

Editorial: Choosing a title for a scholarly paper

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This editorial was written following the discussion initiated at the conference for scientific editors and publishers. The delegates raised a number of relevant and thought-provoking issues. Among them was the quality of reviews, the author-editorship interaction, ethical issues and many more. But the presentation on how to choose a title for a scientific paper kindled my interest. The speaker showed examples of headings in the manuscripts from the chemistry field. As the comments were quite universal, I would like to share them with readers and potential authors of Education and Self-Development Journal.

When creating a title, one should remember two basic functions that headings carry out. First, they are supposed to engage the attention of readers. Second, they should facilitate the quick discoverability of a full manuscript in databases (Medvedev, 2022). Therefore, an initial recommendation for authors seeking to find a suitable title is the length. Long and complex titles usually discourage readers from reading the full text. Given that, it is recommended to make titles concise, but not too short. The length should range from 5 to 15 words (Enago Academy, 2022).

Additionally, authors are advised to use a descriptive statement avoiding questions and complete sentences. The use of jargons and abbreviations without expansion is not acceptable either. It is also suggested that words 'novel' and 'new' are excluded, unless you have conducted pioneer research (Mudrak, n.d.).

The most important issue to consider is keywords. It is essential to include two or three keywords in the heading. In the current flow of information discovering a paper without some 'distinctive' features is like looking for a needle in the haystack. Keywords increase the chances of someone finding your article when performing a database search.

Normally the process of preparing a manuscript takes some time. Authors revise or add some material in the course of writing. They can even have several drafts. For such cases there is a basic rule: the title should reflect the content of a final version.

Summing up, the work with titles does not require extraordinary efforts. It needs time, creativity and simple rules to follow. Most importantly, when trying to come up with a title, one should bear in mind that a heading is an opening gambit, which if taken correctly, will determine the outcome and lead to success.

References

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