

## Invited Article 1

### **Why *VISTAS*? One Reviewer and Author's Response**

Gerald A. Juhnke

The University of Texas at San Antonio

Juhnke, Gerald A., EdD, LPC, NCC, MAC, ACS, CCAS, is a Professor and the Doctoral Program Director for The University of Texas at San Antonio's Department of Counseling. Jerry has authored, co-authored, or co-edited six books and over 40 refereed scholarly journal articles. Jerry is an American Counseling Association Fellow and a former President of two counseling associations: The International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors and The Association for Assessment in Counseling. He is a former Editor of The Journal of Addictions and Offender Counseling and is a former Co-chair of the American Counseling Association's Council of Journal Editors. His research agenda continues to focus upon "life-threatening behaviors" which include but are not limited to addictions, suicide, threat assessment, and violence.

Academic writing is daunting. I submitted my first manuscript for scholarly review in 1992. Although I had breezed through my writing intensive undergraduate and graduate degrees, and I had completed my dissertation, as a new assistant professor, I knew absolutely nothing about academic writing intricacies or protocol. I spent months toiling over my first manuscript. I sacrificed nearly all my free time to ensure a thoughtful, well-cited, and clinically relevant piece. I knew it would be published. Certainly, the manuscript would rock the scholarly world, establish my reputation as a rising scholar, and catapult me toward my ultimate goal—promotion and tenure. Regretfully, this was not the case.

When the journal editor's thick review letter arrived, I was completely humiliated. Although the editor was pleasant, the "Revise and Resubmit" response was far different than I anticipated. I painstakingly re-read the editor's letter and then read the three review board members' reviews. One reviewer was highly encouraging. He clearly recognized I was a junior faculty member attempting to establish my research agenda. He had carefully re-written sentences and paragraphs and made encouraging comments throughout the piece. The other two reviewers were brutal. They used red ink and highlighted each of my American Psychological Association stylistic and grammatical flaws. One wrote a note on the returned manuscript. The note was clearly for the editor's eyes only. It stated that a "junky" had no business authoring an article for the specific journal. It continued by suggesting that even if the manuscript had been worthy of publication—which it clearly was not—publishing something by someone named Juhnke could irreparably harm the journal's reputation.

I was crushed. I internalized that I was a failure who could never publish in academic journals. Thus, I would never secure my aspiration of becoming a tenured full professor. In my ignorance of the academic writing process, I did not understand that a “Revise and Resubmit” was not a rejection. I mistakenly assumed the majority of academics received “Accept as Is” decisions. After days of moping, I finally tossed the manuscript, the editor’s letter, the reviews, and even the 5.25” black floppy disk into the trash. A few days later, when I received yet another manuscript review from a different journal editor, it seemed my fate was sealed. This time the editor penned the word “UGH!!” in red ink across the top of my returned manuscript. The experience was emotionally painful. I would have quit, had it not been for the support and encouragement of Drs. Nicholas Vacc, William Purkey, Alan Hovestadt, and DiAnne Borders. They mentored me. Basically, they taught me how to successfully research, write, and submit scholarly works to academic outlets.

## **VISTAS**

So, you may be asking yourself, “What is the relevancy of Juhnke’s first publication and rejection experiences to VISTAS?” The answer is quite simple. The above-described experiences demonstrate exactly why VISTAS is so unique and vitally important. VISTAS provides authors the opportunity to write within a supportive and caring environment. Given my earlier academic writing and journal submission experiences, I know mentoring is paramount to the development of students’ and junior faculty members’ academic writing success. Please, do not misunderstand. VISTAS publications are rigorously reviewed. The VISTAS publication process is demanding. However, reviewers and editors provide abundant, non-intimidating feedback designed to move publication worthy pieces into publication.

As a VISTAS reviewer for the past years, I have watched VISTAS become a leading publication outlet of exceptional quality. Final publications provide superior and practical resources to counseling professionals on significant and pressing topics. Many understand VISTAS’ prominent place in the profession. Simply peruse any VISTAS volume and you will find that some of the most distinguished, celebrated, and noteworthy professional counseling researchers, scholars, and academics are publishing in VISTAS. They understand that publishing in VISTAS ensures their research will reach a wide audience. Concomitantly, when you review VISTAS’ authors you will find many who have used VISTAS as a springboard to their first academic publication and the activation of their research agenda. I know, because I have helped mentor some of these exceptional first time authors—including students and junior faculty. These mentoring experiences have helped me contribute to others the way my superior mentors invested in me.

Additionally, as a co-author with junior faculty and students, I have found publishing in VISTAS an exceptionally rewarding experience. Three VISTAS publications I am most proud of are specific to topics that serve populations that warrant special consideration. The first VISTAS article that I helped co-author was specific to a population that has been overlooked far too long. The number of middle and high school girls experiencing anxiety disorders is at an epidemic level. Yet few articles provide practical, nuts-and-bolts treatment techniques designed to reduce anxiety within this population without pathologizing young women. My co-authors and my article is a first

step (Juhnke, Juhnke, & Hudson, 2012). It describes Circular and Projective Questioning techniques and how to utilize these non-invasive techniques to bring about reduced anxiety levels. The intervention is based upon clinical experiences and holds significant promise. It will be further investigated once my co-author receives Institutional Review Board approval to begin her upcoming research investigation.

The remaining two VISTAS articles also are specific to traditionally underserved and overlooked populations—suicidal and bullied populations. Related to suicidal clients, there is increasing literature describing how to assess clients for suicide. However, there is a distinct paucity of literature precisely describing how counselors should intervene once they assess clients as being an imminent suicide risk. Additionally, the last two VISTAS articles utilize mnemonics as memory aids. Mnemonics have been proven to increase entry-level counselors' memory specific to client assessment and intervention. The VISTAS SCATTT article describes a six-step suicide intervention plan (Juhnke, Juhnke, & Hsieh, 2012). The intervention plan is unique within existing literature. SCATTT provides a systematic intervention that ensures utmost safety for clients and counselors alike. Concomitantly, it addresses the importance of eliminating immediate access to the suicide instrument of choice (e.g., guns, pills, etc.) and briefly describes transportation options.

The 2WHO-SCAN is another mnemonic I helped develop and co-author in VISTAS (Juhnke & Juhnke, in-press). The 2WHO-SCAN, like the SCATTT, promotes an easy to remember, organized, systematic, and focused intervention plan. However, the 2WHO-SCAN is an eight-step intervention plan counselors can utilize when they are counseling survivors of active bullying. Thus, this intervention plan ensures that counselors intervene with the presenting clients as well as stopping bullies from continuing to harm others. It further ensures that other potential bullying victims are insulated from harm, and it also helps bullying survivors understand their opportunities to engage in counseling.

### **Conclusion**

I believe it is easy to understand why I am a VISTAS believer. VISTAS allows seasoned researchers and academics to disseminate their research to a large professional practitioner audience that has interest in relevant, practice-focused articles. For less experienced authors, VISTAS provides a supportive review process that promotes writing skills and a greater understanding of academic writing experiences. As a VISTAS reviewer, I understand my charge is not to simply tell authors what they have done wrong and reject their submissions. Instead, my charge is to enhance less experienced authors' writing skills and provide helpful feedback in a kind manner. As a co-author, I have found VISTAS to be an exceptional publication outlet that encourages superior articles on pressing and highly relevant topics. Finally, as an academic, VISTAS has provided me with incredible mentoring opportunities. Co-authoring articles with students and junior faculty has allowed me the opportunity to contribute to their development and give back to the profession in a manner others did with me. The verdict is clearly evident. VISTAS provides opportunities like few other publication resources.

## References

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