

Grant Proposals: How to Write and Argue Effectively

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6BMn3Q8jvA>



About me, sales, and entrepreneurship

Successful multi-million-dollar baseball hitter gets a hit
1 times out of 4 chances

Overall grant success rates: 1 in 5

U of A Arts SSHRC success rate for INsight:

~1 in 4

Overall SSHRC success rate:

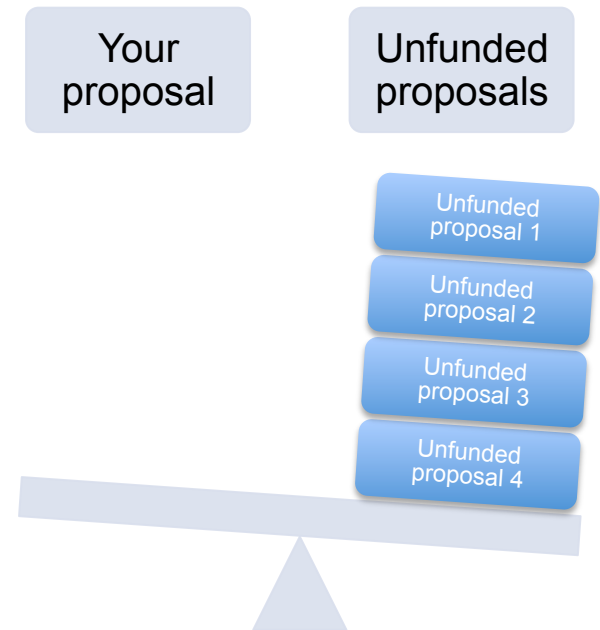
1 in 5



Sell me this pen



1. Persistence wins
2. Good isn't good enough: you have to be better than the other good proposals
3. What gives you an edge over the other excellent work being done out there?



Moral of the story



Funding applications are derived from the business genre: RFP (requests for proposals)

Opportunity Description:

This Tender is for an Outline Agreement for the provision of all labour, materials and equipment required to provide a means for beneficial use of thickened and dewatered Biosolids in agricultural and non-agricultural lands, along with all associated tasks as per the Scope of Work, for the City of Edmonton Drainage Services Branch.

The Term of the Outline Agreement will be for 1 seasonal period, beginning June 1, 2013 and ending December 31, 2013. The City will have the option to extend the Term, in its sole discretion, for 2 additional 1 year periods. The City may split the award of this Contract between up to 2 Bidders.

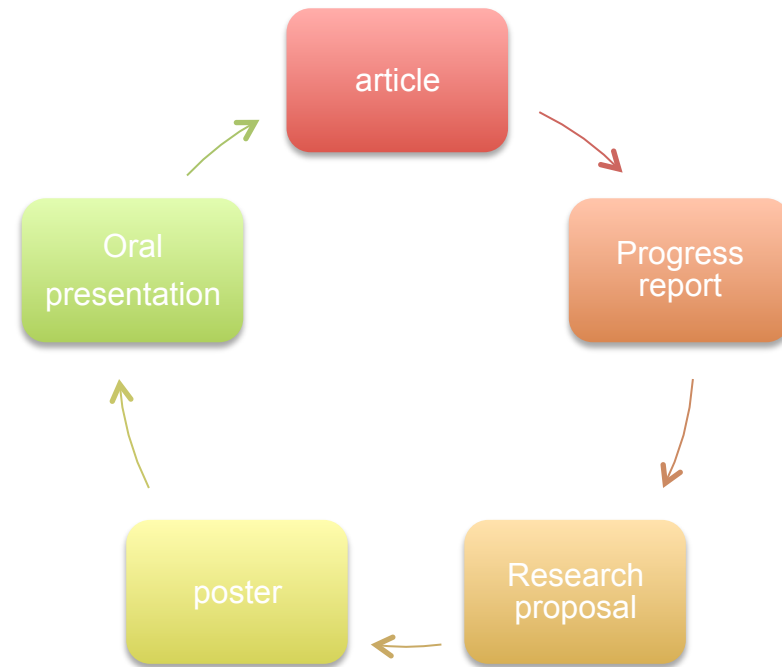


Distant relations but still relatives

C. Miller (1984) described genre as a rhetorical action that recurs within a social setting

The sharing of meaning is **intersubjective** and **negotiated** through discourse among the group

These shared discourses form into typical types of documents (genres)



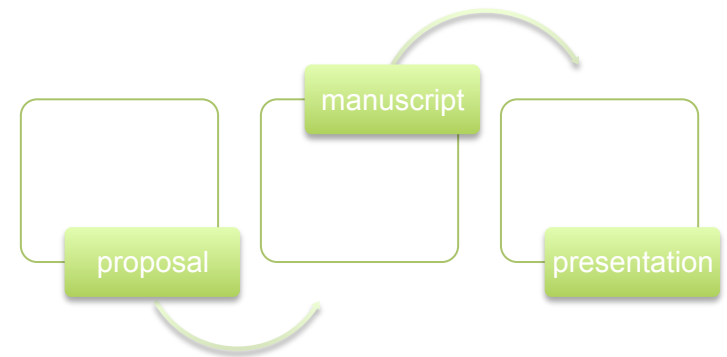
Genre as social action



Genres typically do not occur alone but instead as part of a set of social actions within a group

The research article is one of a set of genres: a conference presentation, a research grant, research grant reports, peer review documents

Other related documents?





Objectives

The objectives of the Insight program are to:

- build knowledge and understanding from disciplinary, interdisciplinary and/or cross-sector perspectives through support for the best researchers;
- support new approaches to research on complex and important topics, including those that transcend the capacity of any one scholar, institution or discipline;
- provide a high-quality research training experience for students;
- fund research expertise that relates to societal challenges and opportunities; and
- mobilize research knowledge, to and from academic and non-academic audiences, with the potential to lead to intellectual, cultural, social and economic influence, benefit and impact.



Insight Grant Requirements

Lay summary (1 page)

Grant narrative (6 pgs)

**Research Team, Previous
Output & Student Training (max
4 pgs)**

Expected Outcomes (1 page)

**Knowledge Mobilization plans
(1 page)**

- Funds requested
- Budget justification
- Funds from other sources

Grant proposals follow this general pattern:

What is the **problem**?

What **solution** do you recommend?

What is your **implementation** schedule?



Challenge—The aim and importance of the endeavour (40%):

- originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge;
- appropriateness of the literature review;
- appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework;
- appropriateness of the methods/approach;
- quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students, emerging scholars and other highly qualified personnel, and opportunities for them to contribute; and
- potential influence and impact within and/or beyond the social sciences and humanities research community.

How will your solution to the problem and implementation plan be evaluated?

Feasibility—The plan to achieve excellence (20%):

- probability of effective and timely attainment of the research objectives;
- appropriateness of the requested budget and justification of proposed costs;
- indications of financial and in-kind contributions from other sources, where appropriate;
- quality of knowledge mobilization plans, including for effective knowledge dissemination, knowledge exchange and engagement within and/or beyond the research community; and
- strategies and timelines for the design and conduct of the activity/ activities proposed.

Capability—The expertise to succeed (40%):

- quality, quantity and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any team members relative to their roles in the project and their respective stages of career;
- evidence of contributions such as commissioned reports, professional practice, public discourse, public policies, products and services, experience in collaboration, etc.;
- evidence of contributions to the development of talent; and
- potential to make future contributions.

Claim



Link (because)



Reason



Challenges

(How, So what, Why?)



Evidence

(Data, Statistics, Expert opinion, Visuals, Other studies, etc. [What counts is often discipline-specific])

Claim + stated reason:

The gun registry in Canada has failed to live up to its promise of making women safer **because the kinds of guns used to kill women in domestic violence do not require registration.**



Informal argument structure

- Claim + stated reason rest upon an unstated reason
- Both the stated and unstated reasons rely on shared assumptions of value between the writer and the reader
- Evidence demonstrates the validity of the stated or unstated reasons
- When values are shared, less evidence is needed to convince the reader

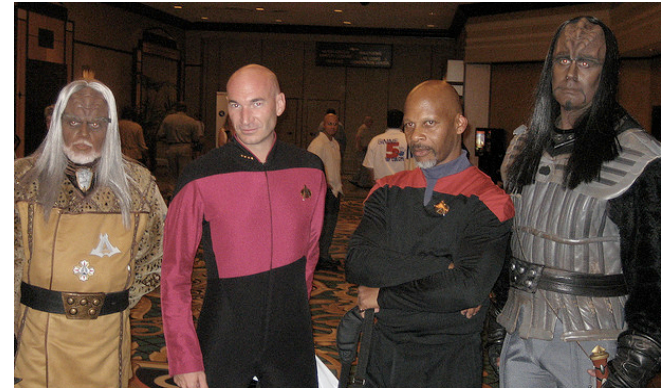


- Evidence to support stated reason (Grounds) (facts, data, statistics, testimony, examples)
- Backing = facts, statistics, testimony, examples that support the grounds or assumptions you are working from



Swales (1991) developed the concept of discourse communities to explain the purposes within documents

His concept of rhetorical “moves” within documents—such as “establish a research territory”—leads to one method for establishing the typical purposes or communicative aims for a document.



Back of the napkin

Exercise

Write a one sentence description of your research problem.

Mine:

I propose to use existing and emerging scholarship in gaming, human-computer interaction, writing studies, rhetoric, and natural language understanding to identify the significant aspects of a new online environment for learning to write (a model).

Yours?



The elevator The elevator version

Exercise

Draft a one-paragraph version of your research problem

Argumentative Moves

“moves” are like tacit questions that grant writers answer

Moves are a way to organize the proposal

Moves create a narrative

“A problem exists of social and research importance (**territory**). Some research already exists, but there is also clearly an absence of research in a particular area (**gap**). The researcher(s) is/are well prepared (**means**) to address the problem (**goal**) by conducting the following study (**methodology**).”



Analysis of successful SSHRC Grants shows writers use these moves to build their narrative:

“A problem exists of social and research importance (**territory**). Some research already exists, but there is also clearly an absence of research in a particular area (**gap**). The researcher(s) is/are well prepared (**means**) to address the problem (**goal**) by conducting the following study (**methodology**).”

“Recently, Alberta has received much media attention because of its massive drawing power for migrants in a context of unprecedented economic growth (3 references 2007/2006). A less noticed but equally important development is the steady increase of the birth rate in this province, a situation diametrically at odds with the persistent pattern of low fertility in Canada. Most surprising is the apparent lack of scholarly interest to this new development. **My study seeks to address this void** in the demographic literature . . .”



Real world example

What argumentative moves can you perform to establish a gap in research?

Sample: "Because Canada's Arctic Aboriginal peoples include diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit cultures in distinct settings, the Aklavik results cannot be presumed to generalize across the north."

Move: X

X is not generalizable because these groups are diverse; therefore we need to study other groups



Sample: "the current risk prediction framework is inadequate for identifying high-risk subgroups and accurately estimating their risk levels. . .Consequently [this leads to] underestimation of the risk for these high-risk subgroups"

Move: Previous methods obscure X ; the proposed method promises to uncover X



Establishes that a problem exists

Provides motivation for the proposed study by implying the gap needs to be filled

“This consolidation appears to be pointing to a ‘two-tiered’ financial system: an increasingly ‘exclusive’ financial world accessible to those with capital and wealth, and high-cost financial practices for those populations who are prevented from accessing mainstream credit (ref. 2005).”



Goal

States the aim, general objective, chief contribution of the study

This move responds to the gap or problem identified in the proposal

“My study seeks to address this void in the demographic literature . . .”



What is the problem?

Exercise

Write a statement that shows there is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Research territory refers to current research issues or problems

“Real world” territory refers to social problems or issues

Connect the two territories: a real world problem exists for which a research area can propose a solution



“Particularly worrisome has been the increase in adolescent gang membership. A subset of the offending population, estimated at 68% of institutionalized youth, are affiliated with a gang, yet little research has been done to distinguish gang members from other types of young offenders (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1996); Richter-White, 2003). It may be that young people are turning to gangs for protection from other gangs, as a way to gain respect, to escape from troubled homes, because their friends are doing it, peer pressure, or as a way to earn a living through drug trafficking, illegal weapons sales, robbery, and theft (Lloyd, 2002). However, the reasons why adolescents choose to join a gang remain understudied with no clear answers.

—Nicole Kostiuik, *Attachment in Incarcerated Adolescent Gang Members*, 2007.



“[this study] will also be of interest beyond the academic community. The project grows out of the initial steps taken by the office of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TCRM). . . It is essential to know the history of agriculture in First Nations communities in order to understand what the barriers have been and how they may be removed.”



Objectives and **Context** sections of Insight Grant are areas where you

- Identify your research territory
- Link your territory with current research in the field
- Establish that there is a problem that needs to be addressed [the gap]
- Illustrate how your research project fills the gap and addresses a real world problem
- Identify the goals for your project



How does this connect to society?

Exercise

Write a sentence that connects your research to a real-world problem.

Objectives

Context

Methodology: demonstrate the quality of your proposed solution

“A problem exists of social and research importance (territory). Some research already exists, but there is also clearly an absence of research in a particular area (gap). The researcher(s) is/are well prepared (**means**) to address the problem (**goal**) by conducting the following study (**methodology**).”



What is the goal?

“The principal goal of my study is to address these and other related questions and to uncover the underlying social demographic and socioeconomic factors responsible for the recent fertility rise in Alberta.”

How the goal (from 'move' narrative) will be achieved, including descriptions of methods, procedures, plans, or actions and tasks

Writers demonstrate their methodological competency by doing the following:

- Present the specific steps of their study
- Name a theory or method that would enable them to reach the project goals



“Vaccinia virus (VV) is considered the prototypic poxvirus, and is amenable to **genetic manipulation** through a multitude of available DNA recombination tools (450). VV has also been used extensively as a **gene delivery mechanism**, as its large DNA genome makes it relatively easy to insert foreign DNA sequences for protein expression in mammalian cells (50, 100). Despite the fact that the natural host for VV is unknown, **VV remains an excellent model in which to study virus:host interactions due to its complex genome and vast array of anti-immune mechanisms** (169). In response to the selective pressures initiated by the host immune system, poxviruses such as vaccinia virus encode a vast array of proteins which modulate both innate and adaptive immune responses (Table 1.2) (21, 105).”

John Taylor, *The inhibition of apoptosis and Bax activation by mitochondrial antiapoptotic proteins encoded by vaccinia virus and ectomelia virus*, Fall 2007. (bolding added)



Cite sources that support your methods

Addresses writer's credibility and readiness to conduct the research

Strategies:

1. Cite their own past or ongoing research to imply connection between proposed research and their competency

2. Make explicit claims about their competency based on previous research



Other areas to discuss 'means'

- Description of research team (if appropriate)
- Description of previous and ongoing research results



Step 2:

What is your method? (one sentence)

You'll need to elaborate this:

- Citations to others who have used it
- Identify how you might be modifying it/improving it
- Describe the steps/procedure in detail



Research plan/Methodology

1. Historical Context Analysis
2. Mapping Public Discourses of Fringe Finance
3. Narratives of Regulation



Citing others: writers build on others' work rather than demolishing it

Citing oneself: used to enhance writer's credibility



“Although sources of public data relating to corporate structure have been used to assess levels of corporate regionalization (Rugman, 2005, Rugman 2004) and processes of transnational class formation (Carroll 2004; Carroll and Fennema 2002), they have rarely been used in the critical finance literature.”



Exercise:

Draft some text to answer one of these two questions:

- What is your method/methodology? **OR**
- What is your plan to implement the project?

Methodology

You'll need to elaborate these:

- Citations to others who have used it
- Identify how you might be modifying it/improving it
- Describe the steps/procedure in detail
- Articulate the applicable theoretical framework

Implementation Plan:

Elaborate your

- **Schedule of activities**
- **Sequence of work**
- **Details of work plan**

Use point form, a table, or paragraphs with sub-headings



Other Sections of the Insight Grant

Description of proposed student training strategies

Expected outcomes

- research
- scholarly benefits
- social benefits
- audiences

Knowledge mobilization plan

What's the difference?

Outcomes

- Resembles 'milestones' in that these are 'receivables' or 'products' from the grant
- What your project will produce
- E.g., new models, important insights into X, new instructional material, better understanding of Y, etc.

Knowledge Mobilization

- Your plan for sharing the outcomes with broader audiences
- E.g., Journal article, conference paper (academic audiences); public lecture (general public); white paper for government minister (Fed, Prov., Municipal)



Outcomes: two parts

1. Pull down menu choices:

Scholarly outcomes:

Enhanced curriculum
Enhanced research
collaboration
Enhanced research
methods
Enhanced theory. . .

Social outcomes:

Behavioural outcomes
Cultural outcomes
Economic outcomes . . .

Audiences:

Aboriginal peoples
Academic sector
Artists-researchers
Federal Government
General public . . .

2. Text box (with 3800 characters) with which you must elaborate your ranked outcomes



Knowledge Mobilization Plan

One page summary (3800 characters) describing how you plan to reach broader audiences to disseminate your project outcomes

Use this narrative to demonstrate that

- You have the capability to reach broader audiences (including academic audiences) and
- That there **are** broader audiences who would find your work of interest



Exercise

Draft ideas for one of the additional sections for your project:

- student training opportunities,
- expected outcomes summary,
- knowledge mobilization plan

Max. 1 page for each of these sections (3800 characters incl. spaces)