Sustaining Reviewing Quality: Induction, Mentoring, and Community

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Biodata

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Abstract

With an increase in the number of online English-language journals accompanying the pressures to publish across the fields in English (Curry & Lillis, 2004), journals face the challenge of recruiting more suitably qualified reviewers to give peer review. In light of this trend, senior editors are required to maintain a high quality of feedback from those reviewers. This study has explored how journal reviewing quality has been sustained at the online *Asian EFL Journal,* a relatively new journal in the field of English language teaching which receives more than 80% of its submissions from multilingual scholars. Integral to this process, the journal's senior editors took steps from 2010 to implement a Developmental Program commencing with an Induction Program for all new reviewers with a subsequent Mentoring Program pairing experienced reviewers with new reviewers. Analysis of the Induction Program involving the review of past submissions and comparison with original feedback in a reflective exercise yielded a large volume of data which revealed important insights into the language used by new reviewers. This has signalled to the senior editors both the suitability of new reviewers for their role at

the journal, and acted as a means for intervention when inappropriate language was employed in trial reviews. Upon acceptance as reviewers after induction, the subsequent Mentoring Program too has played an important developmental role for both mentees and mentors. Data from the Induction Program showed instances of constructive discourse which signal potentially good review practice; however, other findings illustrate conservative reviewing habits among both new so-called 'Anglophone' and multilingual reviewers which have necessitated senior editorial intervention before allocation to do real reviewing. Furthermore, some mentoring correspondence revealed conservative review attitudes among mentors had some negative influence upon new reviewers, an issue which led senior editors to consider the selection of appropriate mentors into the program. Conclusions from this study showed that the Developmental Program has operated as an effective means to reveal positive and potentially problematic language use in new reviewer feedback at the pre-reviewing stage. Once real reviewing has started, the Mentoring Program has been valuable in monitoring both new reviewer and mentor review behaviour, and therefore in sustaining review quality in the first important stage of a new reviewer's career with the journal. Important to this Developmental Program of induction and mentoring is the emergence of a community of editorial support among new reviewers, their more experienced peers, and senior editors managing the programs.

Keywords: Reviewing, quality, development, mentoring, sustainability

Introduction

This study investigates the means by which an online journal in the field of English language teaching (ELT) has initiated a program to sustain reviewing quality. As a relatively new journal in its field, *Asian EFL Journal* (*AEJ*) has been in operation since 2002 and currently uses the services of more than 100 volunteer reviewers to evaluate submissions. The journal attracts submissions which are either full Research Articles

(RAs) or more practical Teaching Articles (TAs), all of which undergo double-blind peer review by two reviewers. Currently, more than 80% of submissions are from multilingual, or English as an Additional Language (EAL), scholars working in mostly Asian contexts. Further to this, 12 associate editors supervise submissions and correspond with reviewers and authors directly, sending out the review feedback to the authors. Evaluation forms for both RAs and TAs are used which scaffold reviews so that reviewers focus upon determined criteria (see Appendices). Reviewers are encouraged to provide extensive comments and suggestions for improvement of the manuscripts over several rounds of review.

As the journal now reviews approximately 150 submissions or more per year, the 100 reviewers may be expected to conduct several reviews (and reviews of resubmissions) in that period. RAs are published in quarterly editions and TAs in 8 monthly editions falling in months separate from the quarterlies. The role of reviewers is to evaluate submissions and pass a verdict on the suitability of the manuscript for publication. This screening and review responsibility is supervised by the Associate Editors who correspond with authors directly. Analysis of submissions from 2008 to 2015 (June) reveals that there is an 8.5% acceptance rate, a decline from 32% in 2008. This is due in some part to the fact that the total amount of submissions sent to the journal in all categories of submissions has almost tripled from approximately 250 in 2008 to 726 in 2014. Furthermore, over time, increasingly it has been observed by senior editors that review quality has become a problematic issue among some reviewers; specifically, it has been observed that some showed a propensity to reject most submissions or use harsh language in giving feedback. This cumulated in 2010 in the implementation of a Developmental Program involving an online Induction Program for all new reviewers (NRs) prior to conducting real reviews, and a subsequent Mentoring Program. Discussions at that time centered around the nature of the program and whether it should focus on improving the quality of reviewing by encouraging NRs to reflect upon their feedback style, or set standards to which should be adhered to by means of a training program; as a consequence, in light of literature in the field of

reviewing which will be addressed later, it was decided to adopt a more developmental stance to sustaining quality, rather than strict top-down 'training' following a set standard of review practice.

The study is part of a series of investigations into *AEJ* and its sister journals in the same publishing group which commenced with research into reviewer and editorial perceptions of their roles and responsibilities (Nunn & Adamson, 2007; 2009; Adamson & Nunn, 2012; Adamson & Muller, 2008; 2012), and continued with a study into senior editorial perceptions (Adamson & Fujimoto-Adamson, 2015), and then reader perceptions of the journal's quality, use, and positioning in the field (Adamson & Warrington, 2014). As a response to these findings, this current study into the Developmental Program investigates the language use and reviewing behaviour of NRs at the pre-practice reviewer Induction Program, and then mentoring discourse between them and experienced mentors once engaged in real review practice. The overall objective of the Induction and Mentoring programs is to orientate NRs to reviewing and to sustain review quality by raising awareness about how to give sensitive and constructive peer feedback at the outset of a reviewing career at the journal. Aligned with this objective is the creation of a community, or support network, of peer mentors and senior editors around the NRs. In contrast with many journals which do not operate such programs and therefore only react to harsh language use in review feedback once it occurs, this program is the first set of steps by *AEJ* to counter such issues in the early stages of reviewing.

The Developmental Program

Looking at the Developmental Program in more detail, the Induction Program is a reflective exercise intended to familiarize NRs how to use the evaluation forms and raise awareness of language use in giving review feedback. 9 selected old submissions were placed online at a closed Google Drive site, including a mixture of RAs and TAs accompanied by their original reviewers' feedback and associate editors' verdicts. NRs are asked to select one RA and one TA of their choice, review them, and then reflect

upon how their reviews differ or are similar to the original feedback and verdicts. Completed reviews and reflections are then sent to a senior editor who corresponds with the NR on how the evaluation has been completed and particularly the language used in their reviews. It is stressed that the exercise is not primarily a way to evaluate the NRs' content knowledge, but to develop their review practice.

The Mentoring Program is initiated once NRs are allocated to real reviewing in small teams under an associate editor. NRs are paired with experienced fellow reviewers in the same team with whom first reviews are exchanged before being sent back to an associate editor. This mentoring relationship is a dialogic process which may last a few reviews or longer depending on the mentors' and associate editors' impression of the NRs' review quality, i.e. their ability to use appropriate, constructive feedback language which is neither too harsh, nor over-generous.

The community of peers supporting the NRs can be termed as a 'community of editorial practice', a concept informed by Lave and Wenger's "Community of Practice" (1991). The community itself is a set of relationships between NRs and their mentor, associate editor, and senior editors – three "brokers" (Lillis & Curry, 2006) of review knowledge who see their feedback. Once familiar to reviewing, the mentees have the possibility to themselves mentor other NRs into review practice, thereby creating a new network in which they take leadership in passing on review knowledge.

Research aims

The specific aims of this study are as follows:
1. to identify in the Induction Program reviews, reflection and editor-new reviewer correspondence common and idiosyncratic themes impacting upon reviewing quality,
2. to identify issues in the mentor-mentee correspondence which shape reviewing practice for new reviewers, and
3. to trace common and emerging issues for new reviewers who have completed the Induction Program and been mentored.

Literature review

The literature addressing the development of journal reviewers starts, for the purpose of this study, with a rationale for the investigation of journal staff perceptions and behaviours and is followed by three interlinking sections: firstly, studies on the review process itself and how reviewers learn how to review; secondly, the concept of 'training' journal reviewers; and finally, the skills and competences needed for reviewing.

Rationale

As a rationale for delving into this literature, Uzuner (2008) states that multilingual scholars researching in English in their local academic communities constitute the "main pillar of global scholarship" (p. 250) but struggle to publish due to language barriers and editorial bias against research which does not adhere to the contentious issues of so-called 'center' norms of writing. This is coupled with the "parochialism" (p.255) of editors who situate themselves at the center, either consciously or not, in evaluating studies written in contexts seen as peripheral to their own center norms of relevance. In following Canagarajah's (2003; 2005; 2010) calls for a shift from center to local (periphery) norms of academic writing and evaluation, we argue that this shift can only occur if journal staff (editors, reviewers, proofreaders) become aware of the issues emanating from literature surrounding the journey into English language publishing of multilingual scholars, echoing Flowerdew (2001; 2007; 2008) and McKay (2003), and undergo some form of development in reviewing whose structure raises awareness of non-normative values of judgment when evaluating submissions (Rozycki & Johnson, 2013). Perhaps accompanying this process, it is essential to remind reviewers of the "multi-centric" (Nunn, 2015, iii) nature of authorial voice and positioning when writing for academic publishing purposes, meaning that, eventually, terms and perceptions of where we position ourselves in academic publishing such as 'center' and 'periphery' need to be superseded by language more inclusive, and less stigmatising. For the purpose of this study, we adopt the terms 'Anglophone' and 'multilingual' to differentiate between scholars' linguistic background, and 'center' and 'periphery' to

denote geographical areas, yet recognize the controversy surrounding their use. Ultimately, the process of sensitising reviewers to review practice needs to address issues of competence in academic writing and research. In doing so, an understanding of the multilingual scholar who is "off-networked" (Swales, 1987, p. 43; Belcher, 2007) from English-language resources and lacks access to "brokers" (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 93) of academic literacy requires investigation not only into their sense of "dislocation" (Flowerdew, 2000, p. 131) from supportive graduate school resources, but also into the beliefs and perceptions of the journal staff evaluating their work. This fundamentally is a call for a recalibration of research into the text "trajectories" (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 3) which has focused on multilingual scholars' struggles to publish in English and the reactions of journal editors to that work, not the reasons for the reactions, and has rarely presented solutions to raise awareness of those struggles, with the possible exception of Lillis, Magyar and Robinson-Pant (2010).

Learning how to review

The process by which scholars become journal reviewers is varied. Paltridge's study (2015) reveals much review practice is learned from experience of being reviewed for one's own submissions and little consensus exists on how to review. This can lead to what Walbot (2009) terms as "pitbull" (p. 24) reviewing, the harsh, unsympathetic, and undiplomatic style of giving feedback which is possibly the norm among some graduate school tutors or journal reviewers and editors. Becher and Trowler (1989) note that such aggressive feedback takes the form of "venting of personal preferences or antipathies" (p. 88) in "soft fields" of research such as EFL and Applied Linguistics. This "bloodletting" (Martin, 2008, p. 302) is often justified by a "scholarly culture of criticism" (p. 302) where "falsification takes precedence" (p. 302) over diplomatic and constructive feedback. Once a university position of employment is gained, Lovejoy, Revenson and France (2011) note that reviewing is seen as a "culture of service to the field" (p.1) for which no formal training is given during postgraduate studies and so is assumed to be "self-taught" (p.1), or even acquired through "osmosis" (Callahan, 1997,

p.192). When actually reviewing, this may lead to a situation in which "most reviewers have mistaken ideas of what editors expect from them" (Callahan, 1997, p.192). This suggests that the process of learning how to review is acquired and becomes embedded through random experience, a process similar to the "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975, p. 60) where teachers ignore teacher training pedagogy and revert to teaching how they were taught themselves.

Looking at the process of reviewing a submission, Hames (2007) notes that little research exists as to what considerations reviewers are engaged with when evaluating submissions beyond standard checklists on the basic facets of a study. This is a process which, according to Lamont (2009, p. 201), makes it impossible to identify "consistent and unified" elements of reviewer behaviour, rendering the search for such elements as "utopian" (p. 201). Gould (2009) sees this lack of conformity in reviewer behaviour as indicative of unreliability in peer review, creating "rotten" (p. 239) reviewing, a view which casts fundamental doubt on the validity of peer review as a means to evaluate research (Benos, Bashari, Chaves, Gaggar, Kapoor, LaFrance, Mans, Mayhew, McGowen, Polter, Qadri, Sarfare, Shultz, Splittergerber, Stephenson, Tower, Walton, & Zotov, 2007).

Reviewer training

In terms of the concept of 'training' for peer review, Paltridge (2013, p. 6) advocates an "experiential" pathway which is developmental in nature, rather than a "didactic" one associated with training. This dichotomy runs through the literature in which some (Smith, 2006; Walbot, 2005; Millet, 2006; Rosenbaum, 2005) favour training programs for new reviewers; in contrast, Schroter, Black, Evans, Godlee, Osorio and Smith (2008), Jefferson, Alderson, Wager and Davidoff (2002), Callahan and Tercier (2007) claim that training programs do not improve review quality. The timing of when reviewing skills should be imparted is raised by Walbot (2007), who suggests that postgraduate studies should include lessons on how to review papers in the students'

field. This would supplement postgraduate studies with review expertise and so constitute a valuable component to the students' knowledge of their field.

Whether training how to review takes place upon joining a journal as a reviewer or at postgraduate level, doubts are voiced whether review quality is an enduring quality (Garcia-Doval, 2009). This suggests that over time, some form of retraining, monitoring of reviewer performance or development should be in place at journals to counteract potential deterioration in review quality and to challenge the "pre-existing beliefs" (Nunn & Adamson, 2009, p. 71) that reviewers may harbour about academic writing and research. Adamson (2012) puts forward the idea of mentoring between experienced reviewers and those newly appointed even after some form of initial entry training is given. Whereas training programs for reviewers may typically involve the practice reviewing of previously processed submissions, Adamson (2012) argues mentoring should involve the exchange of review feedback between mentor and mentee on currently submitted papers, rendering the exercise and relationship a sense of immediacy and authenticity. Care should, however, be taken as to the kind of beliefs that mentors impart to mentees as biased views on academic writing and research may be held by even experienced mentor-reviewers. In this respect, Shea (1992) notes the possible incongruence between mentor and mentee when the latter seeks more of a peer mentoring relationship, rather than a hierarchical one in which mentors see their role to make mentees conform to a certain standard of performance (Cullingford, 2002).

Skills and competences in reviewing

The review of literature concerning reviewer training or development leads then to a consideration of what skills or competences are required for reviewing (Calleigh, Shea & Penn, 2001). Foremost here is the assumption that content or field knowledge is the predominant skill; yet, as Rogers, Campbell, Louihala-Salminen, Rentz, and Suchan (2007) and Rentz (2005) indicate, there are "interpersonal and intellectual dimensions" (Rentz, 2005, p. 291) involved in giving feedback to authors. This points to a discourse sensitivity, particularly when identifying shortcomings in a submission (Adamson &

Muller, 2013). It is at times absent, as Lillis and Curry (2010) observe among well-published, 'center'-educated multilingual reviewers when reviewing submissions from multilingual authors, and is evident in "hypercorrection" (p. 164), feedback which is overly-critical of language errors in the paper. Such reviewers have a "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" (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 164), as opposed to the empathy senior editors may expect multilingual scholars to have for fellow multilingual scholars struggling to publish in English (Plickert, Cote & Wellman, 2007). This conservative stance on academic writing reinforces "narrow vocationalism" (Carter, 1995, p. 55) and constitutes a stumbling block to senior editors' desires to expand the boundaries of academic writing genre (Nunn & Adamson, 2007).

Methodology

This study is positioned as an "intrinsic case study" (Stake, 1995) in that its findings are intended as forming an internal evidence base to inform local journal practice at *AEJ*. It is qualitative in nature and on-going as the Developmental Program is still in operation. The Induction Program has to-date gathered data from 49 NRs from the closed online Google Drive site in the form of completed 2 reviews supplemented by 'reflections' on how the NRs' feedback differs to that of the original reviewers (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the Induction Program evaluations forms for RAs and TAs respectively). Email correspondence from approximately 63 messages between NRs and senior editors is also included in the data to illustrate how senior editors react to the discourse used by NRs. Data from the Mentoring Program is in the form of email correspondence collected from NRs (mentees) and their experienced reviewers (mentors). In all, correspondence from 15 mentor-mentee relationships has been gathered and comprises approximately 85 cc'ed messages. Both Induction and Mentoring Program data originates from the period 2010 to the present.

Qualitative analysis has been conducted of the data in both programs by identifying common themes within and across the two data sets. This is fundamentally a data reduction and thematic identification (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in which representative key review feedback and mentoring correspondence is presented as "talk around text" (Lillis, 2008, p. 355) in key extracts, words and expressions. All data used is with the voluntary informed consent of participants whose identities remain anonymous.

Findings & Discussion

We turn firstly to the main findings and discussion emanating from the Induction Program, and then proceed to the Mentoring Program.

Induction program findings

From the findings from 2010, it was noted whether multilingual NRs (M) or Anglophone NRs (A) used language which senior editors regarded as insensitive to authors. In some cases it is indicated that both As and Ms used the same wording. As the objective of this exercise is to recognize both positive and negative discourse use, language is noted when it occurs normally more than once. Occasionally, in the case of negative language use, words and expressions occurring only once are also indicated as they constituted grounds for intervention by senior editors in correspondence after the Induction Program with the NR. Table 1 below represents the key positive language.

Table 1: NR language to authors in positive feedback

Language	A/M	Number of occurrences
"interesting", "of interest"	A/M	43
"good", "fine", "very good"	A/M	38
"satisfactory", "sufficient"	A/M	27
"excellent"	A/M	24
"positive"	A/M	18
"well-structured", "good structure"	A/M	18
"applicable", "application", "applicability"	A/M	17

"should be praised", "praiseworthy"	A/M	11
"addition to the field"	M	10
"coherent", "coherence"	A	9
"encouraging" (findings)	A	8
"persuasive" (argument)	A	5
"probing analysis"	A	4
"critical"	A	3

As can be seen above, both positive language was used by A and M NRs which was noted in later correspondence by senior editors to NRs as being useful, or exemplary, in real reviewing. It is important to note that, although inappropriate language triggered intervention by senior editors, some positive language was possibly an indication that NRs did not identify faults in the submission. As the Developmental Program has tried to avoid the concept of falsification, or error identification alone, of manuscripts, the emphasis in analysis of NR feedback has been placed much more on insensitive negative language. As a safeguard, the subsequent Mentoring Program, as well as associate editor monitoring of real reviewing, is expected to pick up on both over-complimentary and demeaning feedback.

Table 1 reveals encouraging language by both M and A NRs which is general in nature; for example, "interesting, "good", "fine". A NRs tended to employ slightly more complex language; for example, "probing", "persuasive", but no clear pattern emerges in the data.

Turning to negative feedback, it is again to be noted that using negative feedback is not always the grounds for senior editorial intervention. The language shown in table 2 below has, however, led to some diplomatic mention in ensuing correspondence with NRs.

Table 2: NR language to authors in negative feedback:

Language	A/M	Number of occurrences
"nothing interesting" , "completely"	A/M	26

"wordy" , "over-wordy"	A/M	13
"fails to...", "failed in.."	A/M	12
"does not add new knowledge", "nothing new"	M	10
"standard"	M	9
"poor", "inadequate"	M	8
"native", "standard"	M	8
"shallow" , "lacking depth"	M	5
"vague" , "vagueness"	M	2
"The author should learn the basis of paragraph writing and sentence construction"	M	1
"banal"	M	1
"pathetic"	A	1
"low level of English"	A	1
"messy"	A	1
"The author shot himself in the foot"	A	1
"I am assuming the author was not a native English speaker"	A	1

Table 2 illustrates some language deemed inappropriate, or insensitive. Both A and M NRs were seen to use words such as "nothing" and "completely" to state that the manuscript held no value for readers. Expressions such as "fails to" and "failed in" were also regarded as requiring rewording (senior editors advised in such cases to hedge the meaning by using "does not quite achieve"). Of some concern was the use by some M NRs of expressions such as "does not add new knowledge" or "nothing new" for case studies which is particularly contentious as senior editors try to see intrinsic value in even the smallest localized studies. Other causes for intervention were caused by

language use such as "shallow", and "banal" which express extreme unsuitability of the manuscript. Of some interest is the use of the words "native" and "standards" together, implying adherence to center norms of scholarship (Canagarajah, 2005; 2010). A NRs too were also seen to use some strong language at times, though not to the degree found in this data set among M NRs, a slightly surprising finding but one which concurs with observations by Plickert et al. (2007) and Lillis and Curry (2010) of conservative attitudes by M reviewers towards other M scholars' language use. "Pathetic" was used once in reaction to a manuscript's English, as was "low level of English"; additionally, there was one case for intervention in which the A NR mentioned "I am assuming the author was not a native English speaker", a signal of unawareness of multilingual scholars' issues in English as a Lingua Franca use and of center norms embedded in that NR's perceptions of academic language use. Of final note is the use of unfamiliar idioms in giving feedback, as seen in the case of "The author shot himself in the foot" (meaning that the author had unintentionally caused himself a problem). Intervention by senior editors to the A NR requested that they not only avoided confusing idioms, but also "he" or "him" in giving blind peer feedback as it could be offensive to authors wishing to remain anonymous in identity and gender.

After completing the reviews for a RA and a TA, NRs were then asked to reflect on their own reviews in response to three questions (see Appendices 1 and 2): the difficulty in evaluating the paper; how different their reviews were to the original ones; and the verdict as given by the associate editor. The purpose was to raise awareness of their own reviewing style by comparing it to other reviewers' feedback which was intentionally chosen for the contrasts in language and evaluation of content. As the original feedback on the Google Drive site was made available to the NRs from the start of their Induction Program, it may have been the case that NRs viewed the feedback before completing their own reviews, despite requests in the instructions only to view it afterwards. This may have influenced the NRs' feedback.

NR reflections were mostly to note how different the two reviewers' feedback were and how harsh in language and verdict one reviewer had been. This was one purpose for

such a diverse selection of original reviews in that recognition of such severity was hoped to raise awareness of its inappropriateness. Other comments were appreciative of the chance to participate on the Induction Program as it gave insights into how the journal expected NRs to review:

This was a useful process to get acquainted with the journal's benchmarks.

The term 'benchmark' is also used in feedback below on the Mentoring Program. Others alluded to the benefits, not only for NRs, but also for their own scholarly activities:

...an extremely valuable experience...for becoming a better reviewer...and a writer.

Of some note in the reflections were comments which made reference to previous "brokers" of academic writing in their lives, namely university tutors:

I imagine...what comments would my supervisor give?

Finally, as an encouraging sign, the following comment showed how access to previous feedback and reflection may have led to a reconsideration of a NR's verdict:

I might have been too doubtful of the author's abilities to revise.

The final stage of the Induction Program was for senior editors to correspond with NRs after reading their reviews and reflections. This provided the senior editors with the opportunity to 'intervene' by identifying inappropriate language use as outlined in table 2. Naturally, also senior editors looked at the NRs' reviews holistically and gave praise for thorough reviews which used sensitive language. One common piece of advice given was for NRs to address the author directly in the feedback; for example, using 'you', instead of 'the author'. This personalization of feedback acts to make reviewers shift their focus from the manuscript to the author, reminding reviewers that there is a person behind the text (Casanave, 2003; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Special advice was given to make sure NRs gave specific references when requesting authors to

expand on literature, which is particularly important if multilingual scholars do not have access to updated resources (Belcher, 2007). In response to strong language, senior editors frequently asked NRs to be more diplomatic when authors' language and content were deemed as deficient. In an attempt to sensitize NRs to the potential offense which can be caused by terms such as "native" and "non-native", advice was given to avoid these terms as they reinforce center scholarship (Canagarajah, 2003; 2005; 2010; Martin, 2010) and stigmatize the multilingual scholar. Further advice was given to avoid idiomatic language in feedback due to its potential to confuse those unfamiliar with such expressions and therefore defeating the objective of providing clear feedback.

Mentoring findings

After completion of the Induction Program, NRs were appointed as reviewers and paired with a more experienced mentor. Associate editors who select reviewers in their teams to review manuscripts were requested to send a manuscript out to a NR and their mentor so that feedback could be shared between NR and mentors before passing completed reviews back to the associate editor. This was intended as a continuing means for NRs to obtain advice about the feedback on evaluation of the content of the manuscript and the language used to express that feedback. Correspondence was cc'ed to senior editors so that NR development and the mentoring relationship itself could be monitored. The period of time for the mentoring process was not strictly determined at start and was envisaged to last for 2 to 3 reviews. In practice, however, extension of the program was requested by some NRs after negotiation between mentor and mentee. At any time during the Mentoring Program, NRs were encouraged to correspond with the associate editor responsible for the manuscript under review or senior editors for advice. Examples of this correspondence between NR mentees and senior editors are as follows:

I cannot more highly recommend X as a mentor. I know that from my own experience, I have learned a lot from X through this process of sharing reviews and asking each other questions. I can say that she and I have been mentoring each other.

This feedback on the program from a NR illustrates the potential benefit that mentoring holds for both mentee and mentor in that the actual giving of advice raises awareness on the part of the mentor about appropriate working practice (Shea, 1992). Interestingly, the positive experience led one mentor to recommend the NR as a possible future mentor:

Maybe that is the strong point of this mentoring system. About Y (the mentee) specifically, she has a very keen approach to reviewing papers, and she makes valuable observations with each paper that we review. Without hesitation, I believe Y will be an excellent mentor.

Some concern, however, emerged in the following mentee correspondence which appeared to show some miscomprehension about the journal's stance towards 'standards' or norms of reviewing:

The mentoring process is a fantastic way of benchmarking review standards and helping new editors getting used to the system.

This feedback, as with a comment made for the Induction Program, although intended as complimentary towards the programs, implies that the mentor's advice to the NR had adhered to set ideas of the evaluation of academic writing (Carter, 1995; Cullingford, 2002). Senior editors remain resolute against the application of an overarching normative 'standard' in academic writing and research.

Monitoring the mentor-NR correspondence did not reveal identifiable patterns, but rather case by case observations which were pertinent to that particular mentoring

relationship. One series of correspondence illustrated the way in which a mentor should provide both encouraging feedback on a NR's reviewing, and also hedged, diplomatic feedback on some of the same NR's less thorough feedback. The first emphasizes the positive aspects:

Thanks for sharing with me your review comments! I found your review very thorough and well grounded with a lot of suggestive measures to revise and reconstruct the paper submitted. Your comments ... were also full of thoughtful and legitimate critique. I also liked the way you presented your review with fully referenced citations to relevant research studies available to the authors. I believe such a fully-referenced review would help the authors a lot.

The hedged advice to amend, or supplement, the NR's review style to highlight some of the positive aspects of the manuscript is put forward as 'just a suggestion', yet is clear as being more than that:

Well, maybe you could provide some more 'words of encouragement' on your review, so that the authors will not be discouraged from further work on their research ... by acknowledging some of the interesting insights/ observations that the study has attempted to present in the paper. This is just a suggestion, so ignore this if there's none.

The advice by the mentor is, in itself, expressed in language which serves as potential model for the NR when giving feedback to authors, especially in the use of modals (Adamson & Muller, 2013). It is also representative of a mentoring relationship which is less hierarchical in nature as advice is presented as a suggestion, not a norm-conforming directive. Shea (1992) indicates that mentees who prefer a more egalitarian relationship prefer this advice-giving style, yet for NRs positioning themselves as 'juniors' vis a vis a 'senior' mentor, problems may ensue (Adamson, 2012).

Overall, the Mentoring Program's findings cannot be generalized easily, yet from the perspective of case by case development of NRs (and mentors as it transpires) are informative. Care should be taken to correspondence which indicates that the imparting of mentor conservatism and normative values had taken hold in some relationships (Cullingford, 1992) as 'standards' were mentioned as praise for the Mentoring Program despite the journal's stance (Nunn & Adamson, 2007) to de-center review practice away from center scholarship norms (Canagarajah, 2003; 2005; 2010). Positive findings illustrate the potential benefit to be gained from diplomatic, hedged mentor to mentee feedback as it presents NRs with language models. Finally, as is the intention of the Mentoring Program, the relationship between NRs, mentors and senior editors has formed an insightful, and mostly beneficial, small network, or community of (editorial) practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), with mentors and senior editors playing the roles of "brokers" of review practice (Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Conclusions & Implications for editorial practice

Conclusions to this small-scale case study must be carefully considered as being relevant to the specific journal, *AEJ*, to which the findings relate. Methodologically, the study can be seen from a practice-level perspective in terms of how the Developmental Program has been set up and managed. From the perspective of gathering and analyzing data, the multiple, qualitative lenses into Induction and Mentoring programs have drawn some resonance to the literature in the field of academic publishing and the multilingual scholar's struggles to publish. Findings remain, however, of greater local relevance to *AEJ*, yet resonance with them may exist for other non-center, Asian-based journals wishing to sustain review quality among a diverse pool of reviewers. Returning to the research aims of this study, the first was:

1. to identify in the Induction Program reviews, reflection and editor-new reviewer correspondence common and idiosyncratic themes impacting upon reviewing quality.

In this sense, some common themes emerged in the Induction Program data, namely the identification of commonly-occurring feedback vocabulary either shared by new

Anglophone and multilingual reviewers, and some which remained idiosyncratic to individual reviewers of either background. Possibly, key to this identification of language items was language which was insensitive to multilingual scholars, many of whom struggled to achieve competence in academic writing. Both Anglophone and multilingual reviewers were, at times, prone to language use suggesting they were used to review practice – either received or practised – which can be seen as "hypercorrection" (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Other tendencies were use of unfamiliar idioms, and identification of only errors in the manuscript.

The second aim was:

2. to identify issues in the mentor-mentee correspondence which shape reviewing practice for new reviewers.

Findings from mentor-mentee correspondence revealed fewer commonalities in this case, but were nevertheless useful in unveiling examples of sensitive language use which could act as language models for NRs, and also some indication of conservative values imposed upon NRs (Cullingford, 1992). This latter finding suggested that the choice of experienced reviewers as mentors may need to be revisited in future.

The final aim was:

3. to trace common and emerging issues for new reviewers who have completed the Induction Program and been mentored.

Perhaps this aim is subsumed in the previous two; despite this overlap, we suggest here that common and emerging issues can be rethought to consider the underlying potential in the conceptual, and practical, role of the "community of (editorial) practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), or "network" of "brokers" (Lillis & Curry, 2010) that have arisen for NRs. Usual review practice tends to isolate reviewers from the dialogic considerations taking place between senior editors and so fails to develop NRs. Expectations of reviewer competence based on field knowledge run the risk of ignoring language sensitivity, especially in *AEJ*'s case with the high number of submissions from multilingual scholars. The dialogic exchange of views among 'brokers' in the 'community' or 'network' surrounding the NR brings these issues to light for

newcomers to reviewing practice. It is also argued as representing review development for mentors as part of this process of advice-giving (Adamson, 2012). In sum, the overall aim of sustaining reviewing quality through this induction scheme remains, as yet, unfulfilled but nevertheless valuable in its ongoing qualitative and dialogic process. More significantly, the Developmental Program represents an attempt to refocus studies in the field of academic publishing in English on the reviewers, not authors, and offers a practical, yet theory-informed means for 'gatekeepers' to become sensitized to issues surrounding multilingual scholars and academic language use. The dialogic nature of the scheme sees peer discussion, reflection, and 'development' as key concepts towards achieving sustainability of quality, rather than adherence to normative 'standards' of academic language use.

Implications for journal practice from this small-scale study are, firstly, that there should be better linking between the Induction and Mentoring programs. Currently, the findings from a NR's Induction Program are conveyed to associate editors along with information about their research backgrounds. This informs associate editors about the disciplinary knowledge of a NR, as well as how they have reviewed manuscripts on the Induction Program. Possibly, mentors also would benefit from this information.

Secondly, assessing the effectiveness of the Developmental Program based on findings from the Induction and Mentoring programs considers only the first few months of a NR's practice at the journal. This short-term view could be supplemented with assessment in the longer term, for example, through correspondence with associate editors and NRs themselves, and also requesting real reviews to be cc'ed to senior editors which could be compared to those conducted on the Induction Program. The 'community of practice' can be voluntarily extended by the NR if the Mentoring program is continued; however, the benefits of the dialogic nature of the Developmental Program come to a natural close after a few months, meaning, as Garcia-Doval (2007) indicate, that the long-term aim of sustaining reviewing quality may not be achieved.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation form for Research Articles

Part A -- Assessment of Basic Criteria

Please indicate your assessment of each of the criteria by placing an "X" in the appropriate column. Please enter comments specific to particular criterion in the comments row below each criterion.

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:				

Part B -- Final Recommendation

Based on my assessment of the basic criteria in Part A, my recommendation for this manuscript is (indicate your recommendation with an "X"):

___ **Accept**

___ **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 AEJ)

Overall comments:

After finishing your evaluation of this particular submission, spend some time looking through the original feedback given by two editors, and also the verdict given by the associate editor.

Reflections

How difficult was it for you to evaluate this paper? Was it written on a theme within or beyond your specialist knowledge?

How was your review different or similar to the ones you have read? In what ways?

And what do you think of the verdict given? What verdict do you think should have been given?

Thank you for your time in reviewing this paper and reflecting upon it.

Appendix 2: Evaluation form for Teaching Articles

Part A -- Assessment of Basic Criteria

Please indicate your assessment of each of the criteria by placing an "X" in the appropriate column. Please enter comments specific to particular criterion in the comments row below each criterion.

Criteria to be Rated	Excellent	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	N/A
1. complete, clear and well organized presentation				
2. Comments:				
3. statement of the teaching issue, context, participants				
4. Comments:				
5. applicability and interest to the teaching field (relevance beyond case presented)				
6. Comments:				
7. background/literature review links theory and practice or provides a clear rationale of practice				

8. Comments:				
9. relevance and appropriateness of (research design and method), the topic discussed or the materials design/teaching approach proposed				
10. Comments:				
11. powerful and coherent supporting argumentation of the opinion expressed (or accurate analysis/description) and/or useful interpretation of (results/) outcomes from a teaching perspective				
12. Comments:				
13. critical self-reflection on teaching practice (e.g. what was learned, what action taken)				
14. Comments:				
15. recommendations for teaching practice and further investigation				
16. Comments:				
17. appropriateness of formatting and referencing				
Comments:				

Part B -- Final Recommendation

Based on my assessment of the basic criteria in Part A, my recommendation for this manuscript is (indicate your recommendation with an "X"):

___ **Accept**

___ **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 AEJ)

Overall comments:

After finishing your evaluation of this particular submission, spend some time looking through the original feedback given by two editors, and also the verdict given by the associate editor.

<u>Reflections</u>

How difficult was it for you to evaluate this paper? Was it written on a theme within or beyond your specialist knowledge?

How was your review different or similar to the ones you have read? In what ways?

And what do you think of the verdict given? What verdict do you think should have been given?

Thank you for your time in reviewing this paper and reflecting upon it.