The art and science of publishing: From becoming a peer reviewer to being a guest editor
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Aims

Explore a key part of the academic journey with a focus on:

• The peer review process
• Guest editing
Introductions

• Introductions
• How many of you have done a peer review?
• How many of you have guest edited or assisted an editor?
Theory into practice: an academic journey

Consolidating knowledge: reflection and feedback
- gaining higher degrees
- learning how to teach
- academic marking & giving feedback

Disseminating knowledge: pulling it together and putting it out there
- curriculum development
- thesis supervision
- writing for peer reviewed journals

Enabling knowledge: creating a platform for others
- journal editing
- publishing contracts
Peer review

• Purpose
• Challenges
• Process and outcomes....
What guides the reviewer?

Each journal has different expectations.

Essentially:

• Overall content and focus
• Style, readability, writing quality, referencing
• Clear statement of research questions/focus of lit review / topic, if conceptual
• Literature, method, ethics, funding sources
• Findings/results/ data display
• Soundness of interpretations/ discussion
• Consideration of limitations
• Recommendations? To whom? Further research?
Outcomes of the review process
adapted from Bigby 2010

• **Accept**: In terms of quality and suitability of content and in the quality of presentation and in your view the article is now suitable for publication.

• **Minor Revision**: there are a very small number of matters of content and/or presentation that require attention before final acceptance but you are confident that, once these minor modifications (which you will make clear) are made, then the paper can be accepted for publication.

• **Major Revision**: substantial revision in terms of content and/or quality of presentation needs to be undertaken, but with modifications the article will be acceptable for publication in the end. A resubmitted article will be sent back to the original reviewers for them to look at again.
Outcomes two:

- **Reject and Resubmit:** Not currently acceptable for publication. “Nevertheless, there is a kernel of a good idea in there or a modicum of future potential” (Bigby, p.373) and so the reviewers/editors want to encourage the author(s) to rework the paper afresh and submit it as a new paper altogether.
Reject: There is no hope for this paper and we do not want to see it again.

We may suggest another more suitable journal.

So reviewers can be helpful or not.....
The Critics
Ineffective reviewers

This....
Mean
Disrespectful
Scathing
Sarcastic
Poor feedback

[Painting by Shawn Corbett]
I am afraid this manuscript may contribute not so much towards the field's advancement as much as toward its eventual demise.

I am generally very happy to provide extensive suggestions and comments on manuscripts, but this submission was an absolute waste of my time.

It is early in the year, but difficult to imagine any paper overtaking this one for lack of imagination, logic, or data it is beyond redemption.

The above quotes were recently published in Buzzfeed (Oakes, 2014), cited in McLaughlin et al 2015 (p.1)
The Pussycats

Ineffective reviewers ... or this

- Afraid to be honest
- Wishy-washy and vague
- Leave the bad news for the editor
Good reviewers

• Respectful
• Balanced
• Fair
• Give specific feedback
• Honest
• Helpful to authors and editors
Detail helps

• Explain carefully what should be restructured
• Explain where the literature is lacking and provide 1 reference that might help them find more
• Give examples – e.g. . Suggest an alternative for 1-2 sentences if they are not too numerous
• List significant typos and suggest they look for more, especially incorrect tenses, misplaced apostrophes
• Ask clearly for more detail of method/ethics/analysis/limitations
Being a guest editor

• Deciding on a focus
• Establishing the structure
  – What the journal & editors want – editorial guidelines; timelines
  – Fliers & disseminating call for papers
• Developing and sustaining the system
  – Finding reviewers
  – Information and relationship management for contributors and reviewers
• Book reviews and the editorial piece
• Submission and editing processes
Deciding on a focus

• Builds upon knowledge and skills from writing journal articles, peer reviewing, and from thesis supervision.

• Thinking of a theme, approaching the journal (or the journal approaching you)

• Working alone or in a group?
  – How much time do you have?
  – Can you usefully divide the tasks up and stay on the same page?
Establishing the structure

Editorial guidelines:

• Which journal? Getting to know the requirements and processes; editorial guidelines; editorial support

• The marketing process: call for papers: internal journal processes, fliers & networking

Timelines:

• Especially important with a group editorial process!
Timelines and flowcharts

- Key to understanding the whole process
- Gives clarity to the need for regular communication with contributors and reviewers

(Email Carole for a copy of this working document)
Developing and sustaining the system

• Selecting abstracts:
  – Team or individual selection process?
  – Criteria for acceptance

• Finding reviewers:
  – The journal may have a list of past reviewers/people on the editorial board
  – Use your networks
  – Google people!
  – Match abstracts to reviewer interests (as much as possible)

• Again, the importance of deadlines

• If you want to submit an abstract/write a lead article – the importance of blind reviewing
**Information management**

**Use a spreadsheet**

- Author
- Abstract received
- Abstract approved
- Reviewers a) potential; b) confirmed & guidelines sent
- Full paper received
- Paper sent to reviewers (with meta-data removed)
- Reviews received (x2)
- Feedback sent to authors with new deadline for revisions (accepted; minor revisions; major revisions) or notification of rejection
- Revisions received
- Revisions sent to reviewers
- Reviewer feedback on revisions
- Editorial decision
Relationship management: canine version

Initial mode: the Labrador

- Open and clear communication
- Accessibility and approachability
- Collegiality
Intermediate mode 1: The Sheepdog

Intermediate mode 2: The Terrier

“Round ‘em up and bite at their ankles”
Finally, the Rottweiler mode:

- Importance of deadlines
- Making hard decisions: letting some go, saying no to others (reviewers as well as contributors)
Book reviews and the editorial piece

Book reviews:
• Editors may already have completed book reviews
• Approach publishers and potential reviewers
• Submission can be edited by guest editors

The editorial piece:
• Binds the journal edition together
• Written once articles accepted
• Counts as a writing output 😊
Copy editing and submission

The last steps of the journey:

• Does the journal have a production/copy editor, or are there funds to pay for one?
• Role of the journal editors in supporting guest editors – how much are you responsible for knocking it into shape?
References:

