**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Why authors fail — Dolan responds**

Landwirth’s recent editorial, “Why Authors Fail,” was critically timed for my presentation about writing for publication, planned for an upcoming MLA chapter meeting [1]. It will be a worthy addition to my collection of resources on writing and further encourage authors to produce good, readable articles.

This editorial stresses doing one’s homework before starting to write, so that there is a good fit of manuscript to journal. Landwirth’s criticisms are excellent examples of why authors should not be hasty in this prewriting process.

Two sets of rules which authors must follow are a journal’s editorial policies and instructions for contributors. I would add a third: editorials such as this one, which remind authors of what not to do in writing for publication. Landwirth reinforces criteria stated in the Bulletin’s “Instructions for Contributors” and prompts authors to check these criteria prior to submitting manuscripts [2].

Her editorial is a good example of how to write a short article focusing on one idea—criticisms of submitted manuscripts—rather than covering a broad topic in one article. This is a well written, brief communication, full of information, which will be useful as a teaching tool. An important final point urges authors of the value of establishing relationships with journal editors early in the writing process.

“Why Authors Fail” is good because it communicates. I hope that editors of the Bulletin will continue to share more hints on writing with readers and authors. Those authors who follow her suggestions will surely improve their writing skills, increase their understanding of the submission process, and make life easier for themselves and editorial staffs.

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**References**