

# GETTING PUBLISHED IN AN ISI JOURNAL

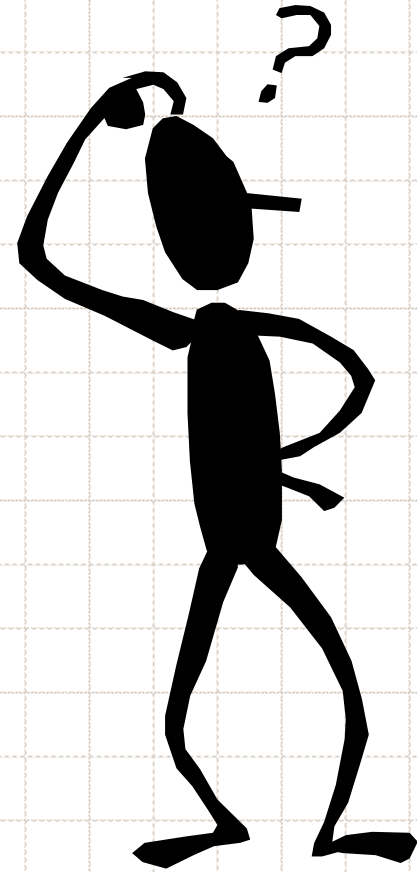
Allan B. I. Bernardo, Ph.D.  
*De La Salle University-Manila*  
*Philippines*

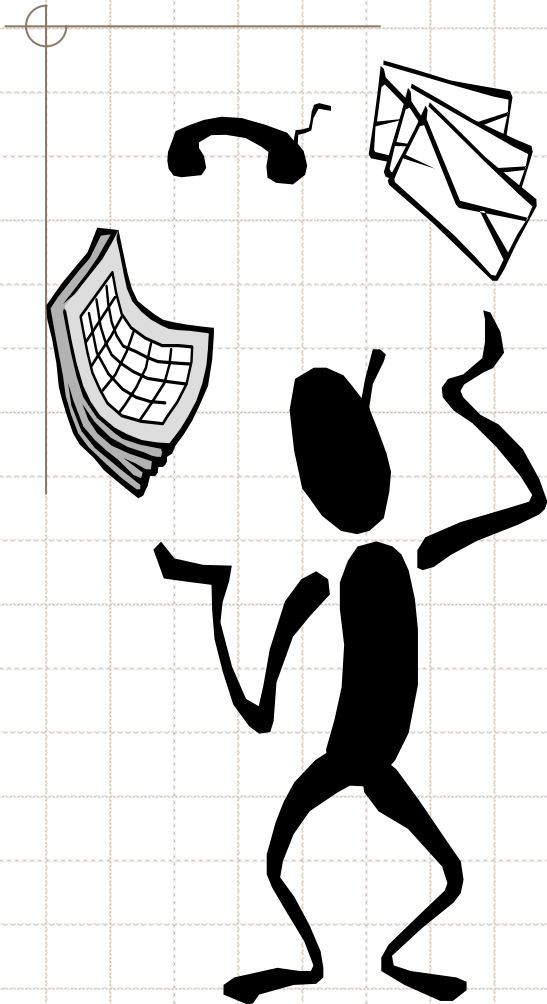
# Objectives

- To provide a discussion of some of the broad and basic considerations for publishing in ISI journals.
- Discuss the significance of publishing in ISI journals in the context of developing research in HEIs
- Discuss how ISI journals work
- Discuss the most important general considerations in publishing in ISI journals
- Suggest some strategies for improving chances of publishing in ISI journals

WHY DO WE DO  
RESEARCH?

WHY DO WE  
PUBLISH OUR  
REPORTS?





Some short-term answers:

- ◆ because our university president is requiring us
- ◆ because faculty members need it to get promoted
- ◆ because faculty members need it to become permanent
- ◆ because we need it to attain university status
- ◆ because we need it to get higher accreditation level

# The Three Foci of Higher Education Institutions

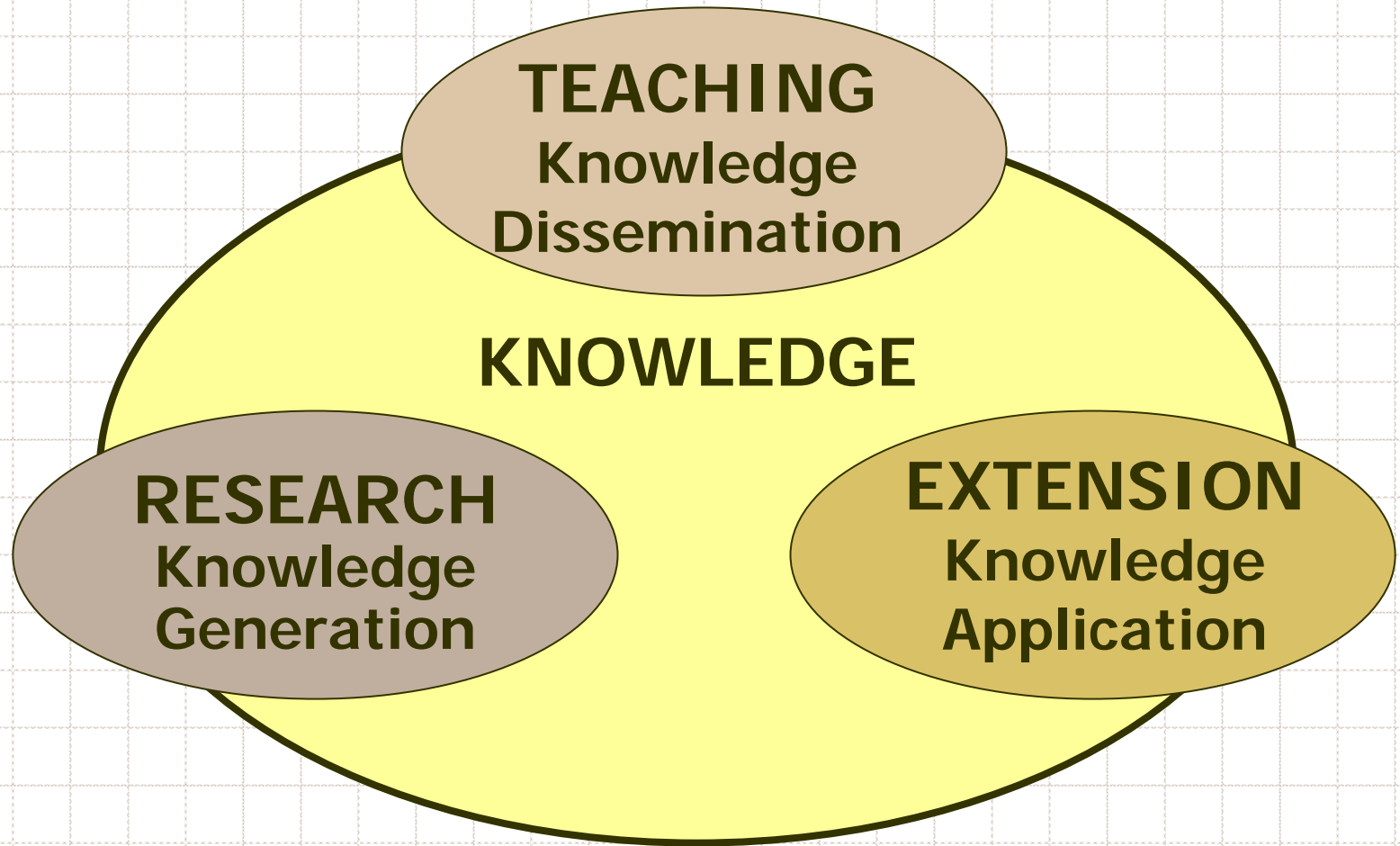
The diagram consists of three ovals arranged in a triangle. The top oval is light brown and contains the word 'TEACHING'. The bottom-left oval is a darker brown and contains the word 'RESEARCH'. The bottom-right oval is olive green and contains the words 'EXTENSION SERVICE'. A thin black line with a small circle at its top-left end is positioned to the left of the ovals.

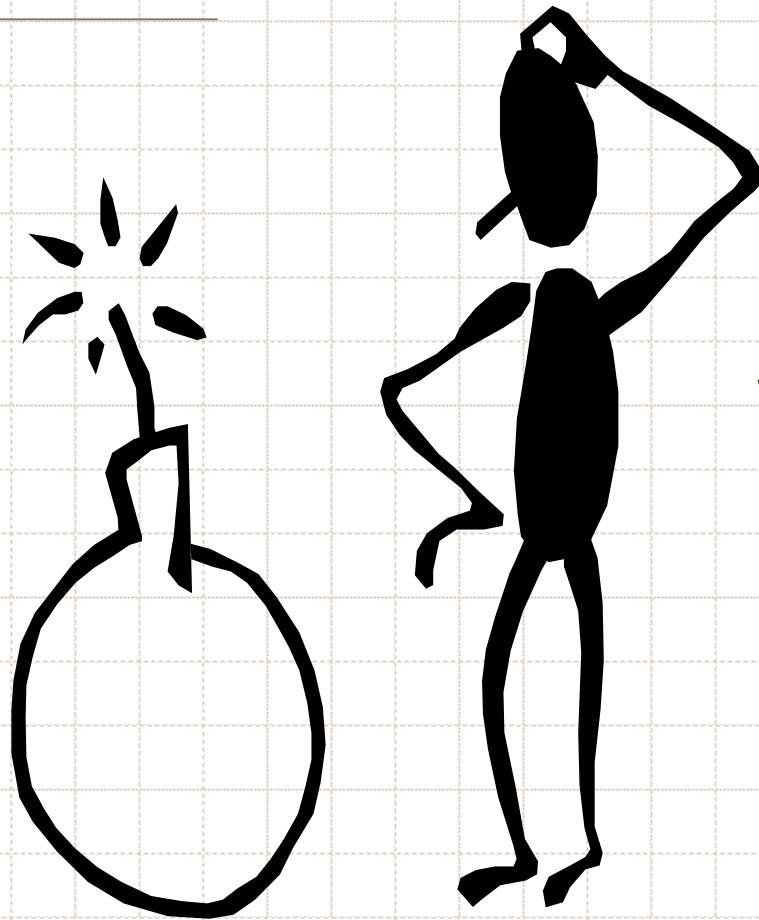
**TEACHING**

**RESEARCH**

**EXTENSION  
SERVICE**

# Understanding the Three Foci

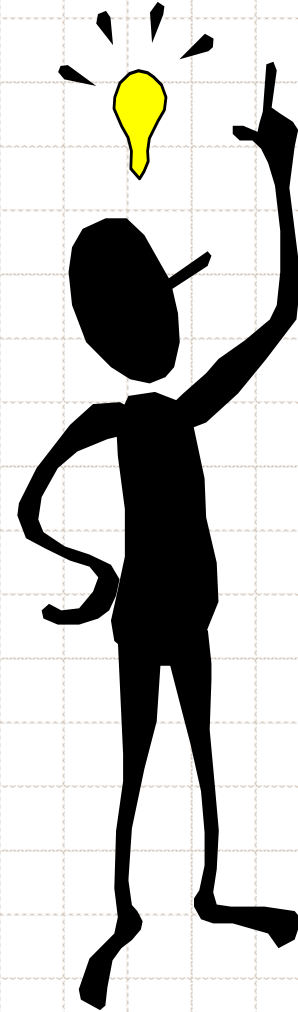




OK, research seems to be important, but why do I have to publish in national and international journals?



◆ Publication makes  
your research  
findings public,  
that is, opening to  
the examination  
and use by other  
scholars and  
knowledge users.





# What makes an ISI journals?

- ◆ Strict refereeing process
  - from 2 to 4 referees for each manuscript submitted
  - referees are from the highest levels of publishers in the field/subfield
  - acceptance rate is less than 50% (some have less than 20% acceptance rate)
- ◆ Articles published tend to be more highly cited in the field

# What makes an ISI journals?

- ◆ There are sub-categories and levels within the category of ISI journals
- ◆ The highest level of ISI journals typically define the most original and important contributions in the field/subfield
- ◆ Publishing in an ISI journal is a very good indicator that one's research is considered a significant contribution to the field/subfield.

# What types of articles are published in ISI journals?

- ◆ Articles that describe original and significant contributions to the research literature
- ◆ Articles that effectively present the original and significant contributions to the research literature

# How do you publish an article in an ISI journal?

- ◆ Do research that has original and significant contributions to the research literature
- ◆ Write an article that describe your original and significant contributions
- ◆ Write that article in a way that effectively presents your original and significant contributions

# What is a contribution to the research literature?

- ◆ A contribution to the research literature needs to be defined in the context of the nature of the research enterprise.
- ◆ A significant contribution can only be understood in the context of the current research environment and the types of research outputs that are being or considered within.



# A Proposed Metaphor

“Research is  
**Conversation**”

- ◆ research is argumentation
- ◆ basic idea, is that a group of people are taking turns in advancing ideas relating to a particular question or inquiry



# Social Dimensions of Conversation

- ◆ conversation is a social activity
- ◆ there are other participants in the conversation
- ◆ participants have a relatively common goal/purpose in conversation; purpose might change as conversation progresses





# Social Dimensions of Conversation

- ◆ participants collectively decide the norms and standards of the conversation
  - participants collectively decide which arguments/assertions are pursued (expanded, refuted, clarified, etc.)
  - participants collectively decide how to assess and/or accept the arguments or assertions
  - participants also decide who can participate or not in the conversation

# Contributing to a Conversation

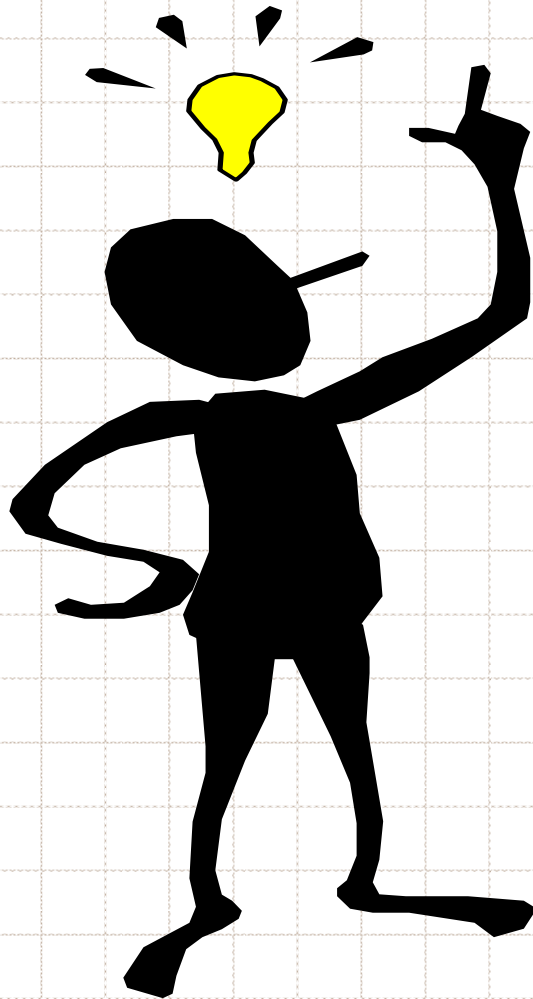
- ◆ Conversations rarely start from scratch
- ◆ The first contributions to a conversation typically draw from previous or existing conversations
- ◆ Interesting and important conversations maybe those that seem to pose an original line of inquiry



# Significant Contributions to a Conversation

- ◆ new argument or conjecture
- ◆ new definition
- ◆ clarification
- ◆ illustration or exemplar
- ◆ elaboration
- ◆ refutation or rebuttal
- ◆ rephrasing of question
- ◆ recasting of question
- ◆ evaluation of an earlier assertion
- ◆ new or alternative interpretation
- ◆ supportive evidence
- ◆ contrary evidence
- ◆ others

# Significant Contributions to a Conversation

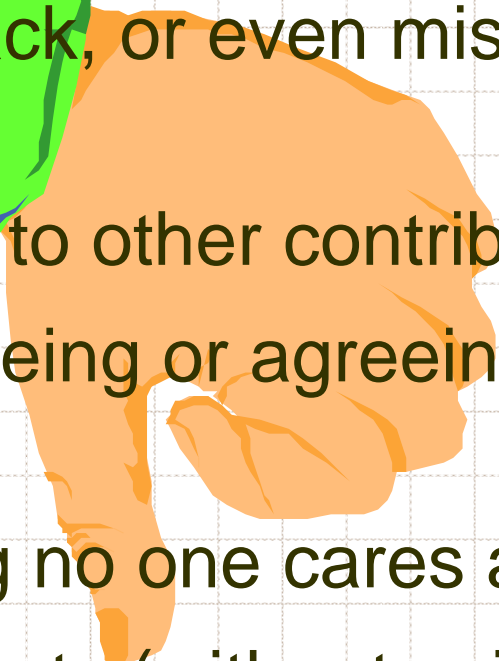


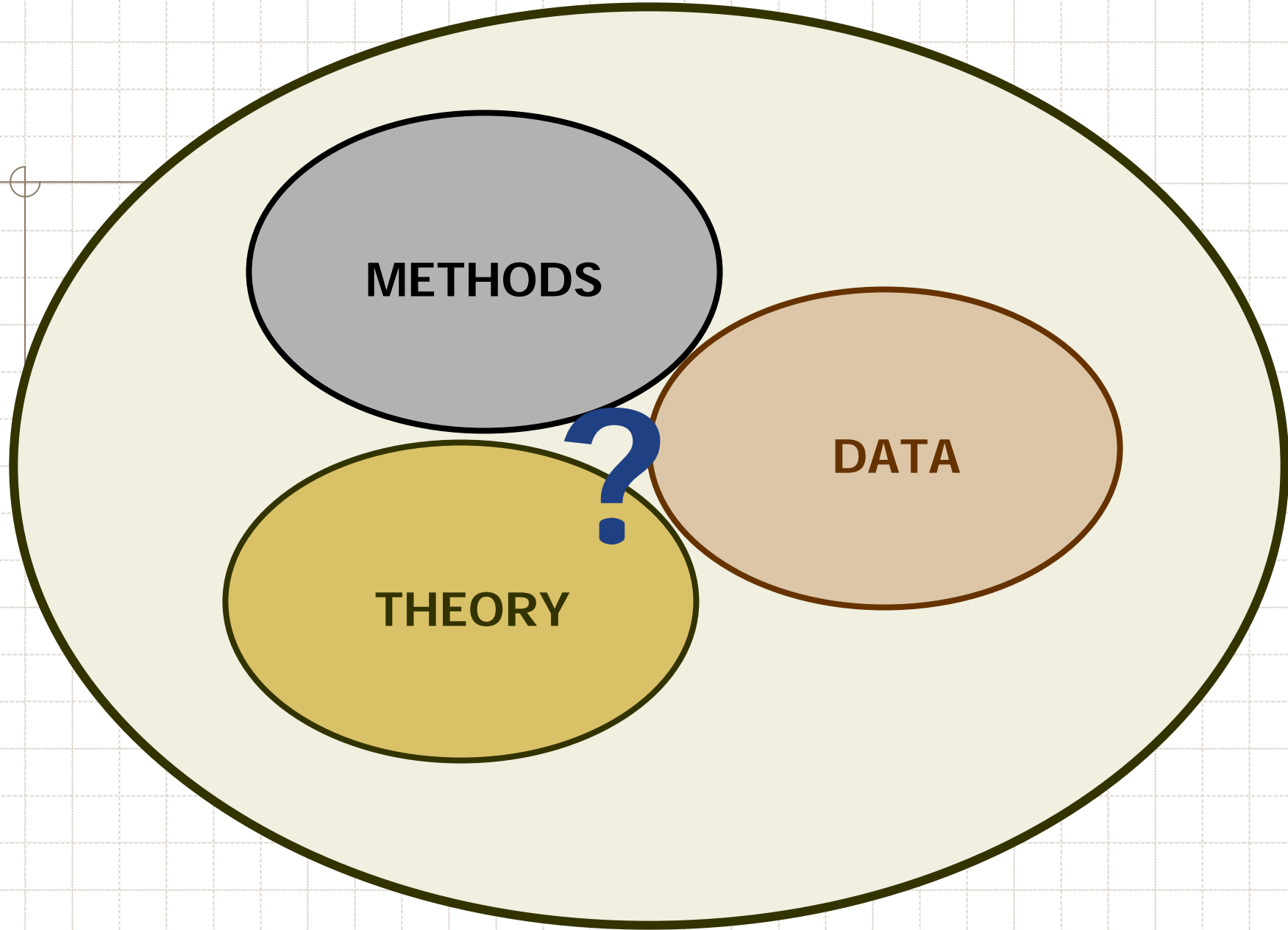
Significant contributions

- ◆ push the conversation forward or towards some positive direction
- ◆ always involve building on the previous contributions

The degree of importance of the contribution depends on the degree to which the contribution advances the conversation.

# Insignificant or Bad Contributions to a Conversation

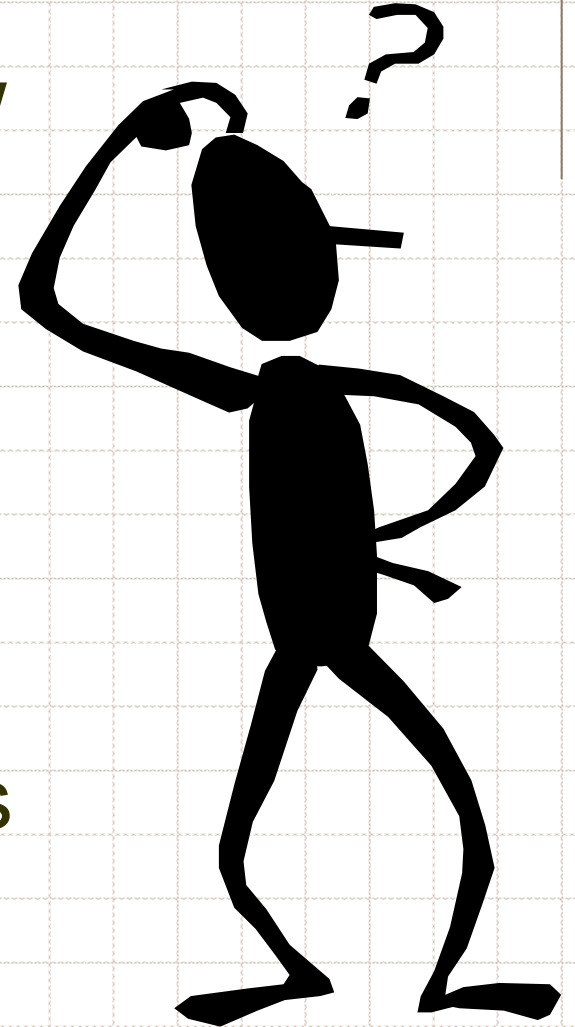
- ◆ saying something obvious
  - ◆ saying something people already know
  - ◆ repeating something that has already been said
  - ◆ saying irrelevant, off-track, or even misleading things
  - ◆ inappropriate response to other contributions
  - ◆ indiscriminately disagreeing or agreeing with everything
  - ◆ talking about something no one cares about
  - ◆ overreaching in arguments (without evidence)
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- A stylized illustration of a hand with the index finger pointing downwards, positioned on the right side of the slide. The hand is rendered in shades of orange and yellow, with a textured, slightly crumpled appearance. It is pointing towards the bottom of the list of items.





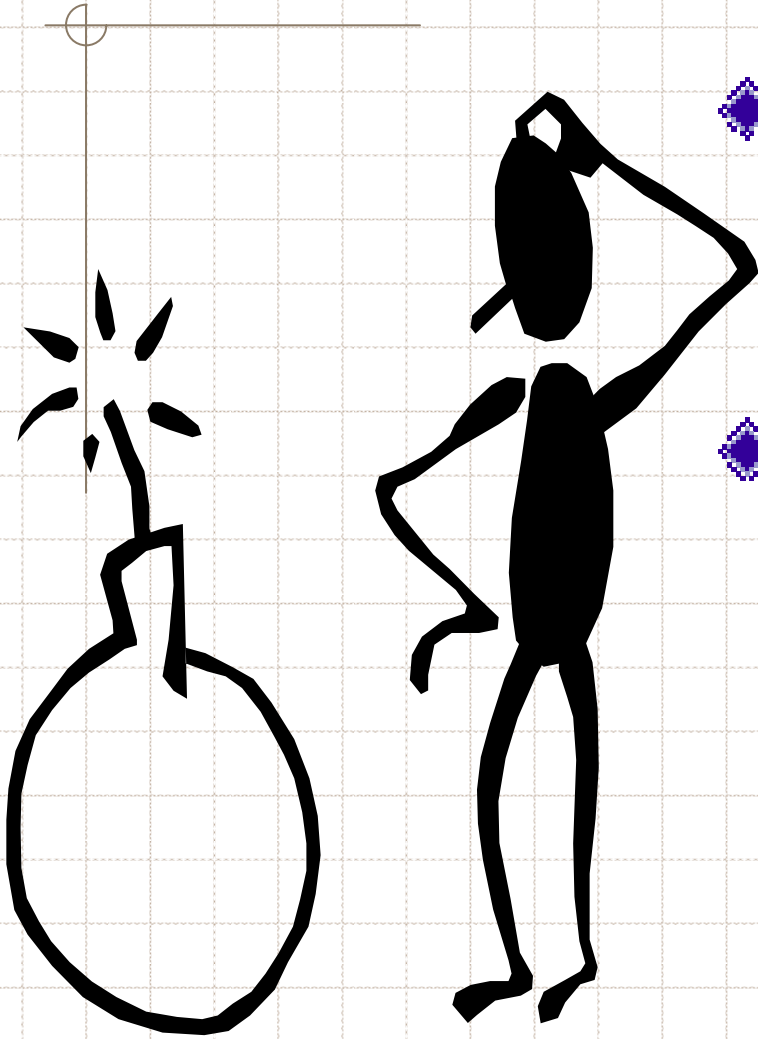
# The Role of Theory in Conversation

- ◆ Perspective or point-of-view
  - may be explicit or implicit
- ◆ Prior? or Emergent?
- ◆ Some dimensions of perspective evolve or change as conversation develops, but some aspects are inflexible.





# The Role of Data in Conversation



- ◆ Evidence: supportive, clarificatory, illustrative, or contradictory
- ◆ What makes data useful in conversations?  
Credibility? Reliability?  
Validity? Relevance?  
Replicability?  
Representativeness?

# The Role of Data-Gathering and Data-Analytic Methods

◆ Quality of data: relevance?  
representativeness?  
accuracy? verifiability?  
completeness?

◆ Quality of analysis: logic in  
inference; rationality;  
persuasiveness; vividness;  
emotional appeals;  
usefulness, practical,  
political & ethical  
dimensions



# Applying the metaphor

- ◆ Trying to publish in an ISI journal is like trying to be included in a very important and exclusive conversation, and trying to contribute meaningfully to that conversation...

*So, do you really have something to contribute?*

# Publishing in ISI Journal: The First Question

“IS MY RESEARCH WORTH  
PUBLISHING” or

“IS MY RESEARCH REPORT  
DESCRIBING AN ORIGINAL AND  
SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO  
THE RESEARCH LITERATURE IN  
MY FIELD/SUBFIELD?”

# Thinking about one's contribution(s)?

- ◆ Most scholars in my field/subfield now think/say that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ My research shows that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ Other scholars should appreciate my research because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

# Realizing what you have to contribute

- ◆ It is important that you find something in your research that some group of other scholars will find interesting.
- ◆ You need to know the breadth and depth of existing research literature
- ◆ You need to consider the diversity within the community of researchers in your field/subfield.
- ◆ Even “small” contributions will have space in the research conversation.



# Realizing what you have to contribute

- ◆ Be clear about what “contributions” you will highlight in the manuscript.
- ◆ Your “contributions” may not be the same as you had planned in your research proposal.
- ◆ Your research question/problem should “match” your “contributions.”
- ◆ Be very clear about what your “contributions” are in relation to what the present literature is stating.



◆ Most scholars in my field/subfield now think/say that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

◆ My research shows that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

◆ Other scholars should appreciate my research because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

# Considering one's options

- ◆ If you cannot think of good answers to the last two items, don't even think about publishing in an ISI journal.
- ◆ If you have answers to the two items, but they do not seem to be very compelling, you should consider a lower-end ISI journal or non-ISI refereed journal.
- ◆ If you have very strong answers to the last two items, GO!

# Choosing the Journal

- ◆ Try to know as much as the journal as possible (editorial policy, types of articles published, audience, etc.)
- ◆ Make sure the you choose a journal that fits the scope and nature of your research
- ◆ The way you prepare the manuscript should be appropriate to the journal you will submit to

# Organizing the Manuscript

- ◆ Keep in mind what your “contribution” is.
- ◆ Know the audience you are writing for; think of the journal you are writing for.
- ◆ Two key principles in preparing your report: **clarity** and **accuracy**.
- ◆ The two principles are important because your readers will be assessing whether they will believe what you are writing. So don't be vague, obscure, or intentionally misleading.

# Thesis format vs Journal format

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- ◆ The thesis/dissertation format was designed for pedagogical purposes.
- ◆ The journal format was designed for "research conversations."
- ◆ Do not make the mistake of simply and mindlessly transplanting the parts of your thesis to your journal manuscript.
- ◆ Journal editors and reviewers will easily see that you are an amateur.

# Writing the introductory sections

- ◆ Start with the big picture; talk about something that readers will understand in concrete terms.
- ◆ Begin limiting the problem, gradually focusing on your topic.
- ◆ In gradually focusing on your topic, you should already be discussing the significance of your topic.
- ◆ State your research problem in broad terms; if possible, in one question.



# Writing the introductory sections

- ◆ Discuss what other researchers have said in relation to the problem.
- ◆ This review of literature should not be enumerative & need not be comprehensive. It should be selective but representative, and presented in a way that coherently describes the current research context in which you want to make a contribution.
- ◆ In the review, be explicit about how you define & use important terms or concepts.



# Writing the introductory sections

- ◆ If appropriate, your review should clearly state your theoretical premises.
- ◆ End the section with a brief but detailed articulation of your research problem, variables, (& if appropriate, hypotheses), being explicit about how it relates to the existing literature.
- ◆ Note the funnel-shape structure of introduction section

# Writing the methods sections

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- ◆ This section should be very detailed and accurate, without being too detailed.
- ◆ Detail should be sufficient to allow readers to adequately assess the sufficiency of the methods.
- ◆ Refer to similar types of articles that have been published in terms of how to organize this section.
- ◆ Try writing this section following a clear and linear narrative style.

# Writing the results section

- ◆ Preface the presentation of results with a reminder of the research questions, and if appropriate, the hypothesis.
- ◆ Organize the results in ways that clearly allow the readers to see the answers to the research questions.
- ◆ Provide the “conceptual” answers to questions before giving the details of the results and analysis.

# Writing the results section

- ◆ Use the conventional forms of reporting data (e.g., tables, figures, statistical analysis); if necessary refer to published papers in your intended journal.
- ◆ Do not be redundant in data presentation; choose the most effective way of presenting your data.
- ◆ When describing large data sets, provide summaries after subsections.

# Writing the discussion section

- ◆ Before embarking on discussion:
  - very briefly summarize your findings, highlighting how your findings relate to existing literature.
  - state possible caveats in your conclusions brought about by limitations of the study.
- ◆ Start discussing your findings: discuss similarities differences with other research, theoretical and/or practical implications, educated speculations, etc.

# Writing the discussion section

- ◆ Be careful not to overreach with your discussion and conclusions.
- ◆ Do not end with “future research” or “limitations.”
- ◆ End with a bang. Make sure your readers feel they got something from your report.
- ◆ Note reversed funnel-shape structure of discussion section.
- ◆ Note hourglass structure of report.



# Some reminders on writing

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- ◆ Be very strict in following all prescriptions of the journal editors (e.g., citations, headings, tables, figures, etc.)
- ◆ You conversational academic style of language. Avoid being abstruse and too formal (e.g., use of third person).
- ◆ Use repeated and parallel construction.
- ◆ Use active voice unless the content dictates otherwise. Avoid self-references.

# Some reminders on writing

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- ◆ Be meticulous in all the details.
- ◆ Be concise. Make sure every word is absolutely necessary.
- ◆ Don't be offensive. Avoid bias (i.e., gender, stereotyping, prejudice, etc.)
- ◆ Avoid jargon. If you need to, define it first in concrete terms & use an example.
- ◆ Proofread.

# Important reminders on writing

- ◆ Think of your reader -- one who is fairly intelligent, with enough background in the field, but is not a specialist.
- ◆ Write as if you are teaching your reader.
- ◆ Revise
- ◆ Revise
- ◆ Revise
- ◆ Revise

# The review process

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- ◆ Submit the manuscript following all the guidelines stated in journal.
- ◆ You will get acknowledgement and information about the process
  - length of review period
  - name of action editor (?)
  - number of referees (?)
- ◆ Then wait!

# The review process

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- ◆ When you get reviews, the action editor gives you his/her comments, the referees' comments, & the action editor's decision.
- ◆ The decision will be one of the following:
  - Accepted without revisions
  - Accepted with minor revisions (indicated)
  - Rejected but encouraged to resubmit with revisions
  - Rejected no revision will be accepted

# How to respond to reviews:

- ◆ Whatever the decision, read the reviewers' comments carefully, and process the comments.
- ◆ If the reviewers' comments indicate that they did not understand you correctly, don't blame them... It's your fault!
- ◆ Don't take negative comments personally. Take these as feedback that would be helpful in improving your work.



# How to respond to reviews:

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- ◆ If you have the option to resubmit, consider whether you want to revise according to the reviewers' suggestions.
- ◆ Remember, you don't have to follow all the reviewers' suggestions.
- ◆ But you should pay attention to those reviewers' comments that are highlighted by the action editor.
- ◆ You need to think about how far you are willing to depart from your original work.

# How to respond to reviews:

- ◆ If you are submitting a revision, you should work on it immediately.
- ◆ When resubmitting, include a cover letter enumerating your responses to the comments (detailing your revisions and specifying why you did not follow some suggestions made by reviewers)
- ◆ Editors may send out your revision for peer-review again. If so, you will have to wait again.

# How to respond to reviews:

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- ◆ Editors may decide to review your revision on their own.
- ◆ Editors will make a decision on your revision; same options as with first submission.
- ◆ The cycle continues until the editor pronounces that your paper is finally accepted or finally rejected.

# How to respond to reviews:

- ◆ If your work is rejected, or you think you could not adequately assess the reviews, you have the following options:
  - Resubmit same paper to another journal
  - Revise or reconfigure the paper and submit to another journal
  - Conduct further studies/analysis and submit to same or another journal
  - Publish in a “catch-all” journal

# Closing suggestions

- ◆ Read and model the articles published in ISI journals.
- ◆ Be courageous and be willing to stick your neck out.
- ◆ Set high expectations of yourself, work hard and always try to do your best.
- ◆ Don't ever take the negative outcomes personally.
- ◆ Never give up. Because we can all do it.

**GOOD LUCK!**

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ISI JOURNAL**

Allan B. I. Bernardo, Ph.D.

[bernardoa@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:bernardoa@dlsu.edu.ph)