**Title: Writing resiliency: Best practices for drafting and submitting manuscripts  
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**APA’s Garth Fowler:** Hello and welcome to our webinar today. My name is Garth Fowler and I am a senior director here at the American Psychological Association, and I am your host for our current version of Staying on Track During a Pandemic. Today we're going to talk about writing manuscripts, and so I'm very excited for the set of panelists that we have, and I want to introduce them in just a second, but there's a number of things that we need to take care of, some basic house cleaning. Hopefully, you're all able to see the screen and I'm going to move into our next. There's a bit of delay. Today there's an opportunity for you to ask questions and interact with our speakers.

In order to do so, you can enter your questions in the questions box and that's in the Go To Meeting control panel that you have to the side. There's also our slides and any articles that we might have are available in the handout section, so if you go there, you can see the current set of slides are already converted to PDF. Those are yours and you're able to use them. Then we will be making a recording of this, and so at the end, you'll get an automated email that will have a link to the recording probably in a couple of days. It does take a couple of days for this to happen, so go ahead and look for that. Yes, like I said, at the end, we'll be taking questions, so we'll be able to work with this.

Without further ado, I'm going to introduce our panel speakers today. We have Dr. Andy De Los Reyes, who's a professor at the University of Maryland. He's also the editor of Journal and Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology and he's chair of the Future Directions Forum. He does a lot of work with young scientists, and young psychologist, and helping them get prepared, and so we're excited to have him here today to talk a little bit from an editor's perspective about what's happening with submissions during COVID-19. Then we're going to have Jack C Lennon. He's a PsyD candidate at the University Department of Psychology in Chicago.

His interests are neuropsychiatric in cognitive, effects of neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, and has recently gone through the process of submitting a paper so he can talk about his experience and what he did to get himself in line and coordinated. Our final person will be Raechel Soicher, who is a PhD candidate at Oregon State University School of Psychological Science.

Her research focuses on the implementation of cognitive and motivational interventions for college student success. I feel like we have an in house expert on helping you stay motivated here, and so she'll be talking a little bit about that. Without further ado, I'm going to turn off my webcam and I'm going to turn over the presentation to our first speaker.

**Andy De Los Reyes:** Thank you so much, Garth. Thank you so much to both you and Allison for organizing this. I'm very excited to be here with all of you today. For the next 15 minutes, I'm going to go through a few different considerations regarding peer view within our current context of the pandemic. I'll talk a little bit about why you might see some changes in journal operations, so as long as we're in this context together, and then in concert with that, I'm going to outline the series of strategies that might help you move forward and propel your work through the peer review process despite the challenges we currently face.

I'm going to talk about three of them here, the ones that I think that might be particularly useful during the pandemic, but there are a series of other strategies that are outlined in a recent book that I published in April called the *Early Career Researchers Toolbox*, where we go over a series of strategies to remain to the period, but also several other topics that are part of the hidden curriculum in graduate education, namely identifying mentors and trying to land a faculty job. A few different things to think about regards to the pandemic. As we all know, COVID-19 had a huge impact on a variety of different systems that we intersect with on a day to day basis.

Peer review isn't immune to these kinds of disruptions. In all likelihood, what's going to happen for the next few months is that the process for pushing any one manuscript for the entire peer view journey is going to be a bit slower. There aren't any solid numbers. These numbers likely vary from journal to journal to journal, but I would mention a guess that whatever the website is telling you in terms of expectations for when to receive a decision on a manuscript that you just submitted, we should add a little more time to it. The question might be, well, why is that the case? Garth, will you go to the next slide.

One thing to consider is that all of us right now are currently at space where we are doing our work in one place and that same place also has a bunch of different other competing demands, and those demands vary from person to person to person and editors and reviewers aren't immune towards considerations regarding work from home. I know that in my experience editing the Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology and also in hearing from other editors of other journals, we're seeing a much higher uptake in submission volume in each of our journals. What does that mean?

That means that for many people who are prospective contributors of all these different journals, several elements of their work have stopped. Data collection has stopped, even I would imagine grant submissions as well. I think a lot of us are wary as to what applications or whether we should submit any of these grant applications in part because whatever we're proposing to the studies, if magic happens and the grant hits on the first submission, we don't even know what we'll be able to do, what data we'll be able to collect, what partners we might develop in the community if our work is human subjects research and involves collecting data from the field.

With two less things on our plate to do at any one time, in all likelihood, that time's being allocated into new things, and what I venture to guess is happening is a lot more people are finding time to write papers. Now that's one thing. The editors themselves are spending a lot of time processing a new volume of manuscripts that's not accustomed to the process. They’re handling a lot of good papers themselves, their associated editors if the journal has them are also handling a lot of papers themselves, so that's already building in some delays in the process. Some additional delays also manifests as well.

Our reviewers are doing these RVs manuscripts on a pro bono basis. They're not getting paid for this. If they're getting any kind of benefit from this, it's by having their name listed on the editorial board journal that they're reviewing. Quite frankly, they're going to have competing considerations. For reviewers who have family obligations, those are likely going to supersede things like extra time they allocate the service like reviewing manuscripts. In practice, I imagine that it's true of our journal, it's true of lots of other journals, it's really hard to find reviewers now.

In light of those different kinds of considerations, outline a few different kinds of strategies that you might find particularly helpful within the contact, within our current pandemic context. First thing and something that you might think is counterintuitive, pick your reviewers. What does that mean? There's some research to indicate that submissions, whether it's grants or manuscripts, tend to be viewed more favorably. By favorably I mean they're given a more fair evaluation when applicants get to select reviewers, when submitters get to select reviewers.

I would argue that this is essential for early career researchers and in some submission portals, you have to select reviewers, you have to identify reviewers in order to move to the next stage the submission process. I would argue this is essential because senior researchers oftentimes don't have to do this, and by that I mean, editors of journals when they get a paper submitted from a senior researcher in the field, oftentimes, they don't have to ask a senior researcher which reviewers might provide a fair evaluation of the work. They already know those people off the top of their head.

That might be less so the case for early career researchers, particularly if they're engaging or focused on areas of research that are emerging for which editors might have uncertainty as to who in that area might provide a fair evaluation of the submission, and the question is, how do you do this? The submission portal is one place, but I also suggest you also do it in the cover letter that accompanies your manuscript submission. At the bottom of the slide is the piece of our lab's cover letter template where we outline people that we would like to have considered to be your reviewers. Now, will an editor select these reviewers?

Maybe, maybe not, but having the names there, in my experience, is remarkably helpful from the editor's standpoint. Then the trick is, well, who among the universal reviewers should you put in your cover letter? There are a few different ways to go about answering that question. The first is, among your co-authors and mentors, particularly if they know the area better than you, they might have an idea with a word on the street in terms of who in that area tend to provide fair valuations of others work. The other place to go is go to the editorial board. The editorial board is the ultimate document for understanding areas of expertise covered by that journal.

If you look into the editorial consultants, identify reviewers who you believe are knowledgeable in your area of research. That's one place to look. There's nothing keeping you from adding what we call ad hoc review, people who're not on the editorial board but otherwise are knowledgeable of your area. Adding those in there, but I would still put one or two members who aren't on the editorial board on there as well because you want to give the impression to the editor that your work fits the aims and scope of the journal. One way to say that indirectly is that there are people in the editorial board who are knowledgeable in those areas.

Next slide. Second thing, it's important to understand that after a few months, most of these journals will take a few weeks, a few months to get the decision back to you once it's under review, and you might expect a little bit of a longer time lag given the pandemic. It's important to understand that these are not normal circumstances. This is now your everyday email you get in your inbox. I know that even to this day, I've been in this business for 12 years, I have over a hundred peer-review publications, and every time I get one of these decision emails, my heart skips several beats, and my heart rate jumps well over a hundred like I'm running on a treadmill.

I already know that I'm emotionally out there when I'm getting one of these emails regardless of what I think that decision might be. In that context, it's pretty certain that you're in no real mental state to make any rational decisions. I'm going to give you an example of one, a pretty egregious example of the time when I got a review back about a manuscript. Garth, next slide.I'm going to show you a series of slides to outline what particularly emotionally arousing reviews might look like, and I'll make a suggestion after this. This was a paper I submitted now about 10 years ago.

It eventually got published at the same journal that I submitted it to, and overall, we had some pretty good feedback from the reviewer's constructive feedback, and so we got an invitation to revise the manuscript for the consideration. Garth, next slide. Revision one was quite constructive, got a lot of really good feedback. Like in almost all cases, reviewer two was the opposite of that. These are a couple of lines, a couple of choice lines, I'll go through a few more in the next couple of slides, some choice lines from the seminar. Now, I've gotten many manuscript rejections. I get plenty of them year in and year out.

It's been about 12 years since somebody's told me that my manuscript misses the boat in some circumstances, or that I haven't bothered to examine a literature relevant to my primary study which was covered in the manuscript in this metric. We also had some additional pieces of information relevant to a literature review. We got a lot of interesting comments from this reviewer. This was great. I like the last thing here on the next slide. The next slide had one that I think you might appreciate. The reviewer told us that they didn't even read the entire paper, they sent them back and said that they didn't read the discussion, but they took a peek and it sucks, too.

All that happened there. Later on, in my slides, I'm going to show you an example of how we might have responded to this reviewer's comment, but suffice to say, this is a very interesting scenario, it's a very low base rate event, but it is one of those things that it's important to consider. This is why when I submit a paper, I get the decision back, I skim down to the bottom of the email where it says, "What do you want me to do?" Is it reject it and should I take my business elsewhere, or is it revise and submit that I have to then attend to?

I always let that decision sit for a couple of days, and then I go back and when I've processed my lived experience at the beginning of this decision, then I move forward. What I do next, the very first thing I do, I don't touch the manuscript, I draft a cover letter, so right from the outset. Why is the cover letter important? The cover letter is instrumental as to whether or not any of these papers you get accepted or rejected for publication. That's the first thing. It's the place where you document your revisions, and importantly, justify the revisions you didn't make even though you might have felt strongly about it.

It also becomes your to-do list. It's the things you have to get through before your paper is ready for the journal to see it once again. I go into itemized comments. Even if the reviewer didn't itemize your comments, I do it for them. I lay it out and I'm going to show you in the next slide what this looks like in our lab with a template for this as well, with a submission template for the first submission, the submission template for the revisions. What we do is we just highlight both in the cover letter and in the manuscript those things that we revised. So itemize all that out. If you want, feel free to send me an email or I'm happy to send you a word version of these templates.

I can also send that to Garth later on. Then afterwards, once I itemize everything, let's say I got 30 comments. That's a lot for writer to submit.It's one that we might call a call for major revisions of the manuscript. I tell myself, "Address one comment per day." That's my deal to myself, I address one common per day and if I do that and I got 30 comments, I'm done in a month. Most of these journals will ask you for a major revision, they'll ask you to send it back within 45 to 60 days. That usually gives you just enough time to be able to get comments from a reviewer, from the other co-authors and stuff before you send it back.

I like doing this because I don't start from the beginning. I don't go review one, comment one, review two, comment two. Not all comments are created equal. Some of them are "Fix this typo," some of them are "Fix your entire theoretical framework of your introduction," some of them are very different. I usually start off with the easy ones and I work my way up to the hard ones.

What I'll tell you subjectively is that the first time I see these decision letters with the reviewer comments, I always think it's a ton of work, and I want it to be a ton of work, but the great thing about this is that after you've drafted the cover letter, usually it's the case where you say to yourself, "It's a lot of work, but it didn't feel like as much as when I first saw the commentary." Now I'm going to show you an example of how we actually address in these comments. Going back to that reviewer two decision that I just showed you, we say really nice things at the outset. Importantly, we say really nice things to reviewer two even though they weren't saying nice things to us. How does that look like?

The first thing we do is we highlight to the editor, this is more for the editor than the reviewer, that even reviewer two, as destructive the tone of the commentary was, they nonetheless said some nice things. In much the same way as a movie poster, it'll say maybe in the movie poster about a movie that might have got bad reviews, they'll use the word like fantastic in quotation marks, but in the sentence where that fantastic word came in, they might have said, "This is a fantastic piece of garbage. I don't like this movie." There's always at least one nice thing that reviewers typically say, so I usually highlight that for the editor just to make sure that that's on their radar.

Then I do what Spike Lee said back in 2009 when he got insulted by Clint Eastwood. A journalist asked him for a response to an insult that he received in public, and Spike Lee said, "I'm going to take the Obama high road." That's what you do here. If you go low while they're going low, you're not going to get that benefit of the doubt from the editor. When they go low or reviewer two goes low, you go high, and so you thank the reviewer profusely for pointing out these things, find the most constructive thing they possibly said, and reframe it.

They said, "You didn't bother to engage in the literature?" "Thank you for pointing me to those articles in the literature that they could improve my introduction," and they just move from there. Always go high. These were a few different strategies that we had to go through some of these peer review issues. If you want to learn more about these things, the book that I mentioned at the beginning of my time, you can get to learn a little more about it in the endorsements that they're made of at the links that you see here. Just the things to mention, there's a podcast you might be familiar with called *Hello PhD*.

It's meant for graduate students generally in areas across a whole different appearance of scholarship. They have 136 episodes up there, and they're all free to download. They're really great resource. In one of the most recent episodes, they profiled the book, there's a really nice conversation, in that case, about mentors. Thank you so much for your time, I'm really excited and eager to hear any questions you might have later on. I don't know, Garth, if there's a spot now for questions, but I'm happy to help in any way I can.

**Garth:** We've been collecting questions, we'll take them all at the end but I think now what we'll do is we'll turn it over to Jack, and so he can do his part of the conversation.

**Jack C Lennon:** All right. Thank You, Garth. I appreciate everyone being here at this talk. Let's see. Garth, if it's okay, I'm going to ask you to go to the next slide. Perfect. My intention is to take a practical approach to writing during this time. Dr. De Los Reyes mentioned high competition and more submissions. I'm sure this varies depending on one's life circumstances. It's highly heterogeneous right now, but because stress is so high, I wanted to take an approach that might cater to the most people possible and things that I've learned myself personally.

Uncertainty is a big theme right now just in the world in general, and if you're like me, I very much dislike uncertainty. Even though this process is complicated, I found ways to control and accept the things that I can control within it, so we're going to talk about some of those things. Next slide, please. The first thing that I believe helps is take advantage of good timing. For me, sometimes my motivation is high and sometimes it's not. It's not nearly as consistent as it was prior to COVID, it waxes and wanes, and so I take advantage.

Whenever I have high motivation, I will do the things that require the most motivation, the things that I know over the course of my life and time in grad school, the things that when I'm feeling less motivated, I really push to the side, I generally procrastinate. I will keep working. There will be days where I spend a significant amount of time working on the literature review or the analyses, and other days where I'm giving myself a break. It might not necessarily be due to self-care, it might be because my motivation is slow.

When mood is elevated, sometimes that's when I like to add my touch to a paper, be a little bit more creative in the discussion talking about some of the directions for future research, but I never assumed that my motivation will continue the same way tomorrow. I assume that it's going to be lower. I continue pushing through with whatever level I have at that time, and I guess as much accomplished as possible. Usually, that's enjoyable to me. I'm not stressing out about anything. The next day if my motivation is low, then I feel like I've accomplished something in the time that I could.

In general, I would suggest if it works for you, don't allow good time to pass. By that, I mean motivation and mood. Next slide, please. Also, play to your strengths. Sort of what I touched on earlier, work on what works best for the moment. For people who like working with numbers, when your motivation is low, maybe you can still manage to get numbers, get your analyses done. For others, maybe you need to have really high motivation for some of the less mechanical stuff such as the literature review or the discussion, some of the other components. I think cling to what you know your strengths are in terms of what your motivation levels are.

It can be really helpful because pushing through, while that might be necessary at times, some people are working on deadlines and have limited choice, I think if you can choose what you work on based on what you know you need to accomplish that day, then I think you're better off rather than wasting time with the writer's block. There I saw that there were a lot of questions about writer's block. For me personally, I can say that I don't sit in writer's block. I will get up and I will say, "I'm not capable of doing this right now." That might not always be possible, but that's generally what I personally do.

Also if multitasking is a strength, if you're one of those people who like to say yes to a lot of things, small projects going on which is not uncommon or unusual, particularly in this time if these are concerns of yours, I would suggest using caution in taking on too much. So reviewing too much for journals if you're getting a lot of invitations, et cetera, I've had to pull back on some of the things that I would like to do just to make sure I get the things done that I need to do. Next slide, please. Also, use external motivators. What I mean by that is, for example, tell others what you're doing. That can be friends, family, colleagues.

I know that when writing novels, this is also a tactic that people will use just to keep people accountable for what they're doing because they don't want to go back to that person and say, "I gave that up," or "I haven't done this." That might not necessarily be someone who really is going to be pushing you too much in this moment, that's somebody who is going to hold you accountable or you would like to be able to go back to that person and say, "Look what I accomplished," or "I got this done today." Also, determine whether or not creating deadlines for yourself helps or hurts.

If they're externally determined, and that might be a different story, but for me, I've decided that deadlines, unless they're externally motivated, I generally don't set them. I set things based on priority and I just created a list, so it isn't "by this day" because on those days where my motivation is low, then I start getting stressed out about that date that I arbitrarily created for myself. I've learned to just prioritize instead, get things done when I can, take advantage of good timing, and not really push myself to have these strict deadlines when they otherwise wouldn't exist.

In the event that they are motivated by external factors, then I would say setting that as maybe a week or earlier if possible. That's where it's really more crunch time. That might not work for everyone, but I try to set like a week early in the event that I'm unable to achieve that goal and I still have some leeway. Creating to-do list which is similar to how I prioritize my tasks, but also allow yourself to alter as needed.

I think that's really important specifically right now, but just, in general, is to cut oneself some slack and to say, "This is what I created, this is my to-do list, but I can also alter this at will, and not hold myself to such stringent guidelines that I'm impacting my own well-being and the quality of my work." Next slide, please. Also, turn negatives into motivators. For this one, the intention of this is to say if relevant to your work, take the life circumstances that are either positive or negative and incorporate them into the work. This may not apply to every single project.

In many cases, it won't, but if you can somehow tailor things to be relevant, I think it can be really cathartic so it can allow you to be more creative with your manuscript topics. If you're writing a review, short communications, some of those papers that are really succinct but allow you to maybe tap into some of those topics that you find really interesting or impacting you right now, you can take a personal stake in that. With those, however, as previously noted, I would say, make sure you choose the right journal for your topic because peer review might take longer. Especially with these types of papers, they might get desk rejected fairly quickly if it really doesn't tie in with what the journal is publishing at that time.

For example, COVID and a lot of the topics around race, and police brutality, and health disparities, all these things that have already been present as we all know but are being published at a higher rate now, I think there's a lot of opportunities for people to have some say in what's being published. I think that can be really cathartic for people if you want to make that stuck and step away from maybe one of the research papers you're doing. Next slide, please. When in doubt, consider on/off days. This is what I do a little bit. Unlike piecemeal work for novels where it's just get something down on the page and this can depend.

Maybe you want to focus on work on one small piece a day, but if that doesn't seem to be working for you, then maybe consider on and off day, so when you're motivated, work, when you're not motivated, work on other things. Remember that the brain needs to rest. There's high emotions right now, aesthetic load is high, we're doing a lot of thinking even when it doesn't seem like we're doing a lot of thinking, and the quality of our work can suffer as well as our mood. If we want to get some of these things accomplished, one needs to rest. Also consider seeking collaborators on manuscripts.

Should it be permissible and it's not something that you need to focus on your own, there are always people out there who might be willing to collaborate colleagues. I think it's worth taking the chance. It's not a time to struggle on a paper on your own. I think it's probably the most appropriate time since I started graduate school to be asking for help. Also, ask colleagues to provide feedback to just anything else. I would ask people to say, "Can you take a quick glance at this? Because I'm going to be submitting it." That might turn into a collaboration, who knows?

I think asking and swallowing the ego and the pride even if you've been working really diligently on something, I think it overall pays off. It pays off a lot and it makes your life a lot easier. I think that's it for me.

**Garth:** All righty, and here, I will turn it over now to Rachel and we can hear from her.

**Rachel Soicher:** Great. Good morning, everybody. I'm on the West Coast of the US, so it's still morning here for me. I've got my coffee and I'm excited to talk to you about a few things that have really helped me during this pandemic time in getting my writing out. Just to give you a little bit of context, I'm a PhD candidate. I am going to defend my dissertation in October and I'm doing a three-manuscript dissertation format where I submit three manuscripts for publication and I staple those together as my dissertation.

During spring quarter, I enrolled in a dissertation writing course, and I have also participated in several accountability groups or writing groups in an online format that have been particularly helpful for me. I just want to share some of the tips and tricks that I've learned through both of those experiences, as well as some resources that I've read about how to write and how to stay motivated in writing. One of the things that worked surprisingly well, if it's possible for you where you live, is to have a dedicated workspace. This helps get you in the mental mindset of being in a place where work is the expectation.

I know when the pandemic started, and still now, I have friends who work with a hamper flipped over on top of their bed, and while I appreciate that for some of us that's the situation, it might even be helpful just to move that hamper and sit on the floor. Something that is dedicated for where you might work, where you aren't doing other daily things like sleeping. Another tip is to set a daily writing goal. Sometimes this can be word count. Sometimes this can be time spent writing, so you'll have to play with that a little bit and see what works for you best. In my dissertation writing class, we set weekly intentions.

We went on to a discussion board every Monday and wrote about what our goals were for the week, and then we checked in again at the end of the week to see how far we had gotten. It's really important to keep in mind when you're setting these goals, whether it's your daily writing goal or your weekly intention that it's not always important that you reach your goal. Things crop up in life, or you get sidetracked, or you have a bad day and that's okay.

The actual point of writing these goals and tracking them is just that it's the metacognitive aspect of just being able to track how much work are you actually doing so that if a hard deadline comes up, you have a realistic idea of how long you would need to work on a project to meet that deadline. Again, if you check-in at the end of the week and you have to say, "I didn't get any writing done this week," that's A-okay, there's no judgment in that, and it is important that you keep that in mind when you're thinking about those goals and tracking your progress on those goals.

Something else that works to help you write on a more regular basis, a lot of people ascribed to a daily writing practice, I personally do not do that, but I'm on more of like an every other day writing practice, is free writing. Even if you are feeling intimidated by the project that you're working on or you're not sure what you want to say, just sit down, set a timer for 10 or 15 minutes, and write whatever comes to mind. It can be about work, it could be about your life, but the goal here is just to get you in the practice of writing.

I don't have this on the slide, but something Jack mentioned during his part of the presentation made me think. One of the most helpful resources for me is *How to Write a Lot*, which is a book by Dr. Paul J Silvia, In it, he talks about writer's block and he says, "Saying that you can't write because of writer's block is merely saying that you can't write because you aren't writing and it's trivial. Just as aliens abduct only people who believe in alien abductions, writer's block strikes only writers who believe in it. One of the great mysteries of the writing schedule system, a spooky mystery, in fact, is that scheduled writers don't get writer's block, whatever that even is."

I think that the really amazing point that he's trying to make here is that if you commit to writing on a regular basis, you actually avoid that feeling of writer's block altogether. Writer's block is nothing more than your trepidation or your intimidation of getting started in a project. Once you're on that committed habit of writing on a regular basis, I think what you'll find is that that writer's block disappears and that can be a really difficult concept to buy into. All I can say is I was skeptical also of whether that was true, but now that I write on a more regular basis, I find that I actually do not have writer's block at all in any way.

Another tip is backward design. If you have a goal date for submitting a manuscript, you might write it on a calendar, and then work backwards how many weeks you have to work on the project and what aspects of the project you can outline for each of those weeks that you're working on it. Sometimes that deadline just looms out there in no man's land, but actually writing it down on paper and then working backwards to set your goals can be really helpful.

Pomodoro sessions can also be very helpful for getting writing done. There are a lot of apps that you can download. There are free websites that you can use. I use Tomato-Timer.com. The idea is that you set some period of time that you'll just work and you don't do anything else except the work you've set out for yourself in that time period.

Sometimes that's 10 minutes. I work on 25-minute intervals, and then when that 25 minute is up, I take a five-minute break. The important thing there is that the break actually be a break. It's not five minutes of checking your email. It's five minutes of getting up, having a snack, using the bathroom, and doing something that really is a break from your work.

Lastly, accountability groups. I was part of a dissertation coaching group. I've joined an All Women's STEM Writing Group that I found out about on Twitter. Also, I just have a group of Twitter friends and we meet sometimes for writing also. It can be really helpful, as Jack already mentioned, to share your intentions with other people or to open a Zoom window where 10 other people are also head down working on a project. It's just really motivating to witness other people working at the same time that you are. I used to hold these in person before the pandemic sent us all to work from home. They work equally well in person as they do in an online format.

If you had any questions about any of these tips, you could always email me for some more information. Garth, if you'll go to the next slide, I wanted to include this slide, not to talk about it per se, but just so that you had it in the PowerPoint slides that you can download for the presentation. I will say of these, the *How to Write a Lot* book is my most favorite thing. It also has information about how to structure an article in case I saw some of that in the questions that we got before the webinar.

Then this blog by Dr. Raul Pacheco, who is somebody that I follow on Twitter, he's a political scientist, but he has just an incredible number of really practical strategies for how to write different types of academic papers, articles, literature reviews and even your dissertation. I would highly recommend these resources to you. That's just my little bit, I think we'd like to leave it open for questions. I will end there.

**Garth:** We've had a lot of good questions that have come in and a lot of people have really thanked you. I'm thinking to go back to the start and jump around. I think one question that I've been wondering, I know some of the other people came in is, this caused a whole shift, the pandemic and the responses that campus had to how we work. What were some of your thoughts about shifting to do this from home?

I know, Rachel, you talked a little bit about using that idea of accountability groups and reacting, but what are some of your thoughts about you're balancing a lot of things you might have roommates, you can't find that dedicated time and space. What are some of the approaches that we might think of to help people as they're shifting to doing all this, but also doing it not in the office or campus environment? Leave that up to any of you to jump in and tackle as you want.

**Andy:** I'd be happy to jump in. Like Rachel, if I want to stay productive in writing, I do everything **[unintelligible 00:43:48]** tells me to do. It's a fantastic book. I read the first edition back at the end of grad school, when I realized these writing times setting these writing tangents would useful, at least for me. My writing time pre-pandemic was a train ride to and from work. I live in DC. I commute to the University of Maryland, College Park. That's 20 minutes to work, 20 minutes from work. That's 40 minutes a day of writing that otherwise wouldn't get. Now I don't get that writing time. The biggest struggle for me has been in the last couple of months, is figuring out what wasn't writing time look like at home now.

Usually, my fallback plan has been-- I do a thing that I call an ambient film. I watch, I put a movie on my television set that I've seen a hundred times, that's usually really fast-paced. Thanks *Inside Man*, thanks *Spotlight*, thank you average Marvel movie. If there's busyness happening on the screen, it helps me concentrate. It's been really, really hard to adjust, using and tried a true strategy that I would say on average, tends to work and can be tailored to your approach.

**Garth:** Let's roll too. I have another question that people have talked about, Andy, in the beginning, you said something about getting to select your writers. We had some people say, "What if there isn't a list that journals have, some do, some don't?" How do you approach those issues?

**Andy:** A few different ways. It's a really good question. This goes for **[unintelligible 00:45:29]** journals too. If some uncertain as to where to submit on- one of the first places I'll go to is the reference section, and I'll start looking to see among the papers that I cited is there a pattern, are there particular journals that I tend to focus on when I'm trying to justify the rationale for this study, because I'm justifying the rationale with a particular journal or set of journals to tends to show up a lot. Chances are that journal might find value in my contribution.

Along the same lines, those papers are in my office. Provided that those authors don't have a conflict of interest with you. They're not former mentors, our current mentors, and not somebody that the mentor collaborates with or any of the co-ops on there. They can make the list as well. The trick is then to figure out, "Well, if we drill down to those authors, do they tend to approach the work in a way that they would have the expertise for a fair evaluation of my submission?"

**Garth:** I want to ask a question of both Rachel and Jack, part of it is having gone through this process and doing things. What were some of the-- I want to think of them as the first time or beginning of mistakes that you made that now that you've done this before you would go, "Ah, if I had to redo this again, I would approach this differently." What are some kind of the things that you learned from having gone through the process of converting your papers into your research, your thesis into papers, vice versa any approach that you took?

**Rachel:** I would say for me, two things, one is I used to think that I had to know everything I was going to say before I got started. That it should just, if I was well-read enough or whatever or I really understood my research, it would just flow out of me. Obviously, that must be how writing works. That's not how writing works. Writing is very piecemeal, it's very much a process of revision. You just have to keep working on it. Just vomit everything you can think of into a Word document and then come back to it later and try again.

Relatedly, what I would say is, your paper won't ever be perfect. Keep in mind that when you submit it to a journal, you're going to have two to three reviewers with very strong opinions about what writing should look like and what writing in that particular journal should look like. You want it to be in a place where you're proud of it, but it doesn't have to be perfect. At that point, when you start realizing, you're just waiting for it to be perfect, that's when you should submit it. Jack, I don't know if you have anything to add to that.

**Jack:** I agree with it not being perfect, especially for those who seek perfection, even though that's prohibited in this world. Also, making it one zone. Not trying to go so far to please other people, that it's no longer your work. I know that becomes an issue, especially during revisions sometimes as well. I think one of the pitfalls is there was a time when I would think too much about what are other people going to think about it. After doing reviews for journals, I have a little bit better idea in general, what people should look for. There's really no point in trying to ascertain what these unknown people are going to think about your paper because it's not possible.

Just like Rachel said, I think getting things on the page, being true to what you want to accomplish in the context of the literature, and making it the best that you can. When it comes to getting the decision, I'm learned to not take it personally, that's another big thing. Especially the first couple of rejections or really bad reviews, not taking things personally because sometimes it might seem that way and they could arguably be personal, but in general, take the high road like Dr. De Los Reyes said.

**Andy:** I couldn't agree with Jack and Rachel more. Especially with regards to trying to read the minds of the reviewers, because you can't control that. Of course, you can't control who the reviewers are and you also can't control what they think. What you can control -and this takes time- trying to figure out that pit in your stomach feel near the end of writing the paper where you say to yourself, "If this has major problems, I'm blind to it now. I've read this so much that there's a perspective on this and I can't have. Now my peers have to see this".

Because the more you keep a paper on your plate and try to perfect it to a point where you've had it on your desk for months or years, you get diminishing returns. You have to ask a question at revision 40, what are you fixing? And revision 40 is going to make a difference in acceptance or rejection relative to the earlier revisions. Then it's just a question of just getting it to the people to see it. Then if they have issues with it, you'll at least have an idea of what to do next, but if you're planning, you're not going to get those ideas if you just keep it on your desk.

**Garth:** I really liked the approach. I'm thinking back when I wrote some of my first papers, and some of the stuff we do now. Don't feel so alone in it, even if you're writing a paper by yourself, you have no co-authors, which is probably pretty rare, you're, at least, going to probably have your advisor or something. Even now, I do so much more alone writing that I love both the recommendations of sharing it in both formal and informal ways. I like the recommendation of just telling someone, "I'm writing that paper."

They're like, "How's it going?" Then it's okay to say, "It's really going poorly right now." Then you have someone to go, "Oh, I'm so sorry." It gives you an opportunity to think about it. I also liked these, and I kept them up, some of those accountabilities in those groups and just working together with people. I think it helps you realize that you're not alone, and that shared group, they can all give some insight about how they're managing to do what you said, Andy, restructure where you're writing now, how you're fitting writing into your day and all those different approaches.

We had another question and I think this is a political one in that regard. It's about how much sharing should you do with colleagues who you think eventually might be one of your reviewers. There's that whole upfront process and you're going to want to share with someone, then all of a sudden, you're like, "Oh, this is also someone I need to recommend. Have I shot myself in the foot by saying, can you read this?" And now you're going to ask them to be a reviewer. [crosstalk] was the editor in chief **[unintelligible 00:52:55]** that was a great question, I'd never thought about it.

**Andy:** You read my mind because in some of the last discussion that we were just having with the last question, it got me to recall a colleague of mine, Erica Glasper, who's a colleague and friend of mine at the University of Maryland that has this brilliant approach that she does with her work. She works in neuroscience, and a lot of this work is constantly coming out in press. It's really hard to keep track if you're just waiting for the new issue to come out with the papers.

What she does is, particularly to the area-- The grads with whom she's working, it's new to them and that kind of thing, they're new to the area. They'll finish the draft of the paper and they'll submit it. **[unintelligible 00:53:42]** they will informally send it to a colleague of theirs who does work in that space. The ask is simple, "We did this work, we're really excited about these findings. You know this work so well, we wanted to get a sense from you about whether or not there's any new findings coming out from your lab that we might consider as we build the rationale for the study".

Brilliant idea, because you're going to get comments from that person and you're going to get new pieces of work that to cite for the justification. Because is a case, they're not a collaborator, and they'll see why. There's nothing keeping you from suggesting their reviewer again. There's no **[unintelligible 00:54:23]** in that way at all.

**Garth:** Rachel, Jack, what are your thoughts?

**Rachel:** One of my most recent publications I actually had this happen. I was testing a product that had been developed by a cognitive scientist in another lab. My advisor and I actually emailed with him quite frequently during the entire writing process. Then we sent it to him and another expert in the area asked for an initial review if they wanted to. They both gave us a lot of feedback that I used to revise the papers before I submitted it.

We did recommend both of them as reviewers. I don't think either one of them ended up reviewing the paper, but certainly they helped to strengthen it and to address some of the more major concerns that there would have been. It seems to be actually a good plan to check with people who maybe know more in that area than you do before you submit.

**Jack:** I agree with just simply emailing if you don't know the people. If you know the authors and you're constantly citing them in your papers, I have no issues with that. Generally, it's been pretty successful in terms of getting responses. If you don't, then sometimes, if it's a PI with a lot of work going on, one more email and you usually get it. That seems to work better. I wouldn't want to put somebody in a situation where they feel like they're in a conflict of interest. Because if you ask them to actually review the whole paper, that's something they should report to the journal and they will not accept it at all.

**Garth:** Sorry, I didn't mean to cut you out. I think also to remember that you're suggesting a list, and it really is the editor's responsibility to pick reviewers. There is, I think, a moral and ethical responsibility that if someone thought you've had engaged with them early enough in the process and they had too much insight in the development, he or she might write back the editor saying, "Typically, I would love to review this paper, but I was part of that", so they might tactfully but professionally decline.

There's those things. I think it is a nuance, I think the more communication you might have with your colleagues, and, "Would you mind if I put you as a potential reviewer?" Even before you do it, one of them might write back and say, "I feel uncomfortable." That's one approach. We have a ton of other questions. I am so sad because they're great, but we are out of time, it is 12:59.

What I'm going to do is just ask each of you if you just want to give one last quick piece of advice that you'd like to leave with the writers, your quick one-second sentence that you would want to just leave the people about writing in this current scenario or just best practices no matter what. Jack, why don't you go first? You're on the top right-hand side of my screen. We'll go in that order.

**Jack:** I would say we have a ton of people who are here today, so you're obviously not alone. Everyone is dealing with this unprecedented situation. It's a mess, everyone's situation is different. Just work with what you have and don't judge it as if it's a problem. Just do what you can, I think that's all one can do.

**Garth:** Rachel?

**Rachel:** I think the things that have helped me the most during this time were habits that I luckily established pre-pandemic. I guess, one thing would be to keep in mind that if you are able to adapt some of these habits now, they will continue to be helpful for you even as we return to whatever our new routine in life is going to be. My biggest piece of advice is to just show yourself a lot of self-compassion. It's not going to go as planned, and that is okay. Lean into whatever rest you need for yourself or whatever compassion you need for yourself. That's ultimately going to serve you much better than any harsh judgment about not proceeding as planned.

**Garth:** Andy?

**Andy:** At the end of your cover letter, say something like, "Needless to say, we are quite pleased to make any further revisions you might have." Always tell the reviewer and the editors that you are not going anywhere, that you are in this for the same reasons they are. You're trying to make your work the best possible version of the work you can produce. As long as you make it clear to everybody that you're always in that space, "I'm only going to find it acceptable until you do, I'm going to wait for you to find this accessible", then people are going to give you the benefit of doubt.

**Garth:** Excellent. We are out of time. I want to again thank our panelists and speakers today. It's been a wonderful session with a lot of people attending, a lot of thank-yous are rolling in. Just wonderful to have you here, we really, really enjoyed it. Some closing thoughts here. Of course, we'll see the APA Convention. It is virtual this year as is most everything, but really want to encourage you to register and come in for that. You can go to convention.apa.org.

There are a number exciting sessions that are being hosted, especially things in psych careers where we see some of our student members doing stuff. Things coming out of our office. If you're on the *Staying on Track* you saw my colleague Karen Stamm a couple weeks ago and she's going to redo one of her things about finding jobs in this type of environment. Lots of things, and we really encourage you to take advantage of attending the convention from home.

We have lots of **[unintelligible 01:00:50]** course, as we've been talking about this idea of the pandemic. COVID-19 is still impacting our life. If you haven't looked at the APA resource page, I really encourage you to do so. This is just a screenshot from it, but you can see over in the right-hand side where we have all the topics. There's a very robust section put together.

It's called Education, Training and Distance Learning, but that really is put together for students, and postdocs, and people who teach. Are trained graduate students, undergraduates even. That really is the resource for where the education community can go. I encourage you check that out. Everything from how to learn online versus if you've never taught online before, all kinds of resources for that.

As I mentioned before, this is part of our *Staying on Track* during our pandemic series. This is one of multiple events that we have done, we're planning more in the future. You can also visit the ones from the past. If you go to the *Staying on Track* website you can find recordings of our previous webinars, and eventually this will also be hosted there. As I said before the slides are available in the Hangouts. In a couple of weeks we'll be formatting the video and we'll be posting it on the website there too. If your looking or want to stream this, again, you're able to do so. You can also, while you're waiting for this one to come, go check out our previous webinars.

That is it, as we're closing out. When you're done, you're going to get a short survey from us. I really, really encourage you to take the time. It's really short, I think it's five questions. Please complete that. It really is helpful for us, it gives us feedback and it tells us where are we making an impact, what did we talk about today that is the most helpful for you so that we can continue doing that.

Once more, I'm going to thank Jack, and Rachel, and Andy for taking the time with us today. I'm also going to thank Allison Gillins who has been in the background answering questions, keeping things online. I call her the producer of our show. I want to thank her for all the effort. I hope you enjoyed our webinar and I wish you best of luck.

**[01:03:07] [END OF AUDIO]**