

JUMPSTART YOUR WRITING WITH AN IDEA LOG

Kendall M. Campbell, MD
 Department of Family Medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, TX
Donna Baluchi, MLIS
 Eccles Health Sciences, University of Utah Health, Salt Lake City, UT
José E. Rodríguez, MD
 University of Utah Health in Salt Lake City, UT

An idea log is an approach to the problem of remembering ideas and moving them forward. This document suggests how educators can create and use an idea log to increase scholarly productivity, in addition to other strategies.^{1,2} This concept can be summed up in six Cs: **C**apture, **C**olumns, **C**omplete, **C**arry, **C**reate, and **C**uriosity.³ After capture, the order of the “Cs” is flexible.



Capture

Have an original idea? Record it in the moment! Capture it at any stage of development. There is no need to decipher deep meanings, use fancy language, check grammar, or review the literature. You can refine it later.



Carry

Keep your idea log nearby so you can visit regularly, and update frequently. Use a notes app on your smartphone, an electronic notebook, or a pen and paper



Columns

Pay attention to the columns in your idea log. They will help you move the idea forward. The idea log columns are **Idea**, **Status** (to know how far you've come), **Collaborators** (writing team), **Manuscript Type** (there are many different ways to publish your manuscript), and **Places to Submit** (consider family medicine journals first).



Create

Write your paper! Create your manuscript based on your idea. Create publications across education, clinical care, and research missions with a clear relationship to one another.



Complete

Complete the idea on subsequent visits to your idea log. The goal is to have as much detail as possible.



Curiosity

Question how things are done and constantly seek improvement. Your curiosity about how we work can lead to the next breakthrough!

Idea	Status	Collaborators	Type of manuscript	Possible places to submit
Record the idea as it comes to you.	Assess the stage of your idea—in progress, published, etc.	Authors are encouraged to engage a writing team of colleagues.	Original research, essays, narratives, letters to the editor, or literature reviews ⁴	<i>Family Medicine</i> and <i>PRiMER</i> are focused on education, where most new faculty work.

The idea log helps with cataloging and keeping track of ideas faculty may get in their work environments. It reminds clinician faculty of the steps to convert the idea into a publication and can be helpful for learners.⁵ We work in demanding jobs with inspiring people. Use this tool to capture your inspiration, create new knowledge, and advance our discipline.

Sources of Funding Support: American Board of Family Medicine Foundation and Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Foundation

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