



**LA TROBE**  
UNIVERSITY



**Writing for RAPIDD**

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# Aims of RAPIDD

- **Engage a wide audience in knowledge and debate about improving the lives of people with intellectual disability** - based on the Tizard LD Review
  - **Inform thinking about the design and delivery of specialist support and mainstream services** that facilitate social inclusion and enhance the quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
  - **Create a constructive dialogue between the sometimes differing perspectives** of managers, practitioners, academics, families, people with intellectual disabilities, advocates, funders, and policy makers. ..space to consider the interface and respective roles of communities, families, and service systems, both disability and mainstream.
  - **Draw out the implications of research** for practice and policy
  - **Generate informed debate** on contemporary issues
  - **New empirical research - ideas and commentary about existing studies, the literature, policy, and practice** relevant to the field.
  - <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rpid20/current>

# Types of paper

More leeway than standard academic journals

- Conceptual pieces
- Commentaries
- Reviews of literature or policy
- Evaluative case studies of programs
- Original research
- Analysis of policy and programs.
- Reviews of book, DVD, report, conference
- Concise summary – already published work

# Conceptual papers

- Start with a key concept or idea.

Soldatic, van Toorn, Dowse, and Muir (2014) idea of the potential exclusion of people with complex needs from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Browning, Bigby, and Douglas (2014) started with an idea about the multiple and often confusing ways in which the concept of supported decision was being used in Australia.

- Draw on the literature or practice wisdom to discuss, review, reinterpret, or reframe ways of thinking about the key concept or idea.
- May bring new ideas or theoretical perspectives to the field of intellectual disability, by drawing on theory or frameworks that are not generally used.

Rogers's (2003) theory of the diffusion of innovation may be used to discuss reasons for the low impact of social inclusion policies.

- May present a systematic analysis of a particular theorist or perspective and discuss its importance or application to the field of intellectual disabilities.

# Commentary Papers

- Take as the starting point an idea, issue, or concept.
- Less likely to draw heavily on the literature or theory and more likely to be based on the 'expertise' of the writer as practitioner, academic, manager
- Draw out and clarify major points from another paper or about a specific issue, and present perhaps further contextual information, a counter argument, or raise new issues – invited –unsolicited
- Concise, informative, and potentially controversial.

Carney (2104) used his expert knowledge to describe the various projects around Australia about supported decision making and drew on his knowledge of the literature to raise several key issues about the concept of supported decision making.

O'Connor (2014) and Clift (2014) drew on their practice expertise to pick up and illustrate some of the key issues raised from the literature by Soldatic and colleagues (2014) about access to the NDIS

Iacono (2014) used her academic expertise in communication to respond to a comment by a South Australian politician - succinct piece about what it means to have complex communication needs.

Craig (2004) Tackling the Ambivalence - more background about problem in Amado's paper

# Concise Reviews of Contemporary Literature and Research Papers

- Many forms, from an original, well-defined, systematic review to concise overviews of the literature about a specific concept, idea, or aspect of practice.
- Grant and Booth (2009) overview of the different types of literature review.  
Cuskelly and Gilmore (2014) systematic review.  
Dowse et al (2014) Young people with complex needs in CJS  
Amado (2014) Review of methods of building relationships
- Review papers may rework published research into a more concise form or review a series of related papers or a program of research and discuss its implications for practice or policy.
- Papers may also review a body of work that is inaccessible to readers, such as research published in another language or written in complex scientific terms.
- Expected to be critically reflective rather than simply descriptive.

# Analysis of Policy and Programs

- Original critical analysis of a particular policy document, broader set of policies, or specific programs that form part of policy implementation.
- Provide sufficient description of the context, background, or the policy itself to enable the reader to understand the points being made.

Hughes M. (2011) Productivity Commission Inquiry into Aged Care: A Critical Review. *Australian Social Work*, 64, 526-536

- Lots of opportunities in current policy context - whose voices are heard – issues raised, enquiries for example, Senate reports, Parliamentary reports

# Evaluative Case Studies of Programs

- Illustrate important issues in the implementation of policy or practice
- Based on experience of practitioners or managers involved in the program - data collected for administrative purposes - primarily descriptive
- Or may resemble small-scale original research and be based on data that have been systematically collected as part of a program evaluation.
  - Background problem, policy, theory, knowledge
  - Provide a description of the specific context and nature of the “case”
  - What occurred –program logic – implementation – action
  - Reflections on the process, - evidence of outcomes.
- For example, if the case is a program to build social relationships of people with intellectual disabilities, details about where the program was located, its design, and who was involved would be important. Any underpinning theory, research, or policy that informed the development of the program would also be useful to include.
- More than a PR statement - needs to be useful to more than your service



# Making judgements about papers

- Clear, concise, logical, built on existing knowledge
- Carefully defined purpose
- Original
- Well argued - capacity to stimulate debate or be used for advocacy purposes.
- The ideas matter most.
  - Is it this an important topic?
  - Is the argument logical?
  - Does the piece draw together and build on existing knowledge?
  - Will it stimulate thinking in the field?
  - Does it have the potential to inform the design and delivery of support that is important for people with intellectual disabilities and their families?
  - Does it have the potential to inform practices and adjustment of the “mainstream” or greater engagement of people with intellectual disabilities in their own lives?

## The mechanics -

- Read the website – authors and submissions –instructions for authors
- Title - catchy phrases are nice – but not good for quick scans
- Abstract – precise – summary not list of contents
- Style - APA citations – references
- Length 4000 words plus refs
- Language - people first -
- Abbreviations - avoid

# Common Problems

- Too much - PhD into 4000 words – the art of cutting things up – what comes first
- Sub set of data from a larger study that .....address specific research question
- Over claiming - insufficient evidence or argument
- Descriptive rather than interpretive
- Too long
- Hard to follow logic
- Hard to understand – long sentences, poor grammar
- ‘ explore experiences of people who have died’
- Ethics – demonstrate
- Identification of service, location?

# What next – the review and revision process

- Ask a friend to read it
- Read it out loud
- Manuscript Central - submission
- De- identifying
- Reviewers roles - not decision makers – constructive critique
- Editors role – decision making
- Making revisions - take a week to think
- Getting accepted and into print
- Proofs - Time lag – ifirst