



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Gender Writing Workshop

**USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab for
the Reduction of Post-Harvest Loss**

11-13 August, 2016

Kansas State University

Dr. Cheryl O'Brien

San Diego State University



Gender and Ag Publishing – Day 1

- Review article by Hugo De Groote.
- De Groote Hugo. (2011) “How to write a great paper in agricultural development and get it published.” *African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, 6(2): 195-215.



The Story by Hugo De Groote

At the heart of each great paper lies a great story, with a strong plot and a new message. A strong plot or story line stays focused without digressing into side stories, it unfolds quickly and logically, and it leads to an interesting conclusion. Unlike a project report, which necessarily covers all activities as defined in the funded proposal, **a good paper has only one message and one major point**, not two or three.

Story Line (including Literature Review)

by Hugo De Groot

Most of our research papers follow a similar story line.

1. A typical paper first draws attention to the problem, for example, by estimating the number of households or the size of the area affected.
2. It then reviews the research in the field to date, so as to identify a gap in our knowledge.
3. Next it explains how it will fill this gap, ideally using a novel approach.
4. It then summarizes its findings, compares them against the knowledge gap, and
5. It concludes by explaining how the findings will help to solve the problem.



Aiming your story to a journal by Hugo De Groote

Once you have a good story, work out a draft title, decide on the co-authors (country specialists and Dr. O'Brien), and choose your target journal (to be determined based on a list by Dr. O'Brien and USAID's gender specialists). A good title is important: it is the first, and sometimes the only, part the reader sees. It needs to be short and to the point, while containing the major information about the paper's topic.

The Outline by Hugo De Groote

Organization -- While trying to tell a good story, our main goal is to communicate the message efficiently and accurately to as wide a readership as possible. The outline organizes the argument and makes for a tighter, more comprehensible paper ... It creates the structure of the paper, the skeleton on which it is built, gives the paper a logical, natural flow and prevents duplication of the same point in different sections. The conventional structure is known as ***IMRAD: introduction, methods, results and discussion*** (Day, 1989).

Introduction by Hugo De Groot

The standard introduction to a scientific paper covers the first three points of the story line: 1) what the problem is, 2) what has been accomplished to date, and 3) what is still lacking.

A good introduction analyzes the past research so as to explain what needs to be done. It demonstrates a good grasp of the most important extant literature and the latest developments.



Methodology by Hugo De Groot

Explain the methods sufficiently to allow other scientists to repeat the research and arrive at the same results. This requires the use of appropriate methods with proper randomization. To assure nothing is forgotten, follow a check list (see Table 4). But remember that you are writing a paper for interested colleagues. Do not go into exhaustive detail of methodology that is standard in your field. Sum up briefly. Explain in detail only when your methods are innovative.



The Results Section by H. De Groot

This section presents the key results that support the story. Present only those that fit the story line and then only the most important ones. Authors have more leeway to structure the results section than they do the other sections, but the results should still be presented in a clear, logical order so the reader can understand them easily.

One common structure is first to present the one-variable analysis, such as the descriptive statistics of the key variables, then the two-way interactions, usually as graphs, and finally the multivariate analysis, such as regressions, usually in tables.

The Discussion by Hugo De Groot

This is the last section of the paper's main body and is typically organized into four subsections.

1. A synthesis is presented to compare the results to the objectives and discuss how they answer the research question.
2. In the biophysical sciences, the next subsection compares the results to previous studies.
3. The third subsection discusses the limitations of the research and problems encountered, and offers insights into the methods used.
4. The final subsection considers how the research contributed to solving the problems, and what its implications are for further research, development action, and policy.



Writing the Outline by H. De Groot

Step 2 of the writing process is to organize your story into the aforementioned IMRAD structure, in an outline of 2-3 pages. For scientific papers, the four common levels in the outline are headings, subheadings, paragraphs and sentences. (See page 202 of De Groot's article for outlining.)



More to review from the article **by Hugo De Groot**

De Groot's article gives more specific details on the various paper sections and how to write them.

Review pages 205-208 while writing your drafts.



Any Questions?

- 2:00pm-2:15pm Break
- 2:15pm-4:15pm:
Begin outline / draft of your country team's paper based on De Groote's article
- Each group presents their outline / draft paper
 - 4:15pm-4:30pm Ethiopia team
 - 4:30pm-4:45pm Bangladesh team
 - 4:45pm-5:00pm Ghana team