

# Writing About Research Methodology: Reflections on Manuscript Composition and Submission

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## Background

- Opportunity to write a case study focused on the research process of a study
- SAGE Research Methods Cases  
*methods.sagepub.com/cases*
  - Pedagogically focused publications
  - Case studies: research process related to health or education
- Collaboration with co-authors at multiple institutions
- First author lack of involvement in project implementation would be a challenge

 **SAGE researchmethods**



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## Case Study

### Project REAL: Research on Environments and Lifestyles

#### Objective

- Identify key determinants of cancer risk behaviors among Latinos

#### Timeframe

- November, 2011 - August, 2014

#### Investigators

- Drs. Castro, Correa-Fernández, Strong, and Heppner (all previously at MD Anderson Cancer Center)

#### Sample

- 150 bilingual Latinos
- Smokers and nonsmokers

#### Measures

- Ecological momentary assessments (EMA)
- Accelerometers
- Questionnaires

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## Project Timeline

### September, 2016

- Review Project REAL meeting minutes

### October, 2016

- Identify key methodological issues
- Review sample SAGE Methods publications
- Draft outline with consultations from Project REAL research team members
- Create project timeline
- Receive outline feedback & revise

### November, 2016

- Draft manuscript
- Receive edits from senior author

### November, 2016-January, 2017

- Revise manuscript
- Request/receive feedback from other co-authors

### February, 2017

- Submit manuscript to SAGE Research Methods Cases

## Outcome and Next Steps

- Manuscript accepted without revisions
- Copy-editing by the production department for publication
- Signing publication agreement
- Publication in SAGE Research Methods Cases
- Reid, E.K., Castro, Y., Strong, L.L., Heppner, W.L., & Correa-Fernandez, V. (in press). Researching cancer risk behaviors among bilingual Latinos using technology and an intensive longitudinal design. In *SAGE Research Methods Cases*.

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## Reflections

- Using institution resources facilitates the gathering of essential information
  - Administrative staff
  - Library resources
- Creating a timeline starting with the desired submission date that includes daily tasks keeps manuscript preparation manageable and on schedule
- Assigning word limits per section from the total word limit helps to monitor manuscript length while drafting
- Working backwards from publisher's guidelines for authors prevents later editing
- Inviting co-author involvement during planning and drafting promotes collegiality and positive communication
- Celebrating milestones such as submission and acceptance is an important part of the manuscript preparation process

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