

1 WEEK AGO EDIT

A History of Citation Styles

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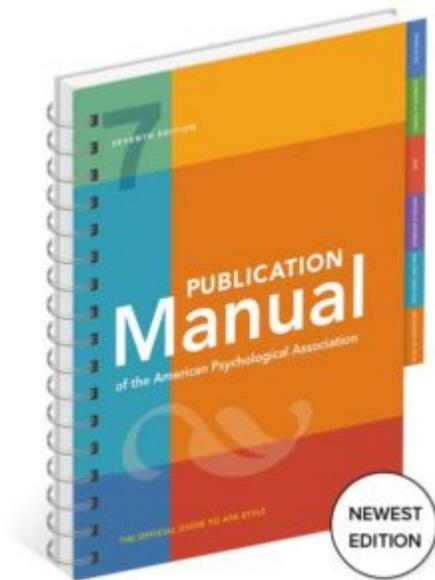
Thomas Lawrence Long

NURSE AUTHOR & EDITOR, 29(3), 6

They exasperate scholars and researchers. They irritate some readers. And they aggravate many editors.

They are officially established style guides, particularly their citation systems (e.g., in-text parenthetical citations, superscript numbers with numbered references or foot/end notes). In publishing nursing research and scholarship, APA style tends to prevail, although AMA style (or Modified Vancouver) is also used. Nicoll et al. (2018) found that of the 245 journals in the Directory of Nursing Journals, 142 (70%) used APA style and 55 (23%) used AMA.

Their technical details, which sometimes become a fetish for professors and editors, undergo

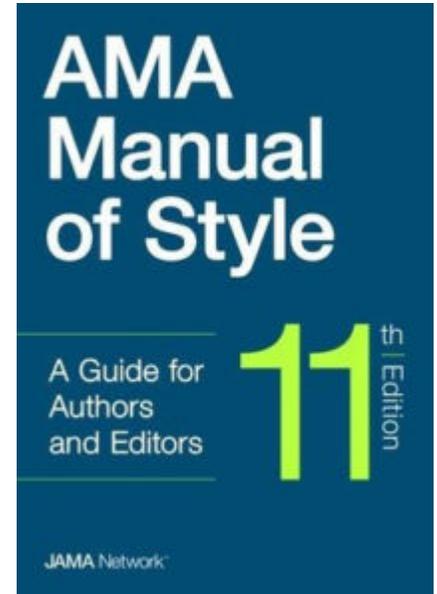


Coming in October 2019

revision periodically because forms of publication and other dissemination change, especially in the digital age. The American Psychological Association is about to publish the 7th edition of its manual and in a forthcoming issue of *Nurse Author & Editor*, Marilyn Oermann will examine the features of this updated version. Likewise, Annette Flanagin and Connie Manno will have an article on changes in the 11th edition of the *AMA Manual of Style*, which is due to publish in November. As a scholar in the health humanities, I am intrigued by the history and meaning of

citation systems and the decision by the nursing research establishment to adopt APA style.

In the course of my career as an editor and author, I have employed the Modern Language Association (MLA) style (used in literary research), Chicago style (for history scholarship, also sometimes called *Turabian*), Harvard style, and Oxford style, as well as APA and Modified Vancouver. Scholars in the humanities routinely debate the value for readers of footnotes versus endnotes. And I do not dare to mention IEEE style (engineering) and CSE style (sciences)!



In a charming little volume, *The Footnote: A Curious History*, historian of early-modern European intellectual life Anthony Grafton takes readers to his version of

a creation story. Although Grafton's focus is the origin of the scholarly citation in humanities research, he observes:

Citations in scientific works—as a number of studies have shown—do far more than identify the originators of ideas and the sources of data. They reflect the intellectual styles of different national scientific communities, the pedagogical methods of different graduate programs, and the literary preferences of different journal editors. They regularly refer not only to the precise sources of scientists' data, but also to larger theories and theoretical schools with which the authors wish or hope to be associated. (Grafton, 1997, pp. 12-13)

Here Grafton cites Cronin (1984) whose premise is that science needs to be understood as a social behavior within a social community whose primary means of communication—the research journal article—serves three functions: knowledge dissemination, standards preservation, and the distribution of credit and recognition of the contributions of prior studies (p. 2). The essential mechanism for this is the citation.

Technically, a publication's printed materials outside of its sentences and paragraphs are referred to as its *paratexts*. According to Gérard Genette (1991) and other scholars of culture, supporting or extraneous dimensions of a text (type font, page layout, indexes, advertising, as well as citations) encode not just arbitrary rules but also a constellation of meanings and values that characterize the discourse community that uses them.

Nursing researchers comprise both a practice community (employing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods) and a discourse community (communicating with each other in conventional ways, like poster and podium presentations and research journal articles). A *discourse community* according to John Swales (2011) shares common goals, has established methods of intercommunication among its

members, has distinctive genres for this intercommunication, and employs a specific technical lexis for this communication. So a citation system like APA style conveys the values and identity of a discourse community, including that of nursing research.

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INSTRUCTIONS IN REGARD TO PREPARATION OF
MANUSCRIPT

The Conference of Editors and Business Managers of Anthropological and Psychological Periodicals held in Washington, D. C., November 30th and December 1st, 1928, under the auspices of the Division of Anthropology and Psychology of the National Research Council, adopted the following report of the committee on form of manuscript.

Although the APA was founded in the late nineteenth century, its members did not agree upon a style guide until the 1920s (Madison et al., 1929). Its establishment was largely the product of an effort by James McKeen Cattell, editor of *Science*, *Scientific Monthly* and *Psychological Review*

for professional standardization of research publishing (Almeida, 2012 July 10). This initiative was a response to the growing scholarly psychology establishment after World War I. Following World War II, the expansion of United States universities, a growth in the number of undergraduate and graduate students, and a proliferation of new journals also compelled standardization, resulting in a more detailed style guide.

In 1952, the editors of first issue of *Nursing Research* proposed that this emerging healthcare science would employ the methods of both the physical and social sciences, which I take to mean its openness to quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, as well as the citation norms of the social sciences. The fact that before the proliferation of nursing research doctoral programs many nurse scholars earned degree in fields like sociology, psychology, and education (all of which employ APA style) may also have led to its widespread adoption in nursing research. Among other features, its use of last names with initials (rather than full given and surnames) gives a kind of opacity and distance, removing the full identity of the author(s) and their genders.

As we await a new edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, I am reminded of one of our international graduate students who said to me that nursing should have its own style guide and citation system, distinctive from AMA and APA styles. I cringed, but smiled. I leave that discussion to the International Academy of Nursing Editors (INANE).

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