

“I was in their shoes”: Shifting Perceptions of Editorial Roles and Responsibilities

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Abstract

This small-scale study has investigated the perceptions of Associate Editors into their roles and responsibilities at two Asian-based online journals in the field of English language teaching and linguistics, paying particular attention to the shift in those perceptions from blind manuscript reviewers up to their present supervisory roles. From the viewpoint of journal management, the role of manuscript supervision by Associate Editors is seen as key to the maintenance of journal quality and positioning in its respective fields and is put forward in this study as a form of ‘middle management,’ involving team leadership skills and sensitivity towards authors and reviewers. From the perspective of understanding the challenges facing scholars pursuing publication in English, investigation into the nature of the pivotal role played by Associate Editors is argued here as an essential counterbalance to existing literature into authorial experiences in publishing. Methodologically, we have taken an emic, ethnographic stance by researching not only the views of fellow editors with whom we regularly interact, but also ourselves as one of us is currently an Associate Editor being investigated in this study, and the other a Senior Editor. Findings from questionnaire-based research have revealed divergence and convergence in views concerning editorial duties. Of note in terms of similarity is the perception in this data collected from ten Associate Editors that knowledge and experience of supervision should be shared, especially of discourse to convey negative feedback to authors. The sense of reward inherent to the position came in the form of satisfaction in team-building and aiding authors to final acceptance, rather than a sense of higher status within the academic field

or journal. Divergence in views manifested itself in the means by which editors should be developed, some advocating formal schemes, and others more individualized and voluntary pathways. Most editors concurred that previous reviewing experience was beneficial to supervisory competence. Implications from these findings and the literature imply that various forms of editorial development are needed to accommodate the diverse needs of editors as they progress from reviewer to higher positions of responsibility whilst facing work pressures and fatigue.

Keywords: journal publishing, editorial perceptions, development

Introduction

As journals in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) face an increasing number of submissions (Zuengler & Carroll, 2010), more editorial staff are recruited and promoted within those journals. This movement up the editorial ladder involves changes in roles and responsibilities, particularly for blind manuscript reviewers who are promoted into editorial positions (termed as Associate Editors in this study, or AEs) responsible for supervising submissions, a job which entails corresponding with authors, senior editors and reviewers. The challenges of this shift have been rarely researched, a surprising omission in the literature considering the pivotal role that editors play for journals and, in turn, within the field.

Research foci and questions

This study seeks to address this shortfall in research by investigating the perceptions of AEs towards their roles and responsibilities at two Asian-based online journals, *Asian EFL Journal* (AEJ) and its sister journal, *The Linguistics Journal* (TLJ). By emailing in-depth, open-ended, qualitative questionnaires to ten of the journals' AEs, questions probe participants' perceptions about their journal work. All participants were those who have moved up into their current editorial positions after experience of reviewing for their respective journals. Questions focus on the difficulties and concerns, personal perceptions of the rewards of AE work, issues inherent in the shift from reviewer to AE, the discourse involved in mediating differing reviewer feedback, the correspondence involved in dealing with reviewers and authors, and finally how AEs feel about their

personal editorial expertise and development. Follow-up email correspondence between the researchers and AEs is also utilised as data.

Literature review

The role of academic journal staff is frequently voluntary in nature but often a popular means of involvement in their chosen field. As Corbett (2012) notes, “Editors play an extraordinary role in helping to shape their fields” and Rosenbaum (2005, p. 147) stresses that journal work is “a sign of peer acceptance.” In terms of their journal roles, Ellis (2010, p. 658) sees editors, reviewers and proofreaders as the “backbone” of journal publishing. For authors, forming positive relationships with journal editors with whom they correspond places editors as all-important “pivots” (Lillis, 2013, p.112) in their albeit temporary scholarly network. Yet recognition for this role is at times less rewarding institutionally and Gould (2009, p. 243) warns that “failure to see their work (editing, reviewing) as scholarly research is not only short-sighted, but counter-productive to progress” in the wider field.

Furthermore, the processing of submissions in English-language journals in the EFL/Applied Linguistics and linguistics fields naturally entails dealing with work from scholars with various identities (center or native scholars, or periphery, non-native, or multilingual scholars). Authorial contributions to journals and participation in journal editorial work are key foci of much recent research concerning academic publishing (Lillis & Curry, 2006, 2010; Belcher, 2007; Flowerdew, 2000, *inter alios*). It is a consideration of both editorial perceptions of their roles and authorial issues in publishing which we argue as best informing editorial practice. In light of this, the review of literature addresses editorial practice in terms of the perceived roles and responsibilities of reviewers and AEs, specifically how issues of networking and community, reviewer performance, middle management, and academic writing impact upon AEs in their new roles.

Roles and responsibilities for reviewers and Associate Editors

The issues surrounding the perceived roles and responsibilities of reviewers for the journals under investigation have been studied in detail by Nunn and Adamson (2007 for AEJ reviewers) and Adamson and Muller (2008; 2012 for other journals in the AEJ group including TLJ). Both studies revealed great diversity, ranging from perceptions of reviewer-as-gate-keeper of journal ‘standards’ to reviewer-as-mentor, or co-constructor of academic discourse alongside authors. Interestingly, reviewers felt it difficult to be both gate-keeper and supportive co-constructor, a dilemma echoed by Rentz (2005) and Flowerdew (2000). Important also to earlier studies concerns the motivation for actually becoming reviewers; Adamson and Muller (2008) identify the desire among many new reviewers to enhance the reputation of the journal in its field by upholding ‘standards’ of research and academic writing. This focus on ‘standards’ is particularly contentious as it challenges senior editors to actually set guidelines which they feel are difficult to agree upon. Furthermore, it raises issues of what can constitute one benchmark for research and academic writing from Anglophone and non-Anglophone perspectives (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Belcher, 2007; Canagarajah, 2002; Flowerdew, 2000). Additionally, if viewed from macro disciplinary perspectives, the concept of following a defined standard points to a conservative policy which only serves to promote “narrow vocationalism” (Carter, 1995, p. 55), rather than to allow for variation and experimentation in academic writing genre (Nunn & Adamson, 2009).

In light of the AE’s authority to pass judgement on submissions regarding their acceptability in terms of research content and academic writing, these same issues facing reviewers would appear to be highlighted for AEs. Yet, those issues may be accentuated by concerns exclusive to the AE’s higher level of responsibility within the editorial system. But what then is the nature of this higher responsibility? Some journals may operate in a simple two-tiered fashion with senior editors sending submissions to two reviewers. AEJ and TLJ, however, have a three-tiered system in which AEs play an intermediary role between senior editors and reviewers. In essence, the decision-making responsibility on a submission’s acceptability has been delegated downwards from senior editors in a move we argue as reminiscent of “distributed leadership” (Spillane, 2005, p. 144), or “middle management” (Busher, 2005, p. 459; Busher & Harris, 1999, p. 305) in educational contexts. Such middle ranking positions of authority requires

certain competences; for example, the skills of coordination (choosing appropriate reviewers), keeping record of submissions (when and to whom they have been sent), discourse skills in correspondence (with reviewers and authors), and content knowledge (assessing reviewer feedback and the manuscript itself). Exercising such skills in middle management can be viewed as empowering and a sign of career advancement (Busher, 2005); however, the development of AE skills is rare in journals as most training focuses on orientation of new reviewers on how to evaluate blind manuscripts (Freda et al, 2009).

Considering the communicative skills required of AEs as middle managers, their training of AEs should develop “interpersonal and intellectual dimensions to the collaborative work between authors and editorial teams” (Rentz, (2005, p. 291). This would entail practice of how to take reviewers’ feedback and “distill it, summarize it, assess it, and make a decision” (Female Science Professor, 2011). This process involves “Diplomacy and tact in dealing with people, especially how to offer corrections and suggestions to authors, who can be sensitive about their writing and work” (Spiridon, 2011). Lillis (2008, p. 355) terms this as “talk around texts” and stresses its importance towards the enhancement of editorial quality. Adamson (2012), in an analysis of the new reviewer mentoring program at AEJ, specifically utilises this approach when encouraging the exchange of feedback between new reviewers and their more experienced reviewer-mentors on their first reviews. AE development would then point to a replication of the mentoring program in place for new reviewers and an emphasis on dialogue about review feedback.

Progression to the position of AE is usually based on experience in reviewing, implying that there is a connection between previous experience and the ability to take on AE skills. As reviewers do not engage in the wider range of duties of an AE, this is a presumptive step. In fact, the assumption that experience is a measure even for long-term reviewer quality has been questioned. Callahan and Tercier (2007) investigated the relationship between review quality and previous training and experience, showing reviewers from “high rank and leadership reputation” (p.37) and those with experience tended to perform poorly. Also, Callahan (2007) and Garcia-Doval (2007) question whether reviewer quality is enduring and suggest a deterioration of review performance over time due to accumulated duties and pressures on academics as they get older. This

raises the question of how basic evaluation skills of research are actually acquired. Callahan (1997) notes that postgraduate training of scientists does not involve formal analysis of manuscripts; instead, such skills are acquired through “osmosis” (p.192). Such an apparently random acquisition of reviewing skills can then lead to a situation in which “most reviewers have mistaken ideas of what editors expect from them” (p.192).

Moving up the editorial ladder

The movement from reviewer up to an AE entails, as outlined previously, changes in duties. A higher level of decision-making is required: which reviewers to select for review, how to synthesize reviewer feedback, what verdict to come to, and more correspondence with a range of stakeholders (senior editors, reviewers and authors). Parallels in this shift could be drawn to the sense of “intellectual dislocation” (Flowerdew, 2000, p. 131) that is normally associated with a scholar’s graduation from a guiding “conversation of the discipline” (Bazerman, 1980, p. 657) in university tutor-student relationships into the workplace where a sudden, stark sense of self-direction is necessitated. At AEJ, a mentor-new reviewer program helps to orient reviewers into review practice, whereas new AEs currently do not have such a support network available to them. In light of their additional responsibilities, this network has potentially wider and more in-depth roles to play. The shift to AE entails entry to a potentially new, or at least extended, community. But what is the nature of this new community? To focus on new skills in discourse use would make it a “discourse community” (Flowerdew, 2000); or perhaps to focus on community norms, expectations, and membership would make it a “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Alternatively, the new AE could be viewed as seeking access to guidance from their personal and professional “scholars’ networks” (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 65) in which the academic knowledge regarding researching and publishing is obtained by “brokers” from various sources in their lives (Lillis & Curry, 2006, p. 13). Possibly a mixture of these three types of community or network could serve as appropriate analogies to draw upon when envisaging the AE’s new context.

If the new AE does have access to a network with advisory brokers to engage in ‘conversations’ surrounding editorial practice, the level of sensitivity in giving feedback cannot be guaranteed as sympathetic or constructive in nature. Research from medical

journal review feedback reveals that much review practice is modelled on how reviewers were reviewed themselves (Lovejoy, Revenson & France, 2011) resulting in cases where reviewers only identify severe errors in the manuscript, termed by Walbot (2009, p.1) as “pit-bull reviewer” practice. Among multilingual scholars who become strict gate-keeping editors, this is termed as “hypercorrection” (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 164), the “tendency towards a highly conservative stance on what count as ‘appropriate’ English language and rhetorical norms, and considerable intolerance of what are considered to be non-standard or less prestigious forms” (p. 164). This suggests that periphery scholars may not necessarily be sensitive or constructive in their feedback towards fellow periphery scholars. What is then falsely assumed is that appointment of periphery scholars as editorial staff, or their access to a network of supportive brokers leads to more inclusive editorial practice sensitive to multilingual scholars’ struggles to publish (Tardy & Matsuda, 2009). Brokers, if adopting the role of mentors, as Madlock and Kennedy-Lightsey (2010) outline, can themselves assume various roles for newcomers into a community – as teacher, sponsor, motivator, counsellor, role model, even someone who socialises, in the case of this editorial context, a new AE into the new community. This then points to the dangers inherent in allowing mentees (new AEs) to choose their own mentors or even allocating them to experienced editorial staff who see it as their role to train or persuade the mentee to conform to a certain standard or norm of performance (Cullingford, 2006, p. 3). The argument returns to one identified in findings from Nunn and Adamson (2007, 2009) and Adamson and Muller (2008, 2009) into AEJ and TLJ, and Rentz (2005), then later Rogers, Campbell, Louhiala-Salminen, Rentz, and Suchan (2007) in internal studies into editorial board members at the *Journal of Business Communication* (Sage Publications), all of which reveal broadly diverse perceptions of the norms of academic writing and of their positioning in relation to authors.

As AEs in this study are from both center and periphery backgrounds, investigating their attitudes towards academic writing norms helps to understand how they review and shape review practice of new AEs. As center and periphery scholars do not pursue academic study and careers solely in their home contexts (Salager-Meyer, 2008), differences may exist among those who studied in center, and those who stayed in the periphery contexts. Those with center experience may acquire competence in academic

publishing which categorises them as “fully-fledged periphery scholars” (Salager-Meyer, 2008, p.124) and may reject publishing in periphery journals, instead only pursuing “a slavish obeisance” (Altbach, 1997) to publish in elitist, center scholarship journals. Plickert, Cote and Wellman (2007) note that benefits may exist if such scholars moving up to senior editorial positions exercise a heightened sense of empathetic “reciprocity” (p. 406) with fellow periphery scholars. This potential cannot be overlooked (Perez-Llantada, Plo, & Ferguson, 2011, p. 28), yet the question remains as to which norms (center scholarship or periphery) these “pivots” or “brokers” (Lillis, 2013, p.112) wish to impart when reviewing or mentoring less experienced AEs. In brief, the assumption that AEs share similar views about academic norms is potentially colored by contextual issues of where they have studied and worked.

Context

The journals under investigation for this study have histories and editorial procedures, including terminologies, which are perhaps in some ways unique from other journals. These will be outlined in brief here.

The journals

AEJ started as a publishing group in 1999 and published its first online edition in 2002. Hardcopy editions have been gradually made available through a self-publishing company. As the reputation of the journal spread, the volume of submissions grew. Currently, articles are published without a fee for submission or publication but viewing is by subscription for research articles (RAs). Other categories of submission are open access.

The editorial board consists of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who owns the journal group, a Chief Editor, three Senior Associate Editors (SAEs), twelve Associate Editors (AEs), and ninety-five reviewers. As authors of this current study, we currently hold the position of SAE and AE and have previously worked as reviewers. Decisions concerning the direction and running of the journal are made by the CEO, Chief Editor and SAEs. Reviewers are placed in teams under an AE who manages that team’s review work and allocation of reviewers to teams is made according to research

specialism so that each team has a balance of reviewing skills. All reviewers are expected to be able to review a broad range of EFL submissions and to orientate them, new reviewers must undergo an orientation and development scheme in which they evaluate old papers and compare their feedback to that originally given to the submission. After this, they are required to reflect upon their own reviews in terms of content and language and correspond with an SAE responsible for reviewer development. Almost half of all reviewers have gone through this scheme to date. After entering a team to do live reviewing, they are allocated an experienced reviewer as a mentor for their first reviews. AEJ publishes four normal editions a year, including some conference proceedings editions and special themed editions and also publishes monthly Teaching Articles (TAs).

Other journals in the AEJ group were established from 2005, including TLJ, a smaller online sister journal with a Chief Editor, six AEs, and over eighty reviewers. AEs at TLJ do not have teams as at AEJ as the nature of linguistics submissions means that only strictly specialized reviewers are chosen from a large pool to evaluate a paper. TLJ publishes one full edition a year, including an occasional special themed edition. All categories of submissions - RAs, shorter Research Notes (RNs) and full theses – are open access. No reviewer development scheme currently exists for new reviewers.

Procedure and terminology

Turning firstly to issues concerning the roles and responsibilities of reviewers and AEs, for the journals under investigation, a reviewer is required to evaluate a blinded paper within a period of time negotiated with the AE. The process of reviewing involves following evaluation forms to provide qualitative and quantitative feedback on the various aspects of either a RA or TA in the case of AEJ. In the case of TLJ, reviewers follow the same form for RAs and RNs as the journal does not specifically focus on classroom-based practice. Examples of evaluation forms for both journals are in Appendices A and B. AEs at both journals send papers out electronically in blind form to two reviewers of their choice and once feedback has been received, send blinded feedback to the author(s). This broadly corresponds to blind, anonymous peer review procedure in the field of English Language Teaching research. AEs correspond with authors on this feedback, receive revised versions and send those versions out to

reviewers again depending on the nature of revisions requested. This process continues until the AE comes to a verdict of acceptance or rejection of the paper.

Methodology

As the eighteen AEs at AEJ and TLJ are geographically widespread, the methodology used for this study was an electronically distributed questionnaire and then followed up by email discussion as necessary. The questionnaire was originally piloted with ten questions and then amended to comprise twelve questions (see Appendix C). All AEs were given pseudonyms and informed of the purpose of the research. Of eighteen AEs, ten replied. While compiling the responses, some contextual information was given for each participating AE: gender, whether they were Anglophone or non-Anglophone Scholars, and their editorial experience at AEJ, TLJ or elsewhere. Gender was added as a contextual factor post hoc as some data did reveal gender-related issues surrounding editorial practice. Noting whether the participants are Anglophone or non-Anglophone Scholars is, admittedly, controversial; however, considering the recurrence of such themes among participants in the data itself, it was felt important to identify AEs accordingly.

Responses were analyzed by a four-stage “phenomenological reduction” (Hycner, 1985, p. 279) which emphasizes the importance of the personal narrativizing of subjective experiences and key events to gain insights into participant motivations. van Manen (2007, p. 26) elaborates on the “phenomenology of practice” as commonly applied to education:

a phenomenology of practice operates in the space of the formative relations between who we are and who we may become, between how we think or feel and how we act. And these formative relations have pedagogical consequence for professional and everyday practical life.

In this sense, the transformative element to this study’s theme, that of shifting from reviewer to AE, is suited to this epistemological framing. In practice, this entails

reduction of a large amount of data gathered typically by questionnaires or interviewing to reveal insights into participants' worlds.

For this purpose, it was firstly noted what each participant conveyed for each question area, whether it was relevant to the question or not. Following this, for the second stage of reduction, only “natural meaning units” or “central themes” Kvale (1996, p. 195) were identified, i.e. data directly relevant to the questions. This “crystallization” (Hycner, 1985, p. 279) of responses involved eliminating irrelevant data. After crystallizing the responses for each of the ten participants in turn, stage three entailed summarizing all the crystallizations across the twelve questions. This resulted in twelve summaries. The fourth stage of analysis attempted to identify possible commonalities and idiosyncrasies among the AE responses to inform the researchers about issues intrinsic to our small data set. This positions the study as an “intrinsic case study” (Stake, 1995, p. 3) as our purpose is not to make generalizations of AE perceptions or behavior beyond our case, but to seek to understand their commonalities and idiosyncrasies better. Question 9 (Appendix C) concerned team management and so was cut for distribution to TLJ AEs as they select reviewers from a large pool and do not manage teams per se as AEJ AEs do. Finally, follow-up emails were conducted with some respondents when responses were unclear, meaning needed to be confirmed, or expansion necessary.

Findings and Discussion

The findings that we present here are a result of the fourth stage of the reduction of data. The unpacking of relevant responses to the questionnaire agenda naturally has excluded some data we feel is not directly related to the research questions; however, this interpretative process has led us on numerous occasions to present idiosyncratic information, often in the form of participants' personal quotes, which reflect the phenomenological nature of the methodology. Responses are also interwoven with relevant literature in an attempt to compare and contrast this small data set with wider trends.

In order to provide some context for the responses, Table 1 represents a brief overview of the participants in terms of their gender, whether they are Anglophone or non-Anglophone scholars, which journal they are affiliated with, and their experience as reviewers and as AEs (or otherwise). Pseudonyms are used which attempt to represent the gender and ethnicity of the respondents. One of the co-authors of this study is known as Nao, not a pseudonym, as we feel her real identity as author-participant can be revealed.

Table 1: Participant backgrounds

Pseudonym	M/F	AS/NAS	Journal	Experience in reviewing and as AE
Nao	F	NAS	AEJ	6 yrs reviewing, 2 yrs AE at AEJ
Mohammad	M	NAS	AEJ/TLJ	2 yrs reviewing, 3 yrs AE at AEJ (also 3 yrs reviewing at TLJ)
Peter	M	AS	AEJ	2 yrs reviewing, 1yr AE at AEJ
Claudia	F	NAS	TLJ	1 yr reviewing, 1yr AE at TLJ
Somchai	M	NAS	AEJ/TLJ	3 yrs reviewing, 2 yrs AE at AEJ (also 3 yrs reviewing at TLJ)
Paul	M	AS	AEJ	2 yrs reviewing, 4 yrs AE at AEJ
Fang	F	NAS	AEJ	3 yrs reviewing, 5 yrs AE at AEJ
Aman	M	NAS	AEJ	2 yrs reviewing, 1 yr AE at AEJ
Raajeev	M	NAS	AEJ	2 yrs reviewing, 6 yrs AE at AEJ (also Chief Editor at another journal)
Karolin	F	NAS	AEJ	5 yrs reviewing, 1 yr AE at AEJ (several yrs reviewing at other journals)

AS = Anglophone Scholar

NAS = Non-Anglophone Scholar

AE = Associate Editor

AEJ = *Asian EFL Journal*

TLJ = *The Linguistics Journal*

Responses are presented according to the twelve questions as follows:

1. What do you think has been the most difficult part of your job as an AE?

Most AEs stated that time pressures were of most concern for them in their duties. Specifically, this entailed “finding the time to go through the manuscripts” themselves (Paul), and making sure that reviewers meet deadlines as agreed upon (Fang; Rajeev). This “chasing” (Peter; Claudia; Karolin) of reviewers was termed as a “daunting” management task by Rajeev, despite his experience as Chief Editor at another journal and long experience as AE at AEJ, and particularly difficult if there is a temporary shortage of available reviewers (Aman).

Nao, who had been a reviewer for a period of six years at AEJ before stepping up to AE, noted that her difficulties focused more on the process of making a final decision whether “articles are to be accepted or rejected” and stated that “I did not realize that the decision-making is such a responsible work to do”, illustrating perhaps the initial difficulty of adapting to the “middle management” (Busher, 2005, p. 459) responsibilities of an AE. Mohammad also stressed the problems in “accommodat[ing] each reviewer’s desire and whims” when sending review feedback back to authors, a process which Peter termed as “consolidating different reviewers’ comments into advice for redrafting.” This echoes the necessity of “diplomacy” (Spiridon, 2011) inherent in synthesizing reviewer feedback to pass on to authors.

Somchai’s difficulties lay more in the later stages of supervision, focusing on the problems of “check[ing] whether the authors have revised the paper according to the reviewers’ suggestions or not” and also persuading impatient authors to wait for the results of the second round of reviewing.

2. What has been most rewarding for you since becoming an AE?

Responses were generally that AE duties had been rewarding with the exception of Peter, a recent addition to the group of AEs at AEJ, who stated that this was due to the low quality of submissions sent to him to supervise. The positive responses focused on various reasons, firstly that of a sense of satisfaction in having supervised an author through to acceptance of their submission (Nao; Paul; Karolin). The second most commonly cited reason was a sense of “managing people” (Claudia), “gaining academic and professional experience through working, feeling guided/supported by the Senior Editors and other friendly colleagues” (Fang), and “active networking with my reviewers” (Rajeev). This process of dealing with authors and reviewers did, however,

require a heightened “patience and diplomacy” (Mohammad). Additionally, Somchai, Aman, and Fang noted the benefit to their own research by reading so many submissions to supervise. Interestingly, a new TLJ AE, Claudia, mentioned the “different perspectives regarding the peer-reviewing process” that her recent promotion had given her after working as reviewer, mirroring Nao’s responses to question 1 on the challenges of becoming an AE. Finally, Rajeev stressed that his role as AE “adds a distinct dimension to my identity in addition to some prominence to my profile as a language teaching professional” which was the only response alluding to the identity and status of editorial work in the field.

These responses suggest some benefit for AEs’ editorial practice and own research may exist in the exposure to reading new research regularly (Somchai) and becoming “networked” (Swales, 1987; Belcher, 2007) with fellow editors and authors (Fang and Rajeev). Being “brokers” (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p.13) would then mean that the benefits for AEs, as well as authors, are recognized by some AEs.

3. When you moved up to be an AE, what were the biggest changes for you?

Many comments regarding ‘changes’ when moving up to AE echoed responses to question 1 on the difficulties inherent in an AE’s role; for example, “dealing with authors” (Somchai), time pressures (Paul; Rajeev), and pushing reviewers to meet deadlines (Claudia; Peter).

However, some responses revealed new perceptions. Both Mohammad and Fang noted the necessity to use more sensitive discourse, Fang commenting on the “much stronger sense of responsibility” regarding the “interpersonal skills” of corresponding with “careful wording” with reviewers and authors. Karolin stressed the sensitivity involved in AE-to-author correspondence and awareness of “how much disappointment a reject causes” (Karolin). This organizational and communicative awareness was echoed by Nao, Somchai, and Rajeev, the latter adding that he had become aware of such skills as a reviewer working under various AEs. This apprenticeship aspect of reviewer work is reminiscent of Bazerman’s (1980, p. 657) “conversation of the discipline” in the university writing teacher-student relationship which imparts both writing field-specific norms to the student new to the field, and also norms of evaluation.

We find this is interesting in that it shows how some reviewers acquire similar discourse behavioural traits before making the transition to AE.

Additionally, although AEJ reviewers are expected to review a wide range of submissions on EFL and Applied Linguistics themes, in contrast to TLJ reviewers who only review within their specialist fields, Fang (an AEJ AE) specifically noted the challenge of choosing appropriate reviewers based on their individual research specialism. This is an interesting insight for us into the way in which submissions are allocated within AEJ teams as it indicates that Fang matches the themes of submissions more closely to the personal research speciality of her reviewers. It implies that Fang operates her team in a different manner to that intended by senior editors and that if other teams are similar, then a broader range of research skills, and possibly larger teams, are needed.

Finally, the theme of status and identity was revisited by Nao, the only AE to mention her non-Anglophone status, gender, and qualifications. Her comments appear to exhibit some self-doubt about editorial competence despite a long apprenticeship and so we need to question the degree to which these factors impact on editorial competence.

“I am not a native English speaker and I am a woman.”

“... although I studied through a doctorate of Education, I could not receive Ed.D. successfully, so I am not a doctor. I know that there are many reviewers who have doctoral degrees in *Asian EFL Journal*.”

This raises the concept of what skills and qualifications are necessary for the AE's role, to which she added: “However, the senior associate editor persuaded me to be an AE because I had the longest reviewing experience (6 years).” Clearly, these reflections play a role in forming her sense of identity as a non-Anglophone scholar and resonate with Morita's (2004, p. 598) observations that Japanese women in academia frequently struggle to overcome the “ascribed identities” of passive Asian women who are poor in English. Additionally, despite the fact that “the degree of experience/expertise in academic publication and proficiency in certain genres of academic discourse ... are more important than the NES/NNES status” (Salager-Meyer, 2008, p. 125), in her case,

self-doubt about a lack of linguistic competence remains which requires senior editorial reassurance.

4. What do you do when reviewers provide contradictory feedback? (Do you recommend that authors follow one reviewer's feedback more than the other?)

One problematic situation facing AEs occurs when reviewers give feedback which contradicts each other. This requires some degree of mediation by the AE so that the author is made aware of how to revise their submission. In response to this question, some AEs said that they state preference for one reviewer over the other, "if it converges with my own opinions" (Peter), or "I decide by myself which feedback is best for the paper" (Somchai). Aman also made judgements based on "whether I agree with any one reviewer." Paul's stance was to choose a reviewer who is "most thorough" as he "favour[s] reviewers who can find something good in the manuscript."

In contrast, Fang and Rajeev make compilations, "or a "synthesis" (Rajeev), which "compare and summarise the differences" (Fang) and then encourage authors to "give the reasons to agree or disagree" with the two sets of feedback. Alternatively, Karolin said that she might send the paper out for a third review if feedback is greatly divergent.

These different approaches to dealing with contradictory feedback are clearly a key point for discussion among AEs and senior editors. The question remains whether all AEs should follow one policy, or be allowed to continue with their existing approaches to dealing with contradictory feedback. If the former option is enforced, there may be possible consequences of a sense of removing AE authority for the sake of conformity in policy. If leadership is to be "distributed" (Spillane, 2005, p. 144), then perhaps one consequence is to accept diversity in AE approaches, yet be prepared to share those approaches among AEs as possible 'alternatives' to dealing with diverse feedback.

5. How do you summarize feedback from two reviewers? (If possible, can you give an old example of how you worded the email to the author below?)

This question generated lengthy responses and in private email correspondence, several respondents requesting the creation of a 'pool' or 'archive' of standard correspondence to draw upon. Non-Anglophone AEs particularly were keen to share and have access to other AEs' correspondence. The manner in which feedback was summarized revealed

some sensitivity on the part of some non-Anglophone AEs. Somchai's approach was to "combine" reviewers' feedback without adding his own opinions. Fang was more explicit in how she synthesized feedback:

"Firstly [I] compare the comments on each section, find the same/similar points of views, and different ones, then marshal, summarise, produce [my] feedback."

In this process, Aman noted that he tried to "rephrase certain statements to tone down certain comments and make them more reader-friendly." In contrast to this, there is the tendency among some Western-educated non-Anglophone scholars towards strict "hypercorrection" and conservative stances to academic standards in writing (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 164).

6. When you need to give negative feedback to an author, what kind of expressions/words do you use? (Would it be useful perhaps to share 'standard letters' or see other AE's wording?)

Most AEs agreed with the idea of sharing standard letters regarding negative feedback. Nao, Peter, Paul and Fang stressed the necessity to start such correspondence with diplomatic language to avoid giving offence and to soften to impact of criticism. Nao mentioned that she commences correspondence with "compliments towards their work and then inform[s] them with specific advice", paying attention "not to use command-like expressions." Instead, she uses question forms as hedging devices, such as "Is it possible ~?" "Would you consider ~, please?" and provided the following models:

This is a very interesting article but the reviewers suggest to include the following points ... Is it possible to revise the article according to their advice?

In order to improve your article, we believe that the following factors need to be amended. Would you consider them, please?

Likewise, Peter recommended starting feedback by "front[ing] criticism with some words of encouragement", but retains the right of 'telling it how it is' as "authors need

to know the truth.” Paul’s sample correspondence, below, highlights the importance of showing ‘respect’ for the author’s work, despite its shortcomings:

Please keep in mind that I mean all these suggestions with tremendous respect for your work thus far, and I understand the focused energy that goes into submissions. I realize that these suggestions are extensive, but as I mentioned, I believe your manuscript addresses some important issues for all of us in language learning, and I encourage you to revise and resubmit.

In a similar vein, Fang also stressed the importance of not “hurting or offending the author, using encouraging words rather than criticising, using ‘different...’ rather than ‘wrong’.”

The use of diplomatic, hedging expressions is, however, linguistically quite challenging, so non-Anglophone AEs particularly wished to share models of how negative feedback could be worded. Spiridon’s (2011) highlighting of “diplomacy and tact” in feedback is clearly mirrored in the responses; additionally, the call among AEs to share model correspondence is perhaps a sign that the modelling of previous feedback, as seen in the reviewer development program (Adamson, 2012), is required for the specific and sensitive nature of correspondence from AEs to authors. This sharing process and willingness to engage in dialogue about AE practice in this research itself points to the creation of further opportunities between AEs, or AE to senior editor “talk around texts” (Lillis, 2008, p. 355).

7. And when you give positive feedback?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, all respondents expressed their pleasure and satisfaction when giving authors positive feedback, especially in conveying the news that a submission has been finally accepted. No requests were made to share model correspondence for this type of feedback, yet samples provided could possibly be of use to beginner AEs. The consensus among AEs was that they use words or expressions of praise, such as:

You have done a good job . (Somchai)

I am glad to inform you that after careful consideration, your paper has been accepted with minor/major revision and therefore ... (Claudia)

Interestingly, Fang provided some specific words and expressions that she had gathered to describe the accepted submission:

interesting, inspiring, significant, bring food for thought

8. How would you describe your relationship with authors (as a colleague, gate-keeper)? Are there any experiences with authors you can recall which were particularly positive or negative?

As AEs have primary contact with authors, responses to this question were key to understanding AE perceptions of their role in external communication for the journal. Potentially, perceptions about the relationship with authors can help explain critical incidents (experiences) that AE recall in the second question. On reflection, the question prompted AEs to think in terms of a colleague or gate-keeper (in brackets above) which could be considered as feeding respondents concepts they may not have naturally produced. As most responses referred to experiences from the perspective of either colleague or gate-keeper, the wording of the question ('as a colleague, gate-keeper') could be assessed as limiting a broader range of relationships.

Interestingly, the relationship was seen as being that of colleagues by some AEs, whereas other respondents either saw it as a gate-keeping role or, as Peter expressed:

"I don't think there is a relationship as such; it's more a question of maintaining an objective position and holding a mirror up to the work, in my view."

We view this comment as unique among the data collected as it is not supported by other AEs. It is, however, informative for us as researchers and potentially useful for senior editors when considering the possibility of awareness-raising development for AEs in the future.

In the cases when AEs supplemented their perceived roles, Nao said that she also played the role of "moderator because two reviewers usually evaluate an article and

their evaluation sometimes differs.” Mohammad added the role of “friend”, Fang that of “Equal academic researchers, education practitioners”, and Claudia saw authors as potentially capable of teaching AEs. Karolin was the sole respondent to perceive herself as being both gate-keeper and colleague, also supplementing these roles with that of mentor. Finally, Rajeev added that his relationship with authors had the potential to “provide a vibrant context for bondings across cultures and continents.” In brief, there is a sense among some AEs in this data of the willingness to create a more collegial relationship than others. Some resonance with studies into reviewer perceptions of roles (Nunn & Adamson, 2007; Adamson & Muller, 2008, 2012), and Rentz’s (2005) and Flowerdew’s (2000) findings can be seen in that most AEs did not state that they could be both a strict gate-keeper and supportive colleague.

Key experiences firstly highlighted the challenges of mediating between authors and reviewers, and saving face for both parties. In such a case, Nao noted that:

“... since I am the AE of the team, it was impossible to show my negative opinion about the evaluation to the author. Therefore, I tried my best to save the reviewer’s face and respect the author’s appeal.”

Several AEs raised the issue of “arrogant” authors, particularly those who contacted the AE frequently asking whether their submission had been accepted (Claudia). Most responses mentioned the “relief” (Nao) when a paper had gone through a long process of rounds of revision and was finally accepted (Claudia). This indicates that more than one round of revisions is common in those teams, a practice encouraged by senior editors. Finally, Somchai expressed the pleasure of receiving thanks from accepted authors:

“One positive experience that I remember well is when this particular author thanked me and the reviewers for giving him/her an insightful knowledge. I felt that he/she really appreciated our job.”

9. Having a small team of reviewers involves various responsibilities. How would you describe your responsibilities and relationship with your team's reviewers?

As responses to question 8 reveal perceptions of AEs towards their external relations with authors, question 9 explores their perceptions towards the internal interactions and relationship with reviewers. Since AEJ operates with teams of reviewers under AEs, forming working relationships with reviewers would appear to be important for successful “middle management” (Busher, 2005) of AE teams..

Most AE responses highlighted the importance of their “administrative” or “organizational” responsibilities; for example, keeping track of who the submissions were sent to, how long it has been under review, etc. This process entails, according to Rajeev, “cajoling” and chasing up of reviewers. All AEs showed sensitivity, as well as some frustration, about this as all journal reviewers are volunteers and need to balance work commitments with reviewing duties. Two Anglophone AEs, Peter and Paul, expressed some disappointment at their reviewers’ “lack of commitment” and “less than thorough” reviews respectively. Other AEs, notably Fang, stressed the importance of inducting new reviewers into their administrative roles (“filling out evaluation forms”, “annotating the manuscript”, “writing a summary of their comments”).

Across the responses, the need to evaluate reviewer feedback was noted. This involves “assessing the quality of reviewers’ comments” (Peter) and “verifying that comments are valid” (Aman). Karolin in particular was keen to develop reviewers by “giving them advice how they can write better reviews, e.g. by providing constructive feedback and by avoiding potentially face-threatening language”. This developmental role was rare in responses and shows perhaps that most AEs see reviewer development as belonging to a pre-team allocation stage, rather than an on-going AE responsibility.

One distinctive responsibility, mentioned by Nao, was to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each reviewer in her team so that each time she chose reviewers, she could achieve a balanced set of feedback:

“....I need to understand their research areas and the characters of the individual reviewers. For example, some [reviewers] tend to be very detailed but some give relatively broad suggestions. In that case, in order to increase the quality of

evaluation, I need to combine these types of [reviewers] when I make pairs of reviewers to do the editorial work.”

The focus of other AE comments regarding their reviewers did not necessarily embrace this level of thought for fairness in feedback when allocating submissions (although it may exist in practice). It implies that Nao is aware of a sense of empathetic “reciprocity” (Plickert et al, 2007, p. 406) when dealing with authors. Along with Karolin’s willingness to develop her own reviewers, Nao’s actions represent initiatives among AEs to counteract extreme feedback in the form of “hypercorrection” (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 164), “pit-bull reviewer” practice (Walbot, 2009), and misconceptions of how to review manuscripts (Callahan, 2007). Team-based reviewing under an AE familiar with individual reviewer performance over time can be argued as providing a viable means towards such internal development. This would be difficult if submissions were sent out to any available reviewer from a large pool, as at TLJ.

**10. Does your own experience as a reviewer help you in any way as an AE?
How?**

In the responses asking AEs to reflect upon the usefulness of their own experiences as reviewers, most clearly stated benefits, many of which alluded to a type of apprenticeship. Aman said it helped him to “understand the expectations of the journal.” A further rationale was provided by Nao who, with 6 years reviewing experience corresponding with her AE, added that such experience gave her “a chance to learn how they worked as AEs such as the way of communication with reviewers.” In a similar vein, Mohammad noted: “If I had been appointed immediately as an AE, it would have been disastrous”, although Peter stated that reviewing experience for him held no benefit for his role as an AE.

Overall, though, among the majority of respondents, there was a common feeling that reviewing experience brings familiarity with the journal’s editorial procedure and gives insights into the pressures faced by reviewers. Of note, Karolin, keen to develop her reviewers, felt that the guidance she passed on would have been impossible without reviewing experience herself. Finally, Claudia’s comment “It is useful indeed, because I was in their shoes” would appear to encapsulate most AEs’ views. If taken from the

perspective of school middle management literature where department managers and classroom teachers can be seen as AEs and reviewers respectively, Harris (2003) highlights the increased awareness among middle managers of the working realities faced by classroom teachers (in this case, reviewers). Middle managers' own apprenticeships contribute to their sense of "empowerment and agency" (p. 316) and enable them, as Karolin indicates, to understand and develop those under them more effectively.

11. Within the whole journal organization, how do you see your own status? Is it satisfactory for you?

The promotion from reviewer to AE entails a move into middle 'management' within the journal, a position which brings higher status and responsibility. AEs and senior editors frequently consult about internal journal policy and its external status in the field. This question seeks to elicit AE perceptions about this new status and identity.

Nao was the only AE to actually compare her responsibilities to that of a "middle manager" within the whole organization and showed awareness of all those associated in it, such as proofreaders, senior editors, as well as reviewers. Most AEs did not allude to their position within the journal as a whole, Karolin saying that she had never considered it, and Peter that status was not of "any concern" to him. Other responses focused more on the AE's status and satisfaction of leading and co-operation (Fang) within their individual team; for example, Paul noted that he "get[s] satisfaction out of working with manuscripts", Rajeev that the role is "professionally gratifying", and Claudia that she felt "honoured to do this job." Few responses appeared to show that AEs viewed their roles and responsibilities in terms of status within the journal, indicating that their sense of a "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), "scholars' network" (Lillis & Curry, 2010), or "discourse community" (Flowerdew, 2000) was limited to that of their immediate review team. In private correspondence after answering the questionnaire, Peter bemoaned the lack of guidance upon first becoming an AE and Nao expressed self-doubts about her lack of educational qualifications, her non-Anglophone status, and even her gender in taking on AE responsibilities. There is perhaps some similarity in these comments in that both expressed a wish for a support network, Peter in the form of objective advice regarding

editorial procedure, and Nao in the form of more personal, subjective confidence-building. Despite only two AEs conveying such thoughts regarding support, the next question, 12, elicited responses which possibly linked back to the wider issue of a network of support beyond that currently implemented within review teams.

12. We currently encourage mentoring between experienced reviewers and new ones, and also run a ‘reviewer development’ programme for new reviewers. Do you think becoming an AE also requires some form of mentoring or development? If so, what form would it take?

Opinions were divided on the idea of a mentoring or development program for AEs. Some, Mohammad and Peter, claimed it would be unnecessary, whereas others said that some kind of support network, or program, would be beneficial. Nao, Rajeev and Somchai advocated a mentoring program which mirrored that already existing for reviewers, Somchai suggesting that former, or existing AEs with more experience could be invited to mentor new AEs. Karolin expressed appreciation for her links with the Chief Editor whom she consulted when in need of advice on specific cases. Paul expressed some support for a developmental program but not for every AE as he felt confident in his ability and experience by working for another journal. Fang and Aman suggested any program to offer development should be online and Peter added that such online support could include sharing model correspondence. Finally, Rajeev suggested that AEs have periodic opportunities to meet online to exchange views, and better still meet with the entire editorial board to engage in seminars and orientation sessions.

Responses regarding AE development were clearly varied, ranging from minimal, occasional exchanges if editorial issues arose, to more formalized seminars. Although the reviewer development and mentoring program for new reviewers is viewed as beneficial among both reviewers themselves and AEs (Adamson, 2012), consensus on what form AE development should take, if indeed it is necessary, remain unclear. Implementation of obligatory development would then be problematic. This raises the issue of whether present perceptions of reticence will continue, and even as to whether AE performance should be self-evaluated. The questionnaire itself is a form of self-evaluation but as AEs naturally pass judgement on the quality of reviewer feedback, more senior editors too may regard AE decision-making critically and eventually see the

need for AE development. Callahan (2007) and Garcia-Doval (2007) outline the deterioration of reviewer quality over time due to work demands as reviewers age, so how much more risk concerning AE performance is to be incurred as AEs continue in their journal duties without either compulsory or voluntary development?

Conclusions and Implications

This small-scale case study investigating AEs who manage journal submissions has considered their perceptions of their roles and responsibilities particularly in terms of how they have shifted from being reviewers. These perceptions are viewed through the lens of not only the well-documented struggles to publish in English by both Anglophone and non-Anglophone scholars, but also from internal, personal AE standpoints and experiences. This investigation is part of an extensive series of studies into the journals, AEJ and TLJ, which have previously delved into reviewer perceptions of journal work (Nunn & Adamson, 2007; Adamson & Muller, 2008, 2012) and into the effectiveness of reviewer mentoring and development (Adamson, 2012). In effect, this study moves up the editorial ladder to research the journals' "middle management" (Busher, 2005, p. 459; Busher & Harris, 1999, p. 305), arguably the most important editorial positions as they represent the authors' temporary "pivots" (Lillis, 2013, p. 112) in their academic networks. An understanding of the "trajectories" (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 3) of academic journal submissions is argued here as being limited without insights into the perceptions of AE roles, responsibilities and development of editorial expertise.

Findings from questionnaires and follow-up correspondence reveal that the most challenging aspects of AE work are personal time management and, for some editors, reaching a verdict on the basis of conflicting review feedback. Most AEs felt a sense of reward in managing a small team, building relationships with them and recognizing their strengths. The challenges of moving into the AE role did, though, place more pressure on AEs to chase up non-performing reviewers and correspond with authors about negative feedback. Most AEs saw the need for a pool of model correspondence to share for this latter purpose. The task of summarizing feedback and passing it on for revisions showed that, among the non-Anglophone AEs surveyed in this study, there

existed great sensitivity towards the authors' feelings and appeared in contradiction to the tendency of "hypercorrection" observed by Lillis and Curry (2010, p. 164). Some divergence in views was revealed in AEs' perceptions of how they viewed relationships with their review team members, but most saw collegial relations as key. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the AE's role of 'moderator', or mediator, between reviewers with conflicting feedback when providing summarized feedback to authors was also mentioned, a role not necessary for reviewers. Overall, there was a heightened sense of awareness among AEs of the "middle management" nature of the work in terms of keeping track administratively of the status of a submission, and interpersonally of building sensitive and supportive relations with reviewers and authors. In preparation for taking on AE duties, most viewed their own previous reviewing experiences as an essential form of apprenticeship as it raised awareness of the basics of manuscript evaluation and made them aware of issues facing reviewers, hence Claudia's comment "I was in their shoes". In terms of status within the whole journal organization, most AEs felt a sense of personal satisfaction of dealing with submissions at the team level, rather than higher status within the journal's hierarchy or in the wider academic field. Finally, there were varied views about AE development which was thought to be of use; however, opinions on such development ranged from a desire for online forms of development, face-to-face meetings for seminars, and sharing correspondence, to stating it would be unnecessary. The opportunity to consult senior editors in problem cases was thought sufficient for some.

As for the practical implications of these findings, the first step is to recognize the role that this questionnaire-based study plays in eliciting and stimulating thought among AEs about their roles and responsibilities. As Callahan (2007) and Garcia-Doval (2007) note, reviewer performance may deteriorate over time due to work pressures and fatigue, a situation which implies too that the quality of the AE's multifarious roles would also suffer over time if support systems are not in place. The form of this support could respond directly to each AE's needs as reported in the responses to this questionnaire, i.e. making senior editorial support available when and if needed. It could also, as advocated, entail the sharing of model correspondence; for those keen to engage in more collaborative development, face-to-face discussions and seminars could be created, but the nature of such formalized forms of development remains open for further discussion.

Of final importance to improvements in editorial practice for the journals under investigation is the dissemination of these findings so that dialogue and analysis can take place between AEs, rather than stay solely within the domain of this research study and these researchers. The access to findings and opportunity to engage in discussion, or to refrain from doing so, is an essential means towards achieving the “empowerment and agency” (Harris, 2003, p. 316) that middle managers in education require. As the experience of reviewing has clearly formed an essential component of AEs’ own apprenticeship, similar opportunities which are distinctive to AE work are called for which meet their desire for either collaborative or individualized development.

In terms of wider relevance and applicability of the findings and discussion in this small study, we naturally wish to avoid generalization to other journal contexts which differ in their editorial process, or those which already engage in internal development. Resonance with our findings and methodological approach is, however, key to positioning the study in the wider field of academic publishing. The divergence in views towards the supervision of submissions and problems of moving up from blind paper reviewing to ‘middle management’ raise issues which require journal management to reflect upon. Specifically, what extent a diversity of views among AEs (or supervising editors, depending on each journal’s terminology) should exist, and whether compliance to standards (of academic writing, use of discourse in correspondence with authors etc) is actually a healthy means for a journal to position itself in the field? Further to this, issues of how AEs should be developed and supported cannot be left without attention as editorial practice can be shaped by previous experience in reviewing and authoring, as well as deeper issues of identity and status within the academic field. In brief, leaving AE practice alone, unmonitored, unresearched, and without encouragement of reflection among AEs themselves, runs the risk of senior editors’ vision of journal purpose, quality and positioning in the field becoming fundamentally detached from the realities of editorial practice.

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Appendix A: AEJ Evaluation Form

Criteria to be Rated	Excellent	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	N/A
1. complete, clear and well organized presentation				
Comments:				
2. significance of the problem				
Comments:				
3. applicability and interest to the field (relevance beyond case presented)				
Comments:				
4. original contribution to open and distance learning				
Comments:				

5. description of the problem within a theoretical framework (where appropriate)				
Comments:				
6. literature review demonstrates a clear relationship to the problem				
Comments:				
7. appropriateness of research design and method				
Comments:				
8. accurate and useful interpretation				
Comments:				
9. sound argument and analysis				
Comments:				
10. conclusion describes implications for education theory, research and/or practice				
Comments:				

Final Recommendation

- ☐ **Accept**
 (the paper is accepted as it is), or the paper should be accepted for this section but there are some potential improvements that the author(s) have the option to make)
- ☐ **Accept with minor revisions**
- ☐ **Resubmit after a major revision**
 (a second round of review will be necessary)
- ☐ **Reject**
 (the paper is not suitable for publication in A-EJ)

Overall comments:

Appendix B: TLJ Evaluation Form

Criteria to be Rated	Excellent	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	N/A
1.Complete, clear and well organized presentation				
Comments:				
2.Significance of the problem				

Comments:

3.Applicability and interest to the field (relevance beyond case presented)				
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Comments:

4.Description of the problem within a theoretical framework				
---	--	--	--	--

Comments:

5.Literature review demonstrates a clear relationship between problem and other relevant literature				
---	--	--	--	--

Comments:

6.Appropriateness of research design and method				
---	--	--	--	--

Comments:

7.Accurate and useful interpretation				
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Comments:

8.Sound argument and analysis				
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Comments:

9.Conclusion describes implications for education theory, research and/or practice				
--	--	--	--	--

Comments:

	YES	NO	INCONSISTENT
10.Does the paper follow APA style?			

Comments:

Final Recommendation

___ **Accept**

(the paper is accepted as it is), or the paper should be accepted but there are some potential improvements that the author(s) have the option to make)

___ **Accept with minor revisions**

___ **Resubmit after a major revision**

(a second round of review will be necessary)

___ **Reject**

(the paper is not suitable for publication in TLJ)

Overall Comments:

Appendix C: Questionnaire to AEs

How long have you been an AE for the journal?

- 1. What do you think has been the most difficult part of your job as an AE?**
- 2. What has been most rewarding for you since becoming an AE?**
- 3. When you moved up to be an AE, what were the biggest changes for you?**
- 4. What do you do when reviewers provide contradictory feedback? (Do you recommend that authors follow one reviewer's feedback more than the other?)**

5. **How do you summarize feedback from two reviewers? (If possible, can you give an old example of how you worded the email to the author below?)**
6. **When you need to give negative feedback to an author, what kind of expressions/words do you use? (Would it be useful perhaps to share ‘standard letters’ or see other AE’s wording?)**
7. **And when you give positive feedback?**
8. **How would you describe your relationship with authors (as a colleague, gate-keeper..)? Are there any experiences with authors you can recall which were particularly positive or negative?**
9. **Having a small team of reviewers involves various responsibilities. How would you describe your responsibilities and relationship with your team’s reviewers?**
10. **Does your own experience as a reviewer help you in any way as an AE? How?**
11. **Within the whole journal organization, how do you see your own status? Is it satisfactory for you?**
12. **We currently encourage mentoring between experienced reviewers and new ones, and also run a ‘reviewer development’ programme for new reviewers. Do you think becoming an AE also requires some form of mentoring or development? If so, what form would it take?**