>8</sup>

Fewer materials exist for graduate students. Exploration of the literature, PRIMO, and MERLOT reveal very little discussion of or online materials for information literacy instruction targeted toward graduate students. The materials that do exist are usually prepared for particular subject areas and typically provide in-depth coverage of discipline-specific research tools or strategies; nursing seems particularly common.<sup>9</sup> Although quite valuable for students in that particular discipline, they necessarily do not enjoy broad applicability.<sup>10</sup>

Other resources for graduate students usually cover relatively basic skills that might be considered remedial information literacy; they are the same concepts we teach to undergraduates. There does seem to be an increase in research methods tutorials geared toward graduate students.<sup>11</sup> For the most part, these tutorials seem to focus on what might be termed “library research strategies” rather than the broader research strategies that most graduate students learn as a part of their studies (for example, construct validity, statistical analysis, randomization, field research, and so on).

Further exploration of the research and of literature like PRIMO and MERLOT revealed almost no information literacy materials targeted specifically toward faculty. This group seems particularly underserved by existing instruction. Although it is impossible to determine with precision the reason for this lack, anecdotal evidence suggests



several possibilities. First, the information literacy needs of faculty have a tendency to be extremely focused, often revolving around a particular scholarly work or research tool. Faculty are typically highly sophisticated information consumers within their specialties. They need little assistance in evaluating sources; rather, they are more likely to require assistance getting a particular resource into their hands. They rarely have a need for a research perspective substantially broader than their particular field. As such, their needs tend to be primarily in their subject areas, making generalized instruction less valuable to them.

Another possible reason that faculty are rarely the recipients of information literacy instruction is that they have generally developed their own, time-tested research strategies. These strategies may involve citation tracing, database searching, professional networking, the collection of original data, and many other methods. Faculty are mostly satisfied with their individual research processes and are, therefore, less likely to seek higher-order research guidance from their librarians. With these higher order skills largely in place, when faculty do contact their librarians, they are often looking only for lower-order research assistance, such as help navigating a particular resource interface. These skills are simple and quick to teach and generally do not merit the extended effort of creating a tutorial or an information literacy program. Furthermore, faculty are less likely to pursue instruction because of their extremely busy schedules. Tenure standards continue to rise in institutions across the country, creating high pressure for junior faculty to publish large amounts before their tenure review.<sup>12</sup> Junior faculty are often forced to cull out of their lives anything that does not directly benefit their tenure case. They are unlikely to pursue information literacy instruction that they do not consider directly valuable to their research, teaching, or service.

Strategies for publication represent a higher order need, and librarians have the ability to bring substantial enlightenment. Junior faculty, and even many graduate students, endure very high pressure to begin publishing but frequently lack sufficient guidance and do not seek practical methods to help them understand the structure and process of publication.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes sufficient guidance is provided by senior colleagues and mentors; but, just as often, junior faculty and graduate students are left to fend for themselves in establishing a publication record. Senior colleagues may have already forgotten the stress and mystery of beginning publication, in much the same way that faculty frequently forget that many undergraduate students struggle to read and correctly interpret a citation or distinguish a peer-reviewed article from an op ed piece.

### **Open Access: A Scholarly Communication Opportunity**

Instruction about publication strategies allows the additional opportunity to educate faculty about other related concerns like open access publication. The library community has long been working to raise awareness of the crisis in scholarly publishing.<sup>14</sup> In the 1990s, as journal costs spiraled beyond the financial means of many libraries, a movement began that promoted free access to some kinds of information, especially publicly funded scientific research. As the crisis spread from scientific and technical disciplines to all areas of publication, either through extraordinary journal prices or severe cuts to book budgets in order to cover high serials costs, the movement toward open access

(OA) spread to many disciplines. Over time, scholarly organizations, universities, governments, and publishers have begun to respond. Librarians recognize that the problem

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of journal costs will not be solved without the involvement of researchers. Railing against high prices to the publishers is not usually a productive strategy, but researchers “voting with their feet” by either refusing to publish in particular journals or refusing to serve on editorial boards is much more visible to the publishing community. The stresses of budgets and the benefits of OA are relevant to faculty in all disciplines.

Librarians, however, must work against the fact that most faculty will see OA as, at best, an indirect benefit. Understanding open access publication represents another possible information need of junior faculty that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Although the idea of owning the distribution rights to their own work is certainly attractive, in the state of desperation created by tenure pressure, many faculty are willing to give up whatever they may want in order to get their publications accepted. They are not necessarily eager to risk their publication strategy over the question of OA. Librarians have long confronted this issue, often with great success. Faculty, and even governments, once convinced, are often willing to make strong statements in support of OA.<sup>15</sup> Although OA is certainly a topic about which junior faculty should be instructed, the subject is primarily a librarian issue; faculty often need to be convinced to learn about it. Publishing strategies, by contrast, are valuable in an extremely obvious way to junior faculty.

A tutorial based on overall publication strategies provides an opportunity for communicating to faculty the relevant issues of open access (OA) publishing. Bundled in this context, the potential arises for influence over the publication decisions that faculty

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make. Librarians reach out to scholars concerning scholarly communication in many ways already and seem to be enjoying some success thus far.<sup>16</sup>

Two factors that would largely influence the success of the OA movement are the value that tenured scholars place on OA publications and the publication choices of junior faculty. Most junior fac-

ulty, in the interest of maintaining their positions, will publish in the places their senior colleagues recommend or expect. Those senior colleagues, in all likelihood, made their publication choices in a different scholarly communication environment. Others have discussed the importance of reaching junior faculty and potential forums in which to do so.<sup>17</sup> A tutorial like “Publish Not Perish” represents an opportunity to influence the choices of junior faculty by arming them with information about and strategies for OA.



Some librarians are teaching successful classes about open access, but those do not appear to address the basics of publishing.<sup>18</sup> The goal of such classes may be to change existing faculty behavior rather than to influence initial publishing behavior among junior faculty. For the long-term success of OA, both angles must be addressed. Of course, change toward OA needs to happen at the level of the research faculty, not at the level of the library, so more efforts at reaching faculty and graduate students constitute movement in the right direction.<sup>19</sup>

### **“Publish Not Perish”: An Information Literacy Tutorial for Faculty and Graduate Students**

In 2005, libraries from all CU campuses received joint funding for an online project to benefit all campuses. Librarians agreed that faculty would be the target audience for the project. Librarians also agreed that a topic applicable to faculty in all disciplines was the need to publish. Given the diversity of subject expertise of faculty across campuses and the relative dearth of instruction on the subject, this choice seemed ideal. The result was “Publish or Perish,” a tutorial focusing on publication of scholarly articles, rather than scholarly books. Even faculty in monograph-dominated fields typically publish several journal articles; and, since many of the fields represented on the various campuses were not fields in which monograph publication was relevant, focusing on journal publication allowed the tutorial to be useful to a much larger audience. The instruction librarians decided on a conceptual structure for a tutorial that would cover the major information literacy concepts involved with publishing in any particular area. Subsequently, a free-lance librarian developed the content, and a campus technology group, the Center for Innovations in Training Technology (CITT), built the technological side. The tutorial was assigned a separate URL to create independence from any particular campus. Once the tutorial debuted, it was advertised to all four campuses and met immediately with great enthusiasm.

#### **The Tutorial: Content Overview**

“Publish Not Perish” consists of five modules: an overview of scholarly publishing, idea generation and journal research, manuscript preparation and submission, the editorial process, and customizing a publishing plan.

#### **Module 1—Overview of Scholarly Publishing**

This section begins by discussing concepts of scholarship and identifying the author’s place in a scholarly conversation. It describes journals and provides an overview of the publishing process. The module next describes the roles of the various players in the publishing process, including authors, reviewers, and editors, and also mentions how indirect conflicts might arise among the players. The module summarizes business models in publishing and highlights open access publishing, underscoring how open access publishing affects authors. The module details the different types of scholarly articles and points out the pros and cons of collaboration on scholarly work. Finally, the module stresses the responsibilities of authorship and recommends some strategies for



citation management and setting long-term goals. The module ends with a short quiz that is scored online.

### **Module 2—Laying the Groundwork: Ideas, Journal Research, and Queries**

The second module begins by discussing how authors might generate ideas for publication. It emphasizes the importance of simplifying and streamlining publication plans. It stresses the value of incorporating elements of other professional responsibilities into one's research and of thinking of many things as potential publication opportunities. A short quiz on these streamlining strategies is included. The module continues by suggesting areas relevant to the lives of most junior faculty in which publishing ideas might be hiding and talks about how to focus ideas into writeable, publishable segments. Finally, the module describes several methods for identifying possible journals for submission, including impact factors, citation tracking, and other strategies. The module cautions that too much attention to impact factors and acceptance rates can be detrimental to publishing plans. Finally, the module presents strategies for sending queries to gauge an editor's interest in a potential article.

### **Module 3—Deadlines and Details: Manuscript Preparation and Submission**

This module opens with a brief overview of how to begin a manuscript, including tips on how to put the article into context and performing a literature search. The module stresses the importance of recording and organizing sources in order to simplify both drafting and citing. The module provides tips on the writing process, suggests resources that affiliates of each CU campus may access for writing guidance, and advocates awareness of particular disciplinary style guides for influencing the kind of writing and citing in an article. The module moves on to discuss ethical issues related to plagiarism and attribution. It suggests submitting manuscripts for review by colleagues before sending them on to journals. Finally, it mentions the details involved in submitting a manuscript to a journal for review.

### **Module 4—From Good to Great: The Editorial Process**

Module 4 begins by describing the different types of peer review, from double blind to open reviews. It explains how manuscripts are often managed by editors and what is happening to one's manuscript while it is under review. It lists some of the reviewers' considerations in reviewing a manuscript and reminds authors to make the most of the waiting time by beginning work on a new project. The module then suggests what to expect from feedback on a particular article and covers the three major categories of results: rejection, revision and resubmission, and finally acceptance. The module further explains what happens during production for a particular article and what role an author should or should not expect to play in an article's production.

### **Module 5—Making It Yours: Customizing Your Publishing Plan**

Module 5 is the final module of the "Publish Not Perish" tutorial, and its focus is to further personalize all of the information the user has learned about publishing. It



provides a short overview of what was covered in the first four modules. It then recommends selecting a venue for publication. It offers suggestions of both low-tech and high-tech methods for tracking and organizing your projects. It promotes best practices in sustaining creativity and mentions possibilities for continuing education. The section includes worksheets for potential authors to download and fill out with their own ideas and with publishing information about particular journals. The tutorial closes with a user evaluation form.

### Who is Using “Publish Not Perish”?

In the first four weeks after the launch of the tutorial in 2007, there were 1,439 users. The tutorial asks for demographic information about the user’s status (faculty, graduate, undergraduate, staff, other) and campus (Boulder, Health Sciences, Denver, Colorado Springs, Denver Community College, Metropolitan State College in Denver, and other). So far, the use of the online tutorial is dominated by faculty, which represents the primary target group. Combined, faculty and graduate students far outweigh all other users (by roughly twice as much). The next largest group is the ambiguous “other.” (see figure 1) These usage patterns seem to suggest that we are reaching our target group with the tutorial.

Surprisingly, the majority of use is not from within the libraries where the tutorial was developed. The Boulder campus represents the largest single-institution user group among the four campuses that developed the tutorial as well as being the top user overall. The Health Science Center (another CU campus) ranks second both among the CU campuses and overall. However, the majority of use is from combined “other” institutions (see figure 2). Users come from all over the world, from Australia to China, and all over the country, from Hawaii to Indiana to Vermont. This international usage was quite surprising to developers, given that the tutorial was heavily marketed locally but not nationally or internationally. Though it is not clear how word of the tutorial spread so far so quickly, it is possible that this broad usage may indicate a need for similar instruction among this target population in other locations.

### Assessment

The only assessment tool currently employed for “Publish Not Perish” is a user feedback survey at the end of the tutorial. So far, feedback from the tutorial is overwhelmingly positive. Of the 49 respondents to the survey, 94 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the tutorial helped them “identify appropriate journals for submitting my work”; 94 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the tutorial helped them “learn to submit my manuscript for publication”; 100 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the tutorial helped them “understand how manuscripts are reviewed”; 96 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the tutorial helped them to “develop my own personal publishing plan”; and 98 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the tutorial helped them “identify resources that will help me publish.” The com-

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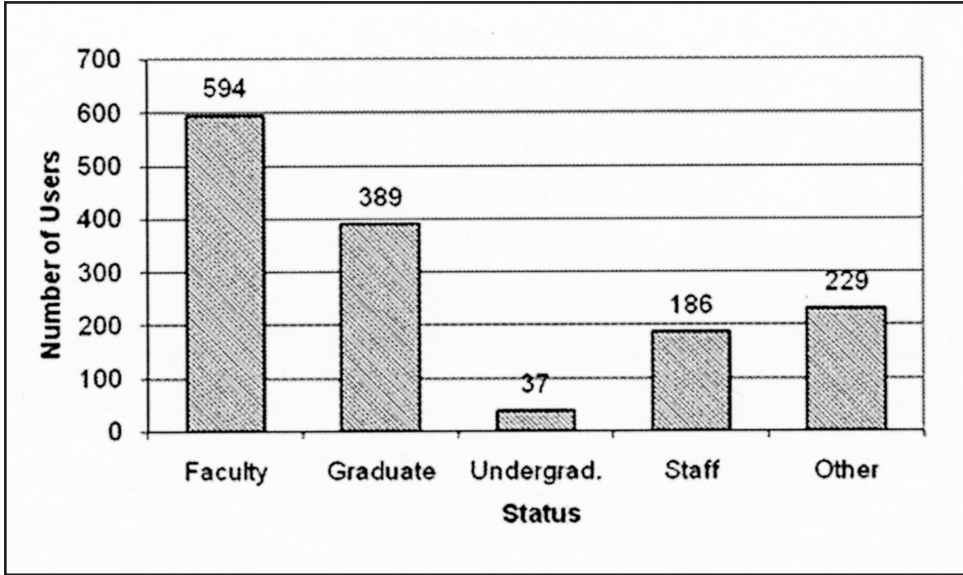


Figure 1. Usage by Status

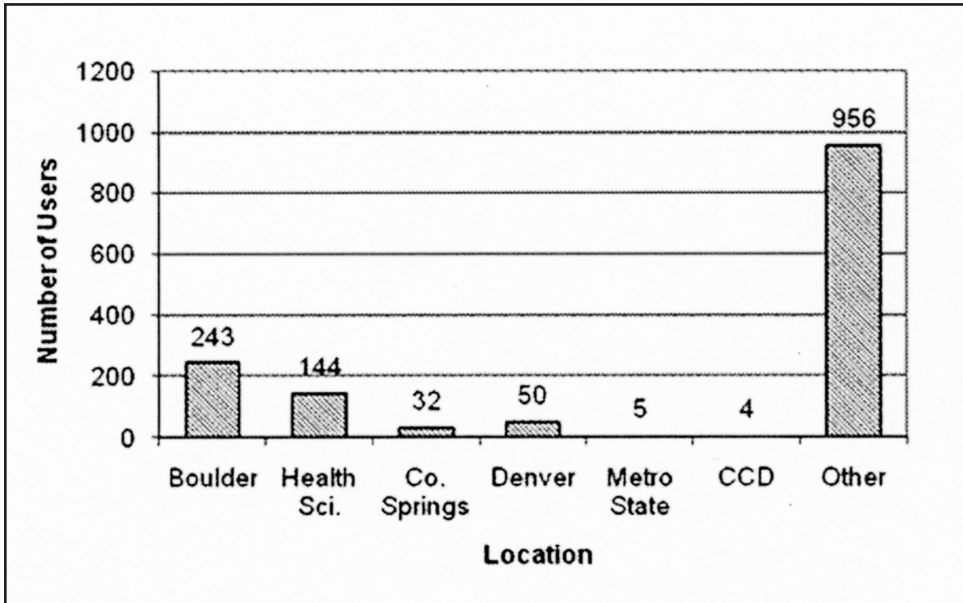


Figure 2. Usage by Location



ments provided by users frequently mention that the tutorial has helped demystify the process of publication, helping faculty to muster the courage required to begin their research agenda. Many noted their appreciation that the tutorial was available online, allowing them to fit it into their schedule at their leisure and convenience. The most common suggestion for changes was to include more quizzes to aid retention, which the developers will consider as appropriate.

## Conclusion

Faculty and graduate students represent an underserved population as recipients of information literacy instruction. Although tutorials have been widely used as instruction devices for undergraduates, few tutorials exist for faculty and graduate students. Publication strategies for faculty and graduate students, who endure high pressure to publish early in their careers, constitute an area needing attention; and this population appears to desire instruction. Publication strategies for publishing journal articles transcend disciplinary boundaries, making instruction focused around this topic broadly applicable. In addition, instruction about publication provides another medium by which to inform junior faculty about open access publication, giving librarians an opportunity to influence the publication choices of faculty while they are still early in their careers. "Publish Not Perish: the Art and Craft of Publishing in Scholarly Journals," the tutorial developed by the University of Colorado for junior faculty and graduate students, represents one attempt to fill this instruction gap. This tutorial has so far been popular locally, nationally, and internationally and serves as a clear indication of the importance and need for instruction in this area.

## Acknowledgement

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