

Nurse Author & Editor

Leslie H. Nicoll, PhD, MBA, RN, FAAN Editor-in-Chief

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The Editor's Handbook

Review: The Editor's Handbook, 2nd Edition

Kathleen Simpson

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As a relatively new editor, I know I have a lot to learn. There are many situations I have encountered in the last two years that were not covered in my brief orientation to the role. The publisher provided the guidance of a wonderful and highly experienced journal editor for several months. The previous editor was also quite helpful. Without their valuable assistance, I would not have been able to take on this job. However at some point, you realize that you are on your own and you cannot keep sending emails to fellow editors with questions about things you already should know or should

be able to figure out on your own.

The second edition of *The Editor's Handbook* (Freda & Nicoll, 2015) was recently published and is the perfect resource to fill in the gap of what I need to know about being a journal editor but don't know. I assume there are other new editors who have similar needs, thus this handbook could be helpful for many. Even experienced editors can benefit from some of the updated information. I read the entire book one afternoon as soon as I downloaded from the Lippincott Williams & Wilkins site. It was extremely informative and covered all of the expected topics as well as details I hadn't realized were involved in journal editing. As promised in the preface, I could hear Dr. Freda's voice while reading each page. I also could hear Dr. Nicoll's voice and I imagined the three of us sitting around having a chat about how I could be successful as the new editor of *MCN: The American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing*. The style is scholarly and informal. The content is easy to understand with enough detail to be useful.

Each chapter covers essential material for nursing journal editors. An overview of the role of the editor is presented first, followed by advice on important topics such as the editorial board, peer reviewers, authors, ethical issues, special topic issues, supplements, continuing education, indexing, and publicity for your journal. In my short time as a journal editor, I have needed to know various aspects of each of these topics. While I based many of my actions on common sense and how I would like to be treated, I found these chapters to contain practical no-nonsense guidance that I could immediately use. For example, working with members of the editorial board, reviewers, and authors was initially overwhelming because I was unsure of how to convey sometimes sensitive information to get the best results.

Specific examples provided in the handbook were quite helpful in this type of communication. Great ideas on soliciting quality manuscripts from top nurse authors and mentoring nurses new to writing for publication were also included.

The chapter on ethical issues was especially enlightening. As a new editor, I experienced several situations where knowledge of publication ethics was critical. The summary of potential problems in that chapter were very useful and I recommend this chapter as one of the most important in the handbook because this content is not common knowledge among nurses involved in the publication process.

There is more involved in journal editing than producing an excellent product. Making sure that the great work in the journal is well publicized is very important. Spreading the word is one of the keys to success. An entire chapter in the handbook is devoted to this topic. The journal's website, blogs, and social media can be vital to promoting the content with those beyond the usual readership. It is necessary to recognize that methods and styles of sharing information have radically changed in the last few years and are likely to change even more rapidly in the future. As the journal editor, keeping up with these trends is crucial if your journal is to remain relevant and reach as many people as possible. As per the handbook authors' suggestions, tweeting and blogging doesn't have to be done by the editor. Editorial board members or assistants might enjoy this activity and be very successful in promoting the journal. Oversight of the journal editor is needed, though, as these methods of communication are instant and correcting an error in this media is quite different than the traditional erratum statement in the journal.

While the book is primarily intended for editors of nursing journals, I recommend it for nurse authors as well. Having an understanding of the perspective of the journal editor can be valuable for nurses who want to be successful at writing for journal publication. As a very experienced author, I will admit that I had not given much consideration to the editor's role and perspective when submitting journal manuscripts. I was not intending to become a journal editor so I was not paying attention to details of editor-author and editor-editorial board member communication and roles. Over the years, I have given many presentations to nurses encouraging them to share their knowledge and research or quality improvement work with others by writing for publication. I now will recommend this book for nurses who are considering submitting a manuscript to a journal because I believe the information will increase the likelihood of their success. *The Editor's Handbook* (Freda & Nicoll, 2015) is an essential resource for new journal editors. Prospective authors, reviewers, and editorial board members should consider reading it as well. There is a wealth of practical information that all nurses involved in the journal publication process will find valuable.

REFERENCE

1. Freda, M.C., & Nicoll, L.H. (2015). *The Editor's Handbook*, (2nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathleen Rice Simpson, PhD, RNC, CNS-BC, FAAN is a Perinatal Clinical Nurse Specialist and Editor-in-Chief, *MCN The American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing*. She lives in St. Louis, MO.

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