Editorial

Donna Berthelsen

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Included in this first issue of the International Journal of Early Childhood (IJEC), for 2015, is a list of the IJEC reviewers who assisted with the review of submitted manuscripts across 2014. I extend my thanks to those individuals who provided high-quality peer reviews on the manuscripts submitted for publication. It is also timely to consider the role of peer reviewers in the processes of publication and especially for IJEC.

In this editorial, I am taking the opportunity to invite IJEC readers to register as peer reviewers for the journal. I will comment on the nature of the peer review process in IJEC and the benefits in participation as a reviewer. Some suggestions are given about how to be an effective reviewer. I hope that these comments will assist current and prospective reviewers to engage in the scholarly processes that are important in building a quality journal.

What is the Review Process at IJEC?

Manuscripts submitted to IJEC are subject to a ‘desktop’ review by the Editor to ensure that the manuscript means the general criteria and scope for publication in IJEC. If the manuscript does not meet reasonable quality standards for publication or the scope for the content of IJEC, then it will be rejected at that point. Feedback will be provided to the author on how the article might be improved in order that the article could be revised and sent to an other journal.

Associate Editors manage the peer review process of manuscripts that are of a satisfactory standard in style and content. Each manuscript is reviewed by at least

D. Berthelsen (✉)
Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia
e-mail: d.berthelsen@qut.edu.au; IJECeditor@qut.edu.au

two reviewers identified from a database of reviewers maintained by IJEC or from the Associate Editor's knowledge of experts in the specific content area. Manuscripts provided to reviewers do not contain author information and reviewer names are not provided to authors. Completed reviews are returned to the IJEC online system. The Associate Editor then makes a recommendation to the Main Editor on the basis of their own evaluation and with consideration of the feedback provided by the reviewers. A decision is made to either accept or reject the manuscript, or request a revision of the manuscript (either a major or minor revision). A recommendation to revise will also detail the key issues that require the authors' consideration in making the revision.

Why Become a Reviewer?

Participation as a peer reviewer for IJEC has personal benefits. It can provide an intellectual challenge and demystify the academic publishing process. It is also a way to contribute to the production and publication of high-quality scholarship in early childhood research. Peer review adds integrity to the publication process. Reviewers learn more about the current research in their field and have the opportunities to mentor other researchers through providing constructive feedback. Reviewers help to shape how and what manuscripts are published. Participation as a peer reviewer provides evidence of scholarly activity and service to the early childhood profession. Such a criterion about professional service is often included in applications for promotion and tenure, as well as providing evidence about work performance in universities and other professional work settings.

What Makes a Good Review?

Reviews that prioritise and organise the concerns that reviewers have about the manuscript assist authors and editors to know what is critical to the development of the manuscript.

Good reviews do the following:

- Provide clear and constructive criticism of the manuscript to the author;
- Are quite specific on any concerns by providing examples from the manuscript;
- Are respectful to the authors.

Reviewers are encouraged to:

- Act as the expert (one reason for the anonymity of the peer review process is that it encourages honest feedback);
- After agreeing to review, stay within the timeline for the review. It is not fair to the authors to delay too long or not to submit a review after agreeing to do so;

- Provide confidential comments to the editor, as necessary, through the online system in which reviews are submitted. Comments to the editor can be made quite specifically aside from the feedback that is directed only to the authors.

Registering as a Reviewer

IJEC depends on reviewer participation. If you are not registered as a reviewer for IJEC register, then you can do so at: <http://www.editorialmanager.com/IJEC/>.

Please supply all relevant information requested and, in particular, identify your areas of expertise in the ‘personal classification’ list of research areas of interest. It is also possible to add other keywords about personal expertise in early childhood research if those interests were not listed in the IJEC list of research classifications.

If you are already registered on the IJEC database as a reviewer or author, you can update your registration information and add detail on your research areas by clicking the ‘Update My Information’ link on the menu bar of the IJEC online site and logging in with your existing user name and password.

Blind peer review is the best system that we currently have to ensure manuscript and journal quality. A thoughtful review can benefit reviewers, editors, and authors. I encourage early childhood researchers to participate in this process for IJEC.