



Reflections on the Basic Manuscript Editors' Training 2017

Hakbong Lee

The East-West Culture Education Center, Seoul, Korea

Introduction

I participated in the Basic Manuscript Editors' Training program organized by the Korean Council of Science Editors. My interest was sparked by reading an interview with Prof. Sun Huh, who was the Chair of the Committee on Planning and Administration at that time, in a newspaper that a colleague in my research institute shared with me in December 2016. This essay is about the trial and error I've experienced while attending to the educational program on manuscript editing.

"Know Where" is More Important than "Know How"

I registered for the program because I thought I would be eligible to become one of "those who could meet the challenge of becoming a manuscript editor" mentioned in the interview. However, I realized that I was mistaken; as a person who was born in 1957 and majored in economics, I was not familiar with computer technologies, and was especially lacking in important computer skills. I might not have taken the training course if the interview had explained the necessary qualifications in more detail. In particular, I found the class challenging because most participants were already experienced in related fields or were currently involved in such fields, and the course was therefore primarily tailored to those participants. It was a surprising, but mind-opening, experience to learn that such a field exists.

I am currently involved in the humanities and am personally interested in physics. However, unfortunately, the content of the training mainly focused on medicine. Regardless, there were assignments where each participant was able to work within a field of their own interest, and this effectively made up for that shortcoming. The training had little to do with the areas of the humanities that I am currently involved in, and unlike I had expected, it barely covered Korean grammar and editing.

In addition, it would have been helpful if the program organizer had provided the participants with more details regarding the textbook purchasing policy before we registered for the program. I mistakenly bought all four textbooks in advance. After reviewing all the textbooks, I am currently reading the *AMA manual of style* thoroughly. Although I am reading the book little by little whenever I have time, I believe that after finishing it, I will no longer be at the lev-

Received: July 24, 2017

Accepted: July 27, 2017

Correspondence to Hakbong Lee
hblhakbonglee@yahoo.com

el of a novice. I find the *AMA manual of style* to be particularly useful because it specifically explains various details that I learned as a novice during the training. I think that only using *APA style* and the *AMA manual of style* would have been sufficient for participating in the training program. *Scientific style and format* aims to cover science in general, but it does not seem to be appreciably different from the *AMA manual of style*. Thus, I think that it was unnecessary to purchase *Scientific style and format* and the *ACS style guide*.

I also think that it would have been helpful to introduce the *AIP style manual*, particularly to those who are interested in physics. It is very encouraging that international collaborations involving Korean researchers are most active in the field of physics [1]. The analysis of the first Korea Manuscript Editors Certification [2], which was useful to those who were preparing for the upcoming exams, was also interesting.

An important aspect of participating in this training program for me personally was that it made me see things differently. In particular, since my institution is planning to publish many books and academic journals, I came away from this program with significant gains in knowledge. As a result of the training, I became aware of books in a different way, and have developed new perspectives on how books should be in terms of their content and structure which I believe will help me and my institution tremendously.

On the first day of the training, when we introduced ourselves and formed groups, I was not sure whether we would be able to succeed together in the training, as our backgrounds were so diverse; our group of participants included experts in fields ranging from science, engineering, and communication to library science, and this suspicion of mine continued throughout the program. When an instructor said that he may have handled more articles than anyone else has, I could sense his pride. I was also thankful that another instructor showed us how to use Endnote and how to search data using his institution's website. An instructor who taught a tutorial on how to actually edit a manuscript presented some portions of the tutorial that were unclear during the lecture; after the class, he went the extra mile to find the right answers and sent them to us. Such kindness is rare, and was much appreciated. I even felt like I wanted to befriend him because of his sincerity and faithfulness to his work. All the instructors also kindly replied to the questions that I asked as a novice, even though the questions were very basic for the other, more experienced participants.

It would have been helpful if the program organizer had

made two copies of the final comprehensive examination and had given one copy of it to us after the test was done. I also thought that more specific explanations about the certification examination in November would have been helpful. Evaluating assignments was rather awkward because doing so involved assessing my classmates. I would suggest that it would be better next time if participants only send their assignments to their group members. Moreover, in most cases, the program sent us the class materials only a day before each session was held; it would have been preferable if they were sent via email at least two days before the session so that participants could familiarize themselves with the materials in advance.

Although this may sound a bit exaggerated, I was such a novice in the training that I felt like I was 'escaping from hell' after each class. However, learning about websites for databases, database search techniques, and other reference search techniques was very helpful, and overall the training program was particularly valuable to me because I also serve as an editor. I now truly believe that "know where" is more important than "know how."

Conclusion

All in all, since I felt like I was an outsider in the training program, I truly hope that similar programs will be developed for the humanities as well, because they would be very helpful to humanists. I believe that Korea must strive to elevate the humanities to the international level, to the same extent that such initiatives have been taken for the natural sciences.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

References

1. Chung Y, Kim K. Rapid growth of international collaboration from articles indexed in Scopus database by researchers in Korea from 2006 to 2015. *Sci Ed* 2017;4:18-23. <https://doi.org/10.6087/kcse.84>
2. Yi HJ, Chang JH, Seo YJ. Analysis of the results of the first implementation of the Korea Manuscript Editors Certification. *Sci Ed* 2017;4:34-8. <https://doi.org/10.6087/kcse.87>