

Editorial: Volume 33 Issue 5

Why can't I crack the code to getting published?

AJET is the premier journal in Australasia which publishes manuscripts related to technology enhanced learning and teaching in post-secondary education settings. As the website indicates, the journal aims to promote research and scholarship on the integration of technology in tertiary education; to promote effective practice, and to inform policy.

The idea for this editorial was inspired by some recent conversations and tweets where doctoral students, ECR's or those academics new to writing for journal publication were lamenting about desk rejections and the creation of a rejection wall, where rejected papers and reviewers narratives are posted to social media or even physically on walls within institutions. Check out #rejectionwall on twitter for examples. At this first desk review stage, AJET accepts less than 30% of papers submitted to be sent for peer review. That is a lot of rejections, and a lot of fodder for the rejection wall. Unfortunately, rejection is a common experience for all academic authors, when it happens: cool off, revise and resubmit to AJET or another journal depending on the feedback. This editorial will discuss the common reasons for papers to be rejected for AJET (and other journals).

AJET has a multi stage review process, which begins with an initial screening. At this stage rejection normally occurs because of:

- Paper length: AJET normally accepts articles between 5000 and 8000 words;
- Context or scope: AJET publishes work related to higher education and post-secondary education, we no longer accept manuscripts that focus specifically on school education;
- Article incomplete: sections missing such as no abstract, extremely short or underdeveloped discussion or conclusion, implications for policy or practice, potential future research, or conclusion;
- Contribution to the field: there may be limitations of the study that significantly undermine the value of the study, or the study may simply replicate current understanding without offering new insight
- Lack of focus: perhaps it was a masters assignment that someone suggested the student submit for publication but it was not modified; and
- Technical issues: authors being identified in the text; track changes left in document; poor writing skills; not following the AJET author guidelines on formatting.

The second stage of the review process, is facilitated by one of the section editors. They may reject the paper at this stage due to: flaws in the study design; weak conceptualisation or limited details on methodology; results of the study are not discussed within the light of other research or are largely descriptive; dated references; conclusions cannot be justified from the results; or lack of research significance. So far the paper has not yet gone through the detailed peer review process yet 70% of the papers have already been rejected.

The third stage, is where the paper finally gets to two reviewers for a blind review. The associate editors will select two reviewers based on their discipline and methodological expertise which they provide to the journal. Each reviewer will make a judgement that the paper should be accepted, declined, revisions required or resubmit for review. The Associate Editor then considers the reviews and makes the final decision which gets conveyed to the author. When the reviews differ in judgment the Associate Editor will make their decision based on a careful reading of the reviews. They may decide to reject a paper even if one of the reviews suggest otherwise. A rejection decision is never made lightly. The Associate Editor's decision may be:

- Accept submission, whereby the paper moves forward to copyediting. It is quite rare for a paper to move straight to acceptance with at least some minor revisions;
- Decline submission, with feedback about why the paper was rejected;
- Resubmit for review, where after the paper is modified and it is sent back out to the same or new reviewers for more comment, acceptance or rejection; or
- Revisions required, with feedback about what revisions are required. This is where the section editor will review the changes to either reject or accept, the paper may go through this process more than once and result can be for more comment, acceptance or rejection;

Having made it to this stage the paper may still be rejected. It is rare, but it can occur because the author has not responded adequately to issues or concerns that the Associate Editor has indicated, based on the reviewer comments. AJET takes the reviewer comments seriously, and failure to address them to the satisfaction of the Associate Editor may result in rejection. This is not to say an author should agree with every comment but they do need to convince the editor they have considered and responded to all of the reviewers' comments as well as the editors requirements. It should be noted that a paper will not be accepted until it conforms to all of the [author guidelines](#).

The fourth stage is where the paper has been accepted by the associate editor and has been sent to one of the Lead Editors who assigns it to a copyeditor. Now the authors deal with the micro details from the copyeditors. Authors are expected to attend to all of the copyeditor changes and queries or else it may result in several rounds of copyediting. Rejection is especially rare at this point but can occur, such as because of discrepancies in authorship or originality, or other issues that may be revealed at this final checking stage. Once the paper has been signed off by the copyeditor the paper is produced as a 'proof' and the authors are given one last chance to make any minor corrections. The paper is then put in a queue for publication which is usually quite quick since AJET publishes articles under 'early release'.

As you can see, the process has quite a few stages in which the paper is reviewed in some form or another. While these may be seen as hurdles for a new author, others may see them as feedback cycles which ultimately strengthen the paper.

There are some obvious strategies you can engage in to help you prepare your work for submission. The most obvious, and yet surprisingly frequent omission, is to be familiar with the journal scope and author guidelines. Another strategy is to get colleagues to critically engage with your arguments, methodology, results and findings. Even highly experienced researchers use this strategy. A further strategy is to become familiar with the journal standards by becoming a reviewer. Indeed, we encourage you to sign up as a reviewer for AJET. Doing so can assist the journal and other authors as well as yourself. Reviewers should follow the details on the process to sign up as a reviewer are available at: <https://ajet.org.au/index.php/AJET/about/editorialPolicies#custom-1>. Current reviewers should update their research interest's, by logging into AJET and then clicking on my profile. Research interests should provide information about your discipline expertise and also methodological expertise.

In this issue

This issue contains eleven articles written by 27 authors who hail from 21 institutions across seven nations. The articles range across a diverse technologies, learning contexts, instructional designs, and research methodology. While there is no thematic organisation of this issue, the articles serve to remind us of the broad area of research in educational technology. In this field we continue to refine our understanding of the complex relationship between technologies and teaching as well as learning, a task made more challenging by diverse contexts and constant evolution and innovation in digital technologies themselves. However, as this issue testifies, established digital technologies continue to be a site of ongoing research.

The issue begins with a paper by **McKenney** and **Voogt** in the context of teacher education. In their study, utilizing a Delphi approach, they explore how we might better inform teacher education programs to develop the Technology Pedagogy and Content Knowledge (TPACK) needed for effectively using technology in the domain of early literacy. The issue also contains several papers that adopt various approaches to understanding the way in which social media can be applied within group contexts. The paper by **Abdekhodae, Chase** and **Ross** explore the potential and challenges in using wikis with groups of students to improve feedback mechanisms including student understanding of their progress. **Klisc, McGill**, and **Hobbs** revisit the notion of assessing asynchronous online discussion forums, either the posts themselves or a post discussion activity. They found that both approaches had resulted in gains in critical thinking. Although recognising the tentative nature of their data, they conclude that it is perhaps a function of the assessment rather than the type of assessment.

Two of the papers in this issue have a particular focus on social networking sites. **Sadowski, Padiaditis** and **Townsend** apply a mixed methods approach to explore how higher education students use and manage SNSs for personal and study-related activities, and how this impacts on their educational experience. Their study reveals multiple implications for the use of SNS in higher education, including its potential for fostering peer

connectedness. Interestingly they also identified a degree of institutional resistance to the use of SNS. As with Sadowski, Padiaditis and Townsend's study, **Akçayır** found that students had a variety of reasons and expectations for using SNS; including the expectation that educators could be using the media for sharing resources.

Shih and Tsai's mixed methods study explored a flipped classroom approach to facilitating online project-based learning. They conclude that it may enhance students' learning effectiveness, learning motivation, and learning interest, as well as encourage diverse development and teamwork. **Koh** offers a potentially useful framework for the design and integration of reusable learning objects, that is, the application of five dimensions of meaningful learning: active, constructive, intentional, authentic, and collaborative. **Yang and Kwok** turn to the Technology Acceptance Model to help reveal the relationship between students' attitude and use of technology in problem-based learning. Unsurprisingly they discovered that perceptions of usefulness and ease of use were significant and conclude, amongst other things, that professional learning of educators is needed to improve the degree of integration of technology in problem-based learning.

Zheng, Schmidt, Hu, Liu and Hsu explore the relationships between design, learning, and translanguaging in a 3D collaborative virtual learning environment for adolescent learners of Chinese and English. In so doing, they developed a space congruent with ecological and dialogical perspectives on second language acquisition in which sense-making is contingent on the relational dynamics of place, activities, and artefacts. Their conclusions affirm that socioculturally bounded places afford unique learning opportunities. In yet a different focus, **Junjie** tackles the issue of attrition rates in MOOCs. They found that a number of factors including satisfaction with prior learning experience, confirmation with prior learning experience, and perceived usefulness are significant. However, Junjie found that Knowledge outcome is the most powerful indicator of learners' continuance intention in MOOCs. **Kitto, Lupton, Davis and Waters** bring a much needed discussion to the work on learning analytics. There is some irony in a movement that argues its goal is student learning but has few empirically documented student-facing approaches. The authors propose two promising learning designs for future exploration.

Acknowledgements

The production of AJET is a large team effort. The lead editors Associate Professor Eva Heinrich, Associate Professor Michael Henderson, and Associate Professor Petrea Redmond work with a committed team of associate editors who facilitate the reviews and author revisions of papers. The team of associate editors has recently expanded and now includes: Associate Professor Shirley Agostinho; Dr Thomas Donald Cochrane; Dr Linda Corrin; Dr Helen Farley; Associate Professor Paul Gruba; Professor Judi Harris; Dr Chwee Beng Lee; Dr Jason M Lodge; Associate Professor Lina Markauskaite; Dr Stephen Marshall; and Dr Michael Phillips. Backing up the editorial team we have two dedicated copyeditors, Kayleen Wood and Antonina Petrolito who work closely with authors to enhance the quality of the articles by ensuring the text is concise, consistent and accurate. We also need to thank our large number of expert reviewers who ensure our articles are of high standard. And finally, thank you to the authors, who offer valuable new understandings in the field of educational technology; and the readers, without you there would be no AJET.

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