

The Research Room

April 2024

Tips of the month

Here are some tips and tricks you can use to make your research experience at VUW much more productive and enjoyable

Writing and submitting op-eds

Publishing your research as an article in a journal is a common goal for most researchers. However, it is a journal the only legitimate place to discuss and share your work? Why not broaden your reach and impact by sharing your insights and knowledge through an op-ed?

Put simply, opinion writing is a formal piece of writing that allows you to express your viewpoint on a particular topic. Writing opinion pieces serves as a powerful tool for both exposure and advocacy, offering a platform to disseminate research and ideas to a broad audience. Whether advocating for a cause, promoting a policy change, or sharing insights from research findings, opinion pieces provide an avenue to reach beyond academic or specialized circles to engage with the general public. They offer a platform for self-expression, enabling writers to share their unique perspectives and experiences with the world. Moreover, they foster critical thinking skills by prompting you to articulate and defend your viewpoints, thereby honing your ability to analyze and evaluate complex issues. Crafting opinion pieces also cultivates effective communication skills, as writers learn to convey their thoughts persuasively and succinctly to a diverse audience.

Overall, writing opinion pieces not only enriches personal growth but also contributes positively to the broader community by fostering informed debate and advancing collective understanding. Where you can publish your opinion piece? Consider platforms such as [The Conversation](#), [Newsroom](#), and [Stuff](#).

Dr. William Eulatth – FGR, Victoria University of Wellington

Share your story

When utilized effectively, stories can be powerful tools to motivate and change minds. If you need an extra dose of motivation, this story should help you out

Embracing the Journey: From life experience to academic adventure – Deborah

As someone who's embracing the label of a "mature student," there are moments when diving into the world of academic learning feels a bit daunting. But we're all perpetual students on this wild journey called

life, right? I've come to realize that learning is for everyone. In fact, with each passing year, I am more courageous, and experience allows me to stick my neck out further than when I was younger. Embracing this perspective allows me to approach new challenges

with confidence and resilience, drawing upon the wisdom gained through years of life experience.

Throughout my life, I've been drawn to causes, which have ignited my curiosity, though they haven't always paved a smooth life journey. From juggling various roles across Europe and the UK to embracing the joys and challenges of motherhood in New Zealand, and now as a dairy farm owner-operator, my journey has been nothing short of adventurous.

However, amidst all the hustle and bustle, the call to the world of research seemed a natural progression. Can you believe it? Over 30 years after earning my first degree at Victoria University, I made the decision to pursue a Post Graduate Diploma in the Faculty of Health, focusing on workplace health and safety. The return to academia throws many reminders, a bit like coming home, but now a place where my decades of life experience could enrich my learning journey. In my quest to uncover the roots of workplace inequality and its potential to shape a different life, I had to go down the rabbit holes and research further for the surprises. This came in my master's research in 2023.

These surprises, particularly embedded in abductive pragmatic design for research, laid the groundwork for transitioning from the Master's to a PhD—a path fraught with the complexities of navigating university processes and deadlines that often only become clear in hindsight. This is where trust takes centre stage, becoming the new exercise regimen. Trusting in the learning and processes that get you to each stage is critical. “You are not wrong” my supervisor often reminds me. You are exploring, explaining, and defending the data that you have collected to further the search for new knowledge. This comes in many forms.

This journey, with its myriad shapes and challenges, are also enjoyed with triumphs. Each victory and setback has contributed not only to my growth as a researcher but also as an individual. Through this process, my understanding of the world has expanded, and my role within it has evolved, shaping a trajectory in academia, and beyond.

The gruelling hours dedicated to learning new stuff such as research methodology, paradigms, and design, alongside the acquisition of skills in unfamiliar software

and survey techniques, has been great fun. Moreover, delving into mountains of literature authored by individuals previously unheard of, yet acclaimed as "seminal," adds another layer of complexity. Throughout this adventure, I've found additional companions in Google, YouTube, ChatGPT, and various online servers. They've been extra go-to pals, always ready to lend a hand. Sure, there are resources available, including assistance from real librarians and advisors, but how to do all this intertwined, tangled, and layered knowledge discovery remains hard work.

It's like a mental workout, and a bit like hitting the gym cold. But as you start to see progress and observe your perspective evolving, it can become addictive. I can't say here that all academics are just the eternal Uni student, enjoying the corridors of energy felt from firing neurons all over the place, but I can understand why the ongoing discovery of more, is exciting and surprising. So, while the journey may be filled with twists, turns, and tangled paths, the exhilaration of discovery makes it all worth it in the end.

As I head into the research phase, ethics, research tool and questionnaire development and recruitment, even maturity fails to calm the nerves, settle the stomach, or soothe the tired eyes. It's hard work and demands a significant amount of willpower to navigate, but I do find solace in reflecting on the steps I've already taken. This is a guiding light of encouragement and motivation.

To all my fellow PhD candidates out there, your dedication and perseverance will pay off, as the courage you build will start to feel more like normal. The journey does offer the reward of earning a PhD, as well as profound personal growth and impact. Obstacles are to go around, learning new academic, personal, and professional maps for your own development. This is your distinct perspective to enrich the scholarly community and shape the future of research. Stay focused, be tough when you need and know your boundaries to manage time, because as a dairy farmer, I know that working hard is needed, but working efficiently gets all the jobs done.

Deborah Rhodes, School of Health, Victoria University of Wellington

Useful resources

Explore our list of research-related links that will help you throughout your research studies

Connected Papers

When conducting a literature review and seeking to identify connections among published papers, Connected Papers offers assistance. Upon inputting a standard paper, the platform generates a visual representation of related papers within your field, facilitating the exploration of connections.

Events happening soon

Looking for other events happening inside and outside VUW? We go over some interesting events happening worldwide

Organizer	Event	Date and Time	Register
Student Learning, Victoria University of Wellington	Qualitative research (<i>In person</i>)	16 Apr, 14:10 – 15:00 NZST	Here
	Developing your argument (<i>In person</i>)	23 Apr, 14:10 – 15:00 NZST	Here
Research Service Team, Victoria University of Wellington	Promoting your research: Reach, visibility, and engagement (<i>Online</i>)	08 Apr, 11:00 – 12:00 NZST	Here
Lumivero	Coding and autocoding with NVivo (<i>Online</i>)	24 Apr, 19:00 CEST	Here
	NVivo Databases and beyond in the Humanities (<i>Online</i>)	25 Apr, 18:00 CEST	Here
Sage Research Methods Community	How to write a paper: Quantitative methodology (<i>Online</i>)	04 Apr, 04:00 NZST	Here
Taylor & Francis	Exploring Open Access publishing: Strategies for successful outcomes (<i>Online</i>)	04 Apr, 24:00 NZST	Here
	Excellence in peer review: How to be an effective peer reviewer (<i>Online</i>)	24 Apr, 20:30 NZST	Here
	Ethics focus: Plagiarism and text recycling (<i>Online</i>)	26 Apr, 24:30 NZST	Here
UK Data Service	Getting started with secondary analysis (<i>Online</i>)	22 Apr, 21:00 NZST	Here
	Introduction to effective and practical research data management (<i>Online</i>)	25 Apr, 21:00 NZST	Here
SREE	Using quantitative methods with participatory action research: Its possibilities, challenges, and limitations (<i>Online</i>)	05 Apr, 13:00 – 14:00 ET	Here
Aalto	Exploring AI analysis of qualitative data, (<i>Online</i>)	09 Apr, 13:00 – 14:30 EEST	Here
Australian Association for Research in Education	Decentring the Human in qualitative Research methodologies (<i>Online</i>)	18 Apr, 19:00 – 20:00 AEST	Here
Dedoose	Thematic analysis using Dedoose: Strategies and best practices (<i>Online</i>)	30 Apr, 04:00 NZST	Here
Education Now: Harvard Graduate School of Education	Media literacy education and AI (<i>Online</i>)	04 Apr, 08:00 NZST	Here

Organizer	Event	Date and Time	Register
Digital Marketing Institute	How to use AI for your copywriting <i>(Online)</i>	16 Apr, 14:00 London time	Here
The Helen Clark foundation	Long Covid – Are we taking it seriously enough? <i>(Online)</i>	03 Apr, 12:00 NZST	Here
Track Safe Foundation	Supporting mental health <i>(Online)</i>	10 Apr, 15:00 – 16:00 GMT	Here
WoodGreen Community Services	Write an effective cover letter <i>(Online)</i>	26 Apr, 03:00 – 04:30 NZST	Here
London Writers' Salon	24-Hour writing sprint: Around the world in 24 writers' hours <i>(Online)</i>	13 Apr, 07:00 NZST	Here
University of Phoenix	How to build your online brand on LinkedIn <i>(Online)</i>	02 Apr, 11:00 NZST	Here
	Writing effective Cover Letters <i>(Online)</i>	12 Apr, 07:00 – 08:00 NZST	Here

**Please note that by listing these events we are not endorsing any organisations but rather compiling and sharing a list of resources that may be helpful.*

FGR

The Wellington Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) works to ensure that your experience as a thesis student is a positive one. For more information, visit our [website](#)

Contact

Postgraduate Research Student Advisers: FGR-postgrads@vuw.ac.nz

- Enrolling in your doctoral or master's programme.
- Candidature management changes.

Online forms for thesis candidature changes can be found [here](#).

Thesis Examinations: FGR-Masters-Exams@vuw.ac.nz or PhD-Exams@vuw.ac.nz

- Submission or examination of theses.

Scholarships and Doctoral Admissions: pg-research@vuw.ac.nz:

- Doctoral applications or the doctoral application process
- Scholarships