Chapter 12
From Outsider to Insider in Scholarly Publishing

Abstract Misconceptions about the roles of reviewer and editor are commonplace. The work of reviewers and editors frequently is referred to as a "black box"—an allusion to a complex, mechanical device that evidently performs an important function yet remains mysterious and defies explanation. The purpose of Chap. 12 is to establish the indicators of quality in manuscripts. In addition, it supplies readers with a glimpse of the inner workings of manuscript evaluation so that they can use these insights to improve acceptance of their written work. Chapter 12 explains the gatekeeper function of the peer review process and how to become a peer reviewer for various types of manuscripts. In addition, it examines the ethical issues surrounding the treatment of other scholars' work. The chapter concludes with advice on seeking out different editing roles, such as guest editor of an issue of a journal, editor for a journal, editor of a book, or editor for a series.

Early in my higher education teaching career, I had a call from the Dean's secretary to arrange a meeting. He had received information about a grant project at Ohio State University for recently hired faculty members who were women and minorities. Applicants were required to fill out a form and submit two manuscripts; one that had been published and one that was a work-in-progress. The professors selected would have all expenses paid to attend a full week of training on writing for professional publication during the fall. In January, they were obligated to return for a 3-day follow up with two polished pieces of writing in hand—one journal article and one grant proposal. Nearly 40 years later, three things about that experience stand out in my mind. The first was a one-page document distributed to the group; it revealed all of the changes that an editor had made to an author's opening paragraph for a journal article. The second memorable experience was a panel discussion with four journal editors; I wrote down—and still recall—some of their comments, such as Lester Mann's fundamental criteria for a publishable manuscript: "Is it new? Is it true? Is it important?" The third enduring aspect of participation was finding a collaborator (Bromley, 2009); she was a published author and reviewed my work with a kindly, yet critical eye. This experience still speaks to the supports that academic authors need to make the transition from outsider to insider in the world of scholarly publishing: constructive criticism of written work, expert advice, and helpful examples.

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Yet even with such supports in place, there are intermediaries who will determine the fate of each manuscript submitted; namely, peer reviewers and editors. These experts are neither friends nor foes. Rather, they are charged with the responsibility of appraising the quality of works submitted for publication and determining if the work is a good fit with the outlet.

This chapter begins with the defining characteristics of quality in publications. Next, it addresses what is widely regarded as the cornerstone of academic publishing: peer review. Then it describes the process of rendering decisions about manuscripts and the author's role in responding to those decisions. Next, it advises authors on how to interact more successfully with editors and how to become reviewers and editors themselves. The chapter concludes with ethical issues in academic publishing.

Indicators of Quality in Publications

Peer reviewers and editors perform what is generally referred to as a "gatekeeping" role. This means that they apply standards of quality to manuscripts and render decisions about what meets the criteria for inclusion in a journal or book. Just as a real estate agent advocates for the seller, peer reviewers and editors advocate for the reader and the publication. Their primary concerns are to the field, the publication itself, and its readership. So, even though editors rely on the contributions of authors to generate a high-quality publication, their first obligation is to maintain the quality of the outlet. Complete the activity in Activity 12.1 as a way to begin the discussion of quality control.

Activity 12.1: Quality Criteria

This task will help you to take a step back from the emotionally-charged situation of having a manuscript rejected. Imagine that you are invited to serve as a judge in a contest. The purpose of the competition is to evaluate office chairs designed by various manufacturers. Think about the criteria that you would use to award first, second, and third prize to a large assortment of chairs. Make a list of your criteria.

Did your list include such features as the quality of the materials? Durability? Comfort and ergonomics? Adherence to contest rules? Assembly/joinery? Beauty? Each of these has a corollary in manuscripts. For instance, the quality of materials is akin to the content of a manuscript, durability is the timelessness of the message, comfort/ergonomics is the match with the audience, adherence to rules is following the guidelines for contributors, assembly/joinery refers to how the manuscript is organized, and beauty is comparable to the aesthetic features of the writing such as flow, precision with words, and ability to engage the reader.

If you actually were judging the relative merits of chairs, the sponsors of the event would no doubt provide some criteria and the process might differ from one situation to another. The same holds true where judgments of manuscripts are concerned—the quality of the publisher affects the rigor of the review. Figure 12.1 is an

Fig. 12.1 Indicators of quality in scholarly journals (Note: Based on Wellington & Torgerson, 2005)

overview of the quality indicators of scholarly journals. The criteria for scholarly books are much the same.

Basically, there are two types of journals that may be considered as possible outlets for articles: peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed (Hames, 2007). A peer-reviewed journal has independent reviewers who critique the work and the editor renders the final decision. For non-peer-reviewed outlets, the editor alone decides or editorial staff members meet and make the decision together.

Online Tool
Read "How to Choose a Journal: Scientific and Practical Considerations" for sage advice on selecting a suitable outlet for your work (Babor, Moirsano, Stenius, Winstanley, & O'Reilly) at http://www.parint.org/isajewebsite/bookimages/isaje_2nd_edition_chapter2.pdf.

Many times, when faculty members submit evidence that they have published a journal article, they will be asked questions about the outlets so that a university-wide committee can gauge the status of the journal. Some common questions are:

1. *Was the manuscript peer reviewed*? In terms of relative prestige, the lowest standard would be no peer review, a moderate level would be peer review that is not anonymous, and the highest level would be anonymous (also referred to as "blind" review). Anonymous peer review is an effort to make the review process more objective and judge the work on its merits rather than the author's name recognition or the status of the institution where he or she is employed. Thus, if

a senior professor at a prestigious institution submits a manuscript that does little to advance thinking in the field and a doctoral candidate at a less well-known university submits a manuscript that represents a stride forward, it would be possible for the latter to get published. This is not to say that bias cannot occur, only that anonymous peer review is intended to prevent favoritism and cronyism. To protect confidentiality, authors will be directed to leave any identifying information out of the manuscript when it is submitted. This means that the author's name should not appear as a header on each page. If the research happens to have been conducted at their own institution, this too would be concealed—for example, referring to the institution as a "Midwestern state university with approximately 12,000 students". Anonymity also extends to a reference to the author's previously published work cited in the manuscript. So, in the reference list, instead of providing all of the details, it would read instead, for example: (Author, 2017).

2. *What is the acceptance rate of the journal*? Scholarly journals rely on unsolicited manuscripts. Unsolicited means that no one asked the author to write the article. The authors are not on staff, nor are they scholars who were invited to submit their work. The most competitive journals in a field often have very low acceptance rates of less than 10 %. Less prestigious publications tend to have higher acceptance rates of 20–30 %. Usually, this information is published in a directory of publishing opportunities in a given field (typically found in the reference section of a university library). Occasionally, authors will compile some of these statistics by surveying the editors of a list of journals in a field and writing a journal article about publication outlets in a particular field (e.g., Amodei, Myers, Onchwari, Jalongo, & Gargiulo, 2013). Acceptance rates may be posted on the publisher's website as well. If all else fails, e-mail the editor for this information.
3. *What is the journal's impact factor*? It can be difficult for a university-wide tenure, evaluation, and promotion committee to assess the relative merits of the work produced by scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds. Many times, the problem is like the proverbial "comparing apples to oranges" when one professor's musical composition is ranked alongside another professor's quantitative research article in engineering. The Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) has attempted to quantify the quality of journals through a metric referred to as the journal's impact factor. First of all, journal editors and publishers had to apply to be admitted to the group and verify that they used a rigorous and anonymous peer review system. Then, ISI produced statistics on the average number of times a journal's articles were cited by authors publishing in the other journals that belonged to the group during a 2-year period (Blyth et al., 2010). The ISI includes approximately 11,000 different publications. Another way of estimating citation counts uses Google Scholar (Hodge & Lacasse, 2011). Citation counting systems are not without controversy (Cronin & Sugimoto, 2014). For instance, it has been argued that the most enduring, high-quality manuscripts that become seminal works in the field would go unrecognized, given

Table 12.1 Limitations of citation counts

Articles are sometimes cited because they are controversial or even because they are being criticized
Only citations in other journals are counted, so citations of work in books would go unrecognized
Other researchers may fail to grasp the importance of a work or part of a work that turns out to be highly influential later on
There is a bias towards citing articles that are more readily accessible through major search engines
Works from one's own country or research group are more likely to be cited, so there is a bias in favor of journals published in English and the United States
Some fields of study generate more citations than others, irrespective of how important they are
Citation of the work may be a reflection of its policy or practical implications rather than its value as scholarship; in other words, a work may be cited frequently because it is consistent with prevailing opinions

Adapted from West & Stenius (2009)

the 2-year time window. Table 12.1 is a summary of reasons why citation counts alone can be misleading.

The Joint Committee of Quantitative Assessment of Research (Panaretos & Malesios, 2008) went so far as to say "Using the impact factor alone to judge a journal is like using weight alone to judge a person's health" (p. 2). Nevertheless, a high impact factor does tend to impress.

In order to stay in existence, what is published needs to fill a niche, have an audience, and—even for nonprofit organizations—be fiscally supportable. As Wang (2007) notes, "the competition among periodicals and the ever emerging new ideas compel every journal toward constant innovations" (p. 160). Any submission that does not fulfill these goals is apt to be rejected.

Quality Control Measures During Manuscript Submission

The great majority of respected publications use an online manuscript management system. This means that, when authors submit their work, a software program guides them through the process. When submitting an article to a scholarly journal, one must adhere to the guidelines set forth from the journal in regards to citations, page limits, and file inclusions (Heyman & Cronin, 2005). Be sure to consult the guidelines, or progressing through the system will be arduous or even come to an abrupt halt. For example, if keywords are required for indexing purposes, you'll need to stop and supply them. If a 200 word abstract is required and yours is 247 words, the manuscript management software will prevent you from continuing until that is corrected. When a publisher uses an anonymous peer review process, it is very important to put your identifying information on the cover sheet only. Be

certain to handle tables, figures, charts, graphs, or photographs as directed; often, they are submitted as separate files rather than embedded in the manuscript.

Authors will find that some of the questions have to do with ethical issues and legal considerations. For example, authors are asked to verify that the work is original, that it is not under consideration by another publisher, to disclose any possible conflict of interest caused by external funding, and to warrant that they have obtained permission to use copyrighted material or model releases for photographs. These days, many manuscripts are converted to a portable document format (pdf) using Adobe—this often occurs when the manuscript is first submitted via electronic means. This creates a uniform, professional look to the work with all of the necessary elements in place, such as the abstract, key words, and so forth. Ordinarily, the author has to review the preliminary pdf and approve it before the review process can commence. Be certain to keep your user name, password, and the number assigned to your manuscript so that you can access it readily when the nearly inevitable revisions are requested. One exceptionally helpful way of glimpsing the inner workings of the publisher is to volunteer to be a peer reviewer of others' manuscripts.

Serving as a Peer Reviewer

The concept of peer review is over 400 years old; it originated as a way to document scientific discoveries by having an independent third party record the inventor's name and the date. The practice of having other professionals review manuscripts independently prior to publishing them continues as a standard practice across the disciplines (Godlee & Jefferson, 2003; Solomon, 2007). They are referred to as peers because they are considered to be sufficiently knowledgeable to assess the quality of work and its contribution. As it applies to the evaluation of manuscripts, the goal of peer review is for the reviewers to evaluate the quality of the work and its suitability for the specific outlet/audience. After the peer review process is complete, it is up to the editor to "review the reviews" and render an editorial decision (Murray & Raths, 1996).

Identifying Reviewers

Who are these people called peer reviewers? Usually, they are university faculty members with specialized expertise and interest in the topic of the manuscript. For research manuscripts, they may be selected more as experts on the methods (e.g., factor analysis, survey research) than on the subject matter per se.

The editor typically identifies possible reviewers using the journal's database of published authors. To illustrate, if an author submits an observational study on teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to university students in Taiwan, the

editor might select one reviewer who is knowledgeable about EFL, another with expertise on observational research, and still another familiar with the context and culture. Sometimes, a manuscript comes in and a search of the journal data base yields no one with the requisite expertise who is available to review. When this occurs, the editor typically will search key words from the manuscript in recent publications outside the specific journal to locate scholars with expertise in the field who are willing to conduct the review.

Reviewers are excluded from reviewing manuscripts if they have:

- manuscripts assigned to them currently or completed a review very recently
- an apparent connection to the authors (e.g., former co-authors, departmental colleagues, dissertation chairperson)
- a conflict of interest with the authors or a vested interest in the success or failure of the publication
- provided cursory, unhelpful reviews in the past (e.g., "I enjoyed reading this article very much. I recommend that it be published.")
- been hypercritical of others' work and provided little useful feedback

Activity 12.2 How to Get Started Reviewing

If you aspire to becoming a member of an editorial board, there are several strategies to consider. They include: (1) attend the open meetings of professional organizations where the publications program is discussed, (2) submit your vita and a letter to the editor volunteering to serve as a reviewer, (3) talk to book sales representatives about reviewing (commercial publishers sometimes pay a small honorarium), (4) give your business card to book and journal editors at conferences and contact them afterwards, and (5) scan the conference program for sessions on writing for publication to network with publishers/editors.

The Reviewer's Role

The integrity of the review process and the overall quality of a scholarly publication relies to a considerable extent on the expertise, ethics, and insights of professional peers in the field. As reviewers read a manuscript, they are expected to evaluate aspects of written work that are summarized in Table 12.2.

Online Tool

Check to see if your institution has a site license with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) http://www.citiprogram.org. If so, complete the Peer Review module on ethics in reviewing other scholars' work.

Table 12.2 The reviewer's role

So what? Consider the overall potential contribution of the work—Does the manuscript advance thinking in the field? Is there an element of originality? What is the quality of thinking behind the manuscript?
For whom? Would the subject matter of the manuscript hold appeal for the readership of the publication? Is it written in a way that is accessible to that audience?
Not so. Identify errors of fact or assertions that can be challenged—what is the author's evidence? Are there contradictions, misconceptions, or flaws in the reasoning? If so, point them out to spare the author(s) embarrassment
Say what? Point out areas in the manuscript that are confusing—Ask the author to say it more clearly and, if you have an idea about how to accomplish this, say so
What else? Suggest additional, relevant sources of information—Are there any key sources that the author may have overlooked and that you might recommend?
More or less? Are there concepts that require further elaboration, a concrete example, or more support from the research? Conversely, are there places where the manuscript bogs down and needs to be cut or condensed?
Well said. Does the writing flow? Is it understandable, readable, engaging, well organized and carefully crafted? Does it exemplify high-quality scholarly discourse?
Check again. Although the work will be copyedited by professionals, note if there are mechanical errors and referencing style mistakes. Generally speaking, what category of errors has been committed (e.g., errors in the reference list, formatting of tables, use of headings)?

Misconceptions About Anonymous Peer Review

In the absence of direct experience with publishing, authors frequently have expectations that are at odds with the process. In a focus group study of doctoral students, candidates, and program graduates in three different countries, their ideas about writing for publication became more accurate and realistic as they progressed through their programs and worked with their faculty mentors (Jalongo, Ebbeck, & Boyer, 2014). Initially, however, the following misconceptions were commonplace.

Misconception 1: *Reviewers should arrive at consensus*. Many a doctoral candidate has grumbled that that their committee members did not give the same advice on their dissertation chapters. First of all, they chose to comment on different things—what one person said nothing at all about was the basis for a lengthy comment from someone else. At times, their recommendations even seemed to be contradictory and had to be resolved to the satisfaction of all. Negotiating these changes requires the student to first find out how wedded each person is to those recommendations. Expect that experiences such as these are a rehearsal for what is to come when manuscripts are submitted to publishers. For example, it often happens that, with three reviewers, one will recommend acceptance, one will recommend major revisions, and a third will reject it. Based on more than 20 years of experience editing a scholarly journal, mixed reviews often are a response to less-than-clear explanations on the part of the author(s). Stated plainly, a confusing manuscript generates confusing advice. Under these circumstances, it is up to the editor to decide what to do. If the journal has many articles awaiting publication and/or other manuscripts on the general topic, the work probably will be rejected. It will take too much of the editor's and reviewers' time. If the journal has space available and/or the topic is

important and underrepresented in the publication, the editor may deem it worth the effort to revise and resubmit.

Misconception 2: *Praise is the purpose of review*. As newcomers to the world of text book publishing, two co-authors eagerly awaited the response of the four reviewers to their book proposal and two sample chapters. One reviewer was enthusiastic and recommended few changes, two felt that it had promise but needed revision, and the fourth did not support publication of the work. When the authors discussed the reviews, they considered the very positive review to be the "good" one yet, during a conference call with their editor, she said, "Reviewer 1 was not at all helpful in improving the work; we won't use her again." Bear in mind that the purpose of review is to strengthen the work. Expect that revisions will be required.

Novices frequently base their expectations for manuscript review on their experiences as students writing papers for classes. As successful doctoral students, they are accustomed to getting an "A" grade on their papers, so they anticipate comparable feedback on a manuscript submitted for publication. During on our combined nearly sixty decades of reviewing and editing, this has happened just a few times. Revisions are almost always required prior to acceptance, and in many cases, a final decision cannot be reached until the revised version has been reassessed. Therefore, the way in which authors respond to the reports of reviewers and to the editor can have a major influence upon the outcome. If editors invite resubmission, it means they expect to receive the manuscript back again by the deadline specified. Still, the majority of scholars withdraw a manuscript when they get recommendations for revision.

Misconception 3: *Reviewers are coaches*. Although dissertation committee members give direction, reviewers of manuscripts submitted for publication are, technically speaking, under no obligation to direct the writer in how to improve a manuscript when it has been rejected. Some may do this, in the spirit of colleagueship, but rejections typically are handled with a form letter. What reviewers are expected to do is: critique the work, assess its suitability for the outlet, and make a recommendation about publication. If the manuscript has potential, reviewers often will do such things as making suggestions about the organization of the work, identifying some particularly relevant research that has been overlooked, ask for clarification, or recommend additions and deletions to the manuscript. Usually reviewers are they are referring to a scoring sheet that includes criteria such as:

- Suitability for the audience
- Significance of research
- Quality of research
- Quality of presentation
- Implications for practice

The purpose of peer review definitely is not for others to "fix up" your manuscript for you. Reviewers will quickly lose patience and get irritated if an author submits a work that displays little familiarity with the outlet, is not well written, fails to conform to the guidelines, and contains numerous errors and it will be rejected. Seriously flawed manuscripts will be returned with a letter that wishes you success in locating a more suitable outlet for your work.

Table 12.3 Steps in anonymous peer review

1. Editors develop a reviewer database
2. Authors submit manuscripts to the journal
3. Editor(s) make initial assessment to determine if paper is suitable for the journal and if peer review is warranted
4. Editor(s) select reviewers with specialized expertise related to the manuscript and invite them to review
5. Editor(s) monitor the timeliness of peer review and send reminders or invite new reviewers if necessary
6. Reviewers submit their evaluations of the manuscript to the editor
7. The editor reads the reviews, compiles the comments into a letter, makes a decision and communicates that decision to the author(s)
8. Authors revise the submissions and return to editor by the deadline specified
9. Editor decides if a second round of reviews is necessary; ***if so***, ***back to step 4***
10. After a manuscript is accepted, copy editing occurs and the proofs are sent to the author(s)
11. Corrected proofs are returned to the editorial office by the deadline specified
12. Accepted manuscripts may be posted online while awaiting publication in hard copy

Source: Adapted from Stolerman (2009)

Rendering Decisions About Manuscripts

There are many different stages at which peer review can occur in an academic career. It probably has occurred in some college courses when the professor required classmate peers to assess one another's papers. It definitely will occur during the dissertation writing process when different committee members make various recommendations for improvement. It also will occur in a more formal way when manuscripts of various types—conference proposals, journal articles, grants, book chapters, and books—are submitted for review. Table 12.3 is an overview of the anonymous peer review process used by many journal editors.

Responding to Peer Review

During a professional development session for new faculty members on writing for publication, two professors became acquainted and agreed to support one another's writing efforts by reading and critiquing one another's manuscripts. As one of them arrived at the appointed time in the other's office, he said, "I realized, as I was walking over, that my hands were actually shaking. I can't believe I'm this nervous about sharing what I've written with you. For some reason, it makes me feel so vulnerable, as if it were me being judged rather than the words I've put on paper." This candid comment captures many of the feelings associated with subjecting work to peer review. Negative reviews can wound the ego, hurt feelings, and make those desperate to get published even more so. What are some more productive ways to respond to less-than-glowing reports on a manuscript over which you have labored long and hard?

As a start, understand the range of editorial decisions rendered on manuscripts and appropriate responses to them in Table 12.4.

Revising a Manuscript

What if someone told you that there was a way to increase your chances of publication success by 60–70 %? Actually, there is. Henson (2007) found that, when authors followed through with a revise and resubmit editorial decision, 60–70 % of the revised manuscripts were published. So, the first step is to realize that:

> An invitation to resubmit is not a half-hearted and cowardly way of saying the work is unpublishable, but rather an implicit suggestion that the editor remains interested in the paper and that it is likely to be accepted if the author is responsive to the questions and recommendations of the reviewers. In such cases, it is nearly always worth resubmitting unless there is some clear and unavoidable requirement with which you cannot possibly comply. (Stolerman, 2009, p. 131)

Another important aspect of revising manuscripts has to do with attitude. Two professors who had written a scholarly book found a home for it with Jossey-Bass. After the book was the reviews were in, they scheduled a telephone call to discuss the anonymous peer reviewers' comments before their conference call with the editor. The conversation went along the lines of, "Reviewer One suggested that we add a section to clarify Chap. 5; that should be easy enough to do." and "Reviewer Two made some good points about the organization; maybe we should switch the order of the chapters as recommended." When the conversation turned to the third and final review, there was a pause in the conversation and one of the authors said, "Reviewer three? I think that this person knows more about our topic than we do." to which the co-author added, "and it was so beautifully written that I even started wondering if it would be possible for the editor to invite Reviewer 3 to write a Foreword for us." Notice that, in this situation, the authors accepted recommendations for improvement in the same spirit of colleagueship that they were given. They did not insist that the reviewers were wrong, whine about the time it would take to revise, or abandon the project.

Still, the challenges of the revision process are numerous (Moos & Hawkins, 2009). Having the support of a writing mentor or trusted colleague can be very helpful in navigating those changes. As one doctoral candidate explained:

> I submitted a book chapter with another colleague and when it came back [from the reviewers], there was a lot of criticism on different aspects of it. And it was nice because I was with the co-author at the time and [we] sat together and went through each remark and decided what remark we would take and revise and what remarks we felt were not in the best interest of the piece…You have to be humble. And take constructive criticism and really use that criticism of others. And I think that over time—at first it's very hard to do—but over time it really makes you a better writer taking points of views of others, accepting constructive criticisms very gracefully moving on from there. (Jalongo, 2013b, p. 73)

When manuscripts undergo a major transformation, they might be e sent out for review again, adding another several months to rendering an editorial decision.

Table 12.4 The range of editorial decisions

Decision	Explanation	Examples
Reject without review	This means that the work is a poor match for the outlet or clearly does not meet quality standards. The editor has screened it and will not waste the volunteer reviewers' time by asking them to evaluate it	A student submits an entire master's thesis as a journal article
		The journal's audience consists of researchers but the article is written for laypersons
		The manuscript contains so many errors or is so poorly written that it cannot be salvaged
Reject and recommend another outlet	The manuscript looks promising, but it does not meet current publication needs of the outlet. Still, the editor is impressed by the manuscript and takes the time to suggest an alternative place of publication	The editor cannot use it because the topic was (or will be) treated extensively already
		An article that is better suited for a journal in psycholinguistics is sent to a publication for language arts teachers
Reject after review	The manuscript has been reviewed and the reviewers did not recommend publication	The manuscript does not make a significant contribution in the estimation of the reviewers
		There are some major conceptual flaws in the work
Revise before review	The manuscript shows some signs of promise but cannot be sent out to reviewers without first being rewritten or formatted differently	The manuscript is nearly double the recommended page length
		The manuscript is not in the required format (e.g., APA 6th edition) or is incomplete (e.g., no abstract and key words)
Major revisions	The manuscript has promise but the reviewers have recommended substantial revision; the work may be sent out for review again. The author will need to submit a detailed, point-by-point explanation of how each revision was addressed	Reviewers question the procedures or analysis
		Reviewers find the organization difficult to follow
		Reviewers suggest the addition of a major piece, such as a conceptual framework
Minor revisions	The manuscript is nearly publishable; publication is contingent on the author making minor revisions that will require a modest time investment	The manuscript is of high quality; however, there are some referencing style errors that need to be corrected
		The manuscript title or abstract needs to be revised
		Some portion of the manuscript still needs refinement (e.g., the introduction, implications, discussion, or conclusion)
Accept	The manuscript is nearly ready to publish in its current form; the very minor revisions necessary can be handled during the production process	The manuscript has been carefully prepared and earned enthusiastic reviews

Table 12.5 is an example of an author's response to recommendations for major revisions.

As Table 12.5 illustrates, authors definitely should not resubmit the manuscript with a quick note that reads "I made all of the changes". You need to respond to each and every comment from reviewers and demonstrate that you complied with their

Table 12.5 Example of author response to major revisions

Reviewers' comments	Author response
Overall, you did an excellent job of explaining the rationale for your study, the need for research with this specific population, and the implications of the research	*Thank you*
This manuscript has potential but it would require significant revision to be publishable. The study holds great interest for the readership of the journal; therefore, we are requesting that you make the recommended revisions and resubmit your manuscript. Overall, the tone of the piece overall sounds like an educational psychology journal publication. Remember that your audience for this publication includes practitioners as well as researchers. Please revise accordingly	*Expanded, reduced jargon, defined key terminology, and revised accordingly*
The literature review seemed to be rather narrow; there is much more out there on this topic	*The review was expanded*
We require all authors to explain how their research was reviewed by an external group to ensure the ethical treatment of human subjects	*Included in methods and procedures, p. 11*
Page 4, line 33- provide more background information about the program at this point. You should explain it for those who are not familiar with this body of literature and cite some sources where they can build background knowledge. Consider also that the readership of the journal is international; at times you seem to be addressing a U.S. audience only	*Revised and added some citations on the subject matter from other countries*
Page 5, line 24- you mention a subscale of the measure without explaining it	
Page 5	*Completed; this information now appears at the top of page 6*
Line 4- What criteria made the participants eligible to attend the program?	
Line 21- Provide the federal statistic that makes participants eligible for services	
Page 5	*This was revised and explained*
When you discuss the assignment to groups, you should be more explicit as to how participants were selected for the intervention group	
Why did you choose to report the median rather than the mean statistic? Were there outliers in your data that made this necessary?	
You make no mention in the text of Tables 1 or 2. Each table should be referenced in the body of the paper. You reiterate too much of what already appears in Table 2 in the body of the paper. It would be preferable to mention the major finding and then state: "Refer to Table 2". APA Style requires you to "call out" each table, figure, chart, or graph in text	*Done*

(continued)

Table 12.5 (continued)

Reviewers' comments	Author response
Page 7	*This material was rearranged into the sequence as suggested*
On the bottom of the page you mention two assessment tools; however, neither of these measures had been mentioned previously. The first discussion of them is on the next page. You should write their titles out in full before presenting the acronyms, as well as explain what they used for (briefly). Later, on page 10, you discuss the measurement tools. This is more appropriately placed before the procedure section	
The written schedule of interventions mentioned under treatment fidelity should be provided. Perhaps this could be added in an appendix	*The article now has a brief appendix*
Page 15 and 16	*Thank you for noting this discrepancy; it has been corrected*
You say that the outcome assessment was only used within the intervention group; however, on page 16 you note that it was used to collect data from the control group	
The method section should be reorganized to improve clarity. The measures and procedures are not completely clear. I had to flip back and forth between the pages to get a clear understanding of what measures were used and how the study was carried out	*This section has been sequenced more carefully; see pp 16–17*
Now looking at Table 1, there is such a large discrepancy in the makeup of the control and experimental groups, how did you handle this statistically so the groups could be compared?	*This is now explained*
According to APA style, "person first" language is required. The label should not define the person. So, it would be "participants from low-income backgrounds" rather than "low-income participants"	*Revised*

requests. If there is a revision that you cannot accept, you need to say so—and supply a compelling reason for that decision. Many times, authors will disregard recommendations for improvement based on the fact that acting upon them will be too much work. It is better to request more time to revise than to neglect to revise. Actually, you can save a major slowdown by assiduously attending to the suggestions from all of the reviewer because the editor might decide to forego a second round of peer reviews. In most cases, round two of reviews adds another 4 months to the process. You also have built credibility with the editor by doing what was requested as well as saving everyone time and effort. In my experience, it is invariably a bad sign when the recommendation is for major revisions and an author submits a revised manuscript within the hour. It is best to follow the advice of German philosopher Goethe: "Do not hurry, do not wait". When it comes to major revisions, authors would do well to neither procrastinate nor immediately dash off a response. Rather, they should develop a clear, thorough, and systematic plan that addresses the reviewers' comments and share it with the editor.

Interacting with Editors

When corresponding with editors, authors sometimes neglect to be professional and to proofread. Mistakes in an e-mail to the editor do not inspire confidence in any manuscript this particular author might submit. The tone of the correspondence should be professional and not overly familiar. When you write to an editor, use his or her name—just as you would in any business correspondence. When it comes to manuscript submission, authors need to study the journal's guidelines or the book publisher's requirements just as carefully as a responsible student would review the syllabus for a graduate-level course. Far too much of an editor's time is spent responding to authors who do not bother to learn the first thing about the publication and its requirements. Neglecting to do this borders on insult to editors who are committed to the publications that they represent.

One helpful tool for authors is the letter of inquiry. It is a short, business-like e-mail that:

- Provides a descriptive title for a completed manuscript
- Very briefly explains its purpose (this can be pulled out of the pronouncement paragraph)
- Reflects familiarity with the intended outlet and its audience
- Verifies that the manuscript is not currently under review with any other publisher
- Affirms that the work is original

The advantage of submitting such a letter is that it helps authors to gauge the editor's interest in the work prior to entering into the lengthy process of peer review. However, be sure to check the guidelines for submission because not all editors welcome letters of inquiry.

In publishing endeavors, trust is built when people demonstrate their commitment to improving the quality of the work. Signs of a hurried response, resistance to investing effort to improve the work, and indignant displays of ego tend to erode the editor's confidence in an author. Some actual examples of this are:

> Editor: "One suggestion from the reviewers was that you revisit the title. As it currently stands, it reads more like a book or an encyclopedia title. It gives no hint that it was a study and leaves the reader expecting a more practical article."
>
> E-mail from author: "We didn't change the title because we can't think of a better one. Can you suggest a new title for us?"

The editor cannot be expected to do authors' homework for them. or to deviate from the policies that govern the review of manuscripts. They also cannot afford to invest additional time in work that was submitted well before it was ready or to deviate from policies that govern the review of manuscripts:

> E-mail from author: "After reading the reviews, I know that I can revise the manuscript and improve it. Would you be willing to give me another chance?"
>
> Editor: "Unless it is an actual error, decisions on manuscripts are final. If, in the estimation of the reviewers and editors, the work does not meet our publication needs and is rejected, then there is no recourse for the author other than to pursue a different publication outlet".

Disregarding the reviews and engaging in arguments with the editor is not a way to reverse a decision. The best approach is to build your credibility by accepting criticism, striving to improve your work, meeting deadlines, and interacting with the editor as you would a respected colleague. The editor has to balance responsibility to: (1) the sponsor/publisher/ organization, (2) the profession, (3) the readership, (4) the peer reviewers, and (5) the authors.

While it is to be expected that authors care about their work, believe in what they have written, and are the major stakeholders when a manuscript is reviewed, that is no reason for huffy displays of ego and defensiveness. Bear in mind that the editor has the final say, even after the reviews come in, so it isn't a simply tabulating the reviewers' votes or calculating a score on an evaluation scale completed by reviewers. Some authors seem to think that they can somehow circumvent the revision process and then become indignant when their work is not accepted for publication. For example, an author indicated that he was "outraged" when a contract was not offered to him. But no amount of ire was going to bully the editor into disregarding three very negative reviews of the manuscript by respected scholars in the field.

When you consider that a typical journal editor gets manuscripts submitted on a daily basis, every day of the year and at any hour of the day, it helps to explain why editors are so selective. This is not to suggest, however, that the editor is always right. The changes that they suggest or make may change the meaning of the work in ways that are unacceptable to the author. Furthermore, an editor can be unreceptive to a new idea at one point, only to see things differently later on. The best that editors can do is to be professional, respectful, and place faith in the team of peer reviewers they have assembled.

Evaluating Other Scholars' Work

While meeting with a group of doctoral students, a professor suggested that, if they were serious about wanting to publish, they would do well to serve as reviewers of manuscripts submitted to the journals in their areas of specialization. One student wondered aloud, "But, isn't that sort of 'the blind leading the blind'? Wouldn't we need to be widely published ourselves before we started critiquing others?" While this might be the case if reviewing research with complex statistical analysis, there are many publications written primarily for practitioners that would welcome the insights of practicing professionals on the manuscripts submitted. In fact, the perspectives of a professional who is actively working in the field would complement the perspectives of another reviewer who is a widely published scholar. If you agree to review, you also will be given a scoring sheet or a set of questions to help you assess the work, so you will have guidance in how to review. There are many things to be learned from reviewing others' scholarly work (Table 12.6).

Table 12.6 Benefits of reviewing

The work of reviewing others' manuscripts can help you to:
Keep current in your field
Demonstrate acceptance of professional responsibility
Document service for tenure/promotion
Expand professional network and identify possible collaborators
Identify resources for teaching, writing, and research
Become an insider in the world of academic publishing
Apply critical thinking to critique of scholarly work
Improve your own writing
Stimulate your thinking about trends, issues, and controversies in the field

(Jalongo, 2002; Gonce, 2013; Randolph, 2009)

Activity 12.3 Self-Assessment of Suitability as a Reviewer

As discussed earlier, it is not necessary to be widely published in order to take on the responsibilities of a reviewer. Use the questions below to self-assess.

- Do you get work done and meet deadlines?
- Are you knowledgeable in the field? Do you strive to remain current?
- Are you willing to give of your time and energy, even in the absence of financial incentives?
- Are you able to judge work objectively?
- Are you committed to the goals and audience of the outlet for which you hope to serve as a reviewer?
- Can you identify with authors and provide concrete, helpful suggestions? Will you challenge their thinking and help them to write an even better manuscript?

Nearly all peer reviewers are volunteers. Although a commercial publisher might pay a small honorarium or permit the reviewer to select a free book from their catalog, peer review is largely a form of uncompensated service to the profession (Table 12.7).

Fraudulent Publication

After a group of doctoral students was assembled for their final, required class together and a student said, "I have a question. I noticed the words 'in press' in a reference list. What does that mean, exactly?" "I wondered about that too," another student commented, "if I get a letter that my article has been accepted, can I put it

Table 12.7 Guidelines for reviewers

1. *Make sure you understand the assignment*. Nearly all publications have a set of reviewing questions, guidelines, scoring sheet, or rubric. Follow them as you compose your review
2. *Review the manuscript in front of you*. Too often, reviewers talk about how they would have written the article, chapter or book. The review is not about you, it is about the author's work
3. *Provide a balanced review*. Critique the work in its entirety rather than belabor one point. Do not make the mistake of writing three pages about one sentence in a book manuscript and one page about the remainder of the book, for example
4. *Check your work for accuracy*. Many times, reviews are written in haste at the last minute and reviewers don't take the time to re-read. In one memorable example, a reviewer went on and on about the need for a glossary when the book manuscript included one. Sometimes, reviewers will take authors to task about careless errors when their reviews—if it had not been proofed by the editor—would have contained several careless mistakes
5. *Provide specific feedback*. Be specific about recommendations for improvement but do not "rewrite". Even if you think the manuscript is practically perfect, you need to support your assessment with evidence. One reviewer, for example, pulled a quotation out of a manuscript and wrote: "I wish I had written those powerful words"
6. *Be tolerant of well-documented dissent*. It isn't necessary for you to agree with the authors. At times, reviewers may allow their own philosophy or biases to result in a negative review. For example, a new assistant professor volunteered to review and was given a book manuscript to assess. She did not recommend supporting the book's publication but, many years later, when prevailing opinions in the field had shifted more in line with the approach of the book, she concluded that the author had been ahead of his time. Fortunately, the author had found an alternative place of publication but she regretted her decision
7. *Function as a content expert*. Editors are most interested in an assessment of the content, approach, and marketability of a work from your perspective as an expert in the field. Some reviewers mistakenly approach a manuscript like an undergraduate student paper, correcting every spelling, grammatical, and typographical error. None of us is a perfect user of language, so the supposed corrections could be wrong. Most reputable publishers have professionals who do this and, until your work has been subjected to thorough copyediting, you may remain unaware of flaws in your own writing
8. *Spare the author embarrassment*. Raise the question, even if you aren't sure about the answer. For example, one author had written that 1 year of a person's life is equivalent to 7 years of in a dog's life. The reviewer seemed to recall that this simple formula had been called into question, so she wrote, "Please check; this has been debated in recent years." In another instance, an author wrote that "Tagalong" was the language spoken in the Philippines and that Spanish is spoken in Portugal—both are incorrect; it is Tagalog and Portuguese
9. *Recommend relevant key sources*. Presumably, if you are reviewing a manuscript it is because it is within your area of expertise and you may expect to see your work cited there; however, the purpose of the review is not to promote your own work. You might mention other, relevant work but it certainly is not a condition for publication that the author cite it
10. *Respond in a timely fashion*. It is customary to ask for a review within 1 or 2 months' time. If you fail to do this, it postpones the decision. If you never complete the review, the editor will need to replace you and this adds another 1 or 2 months to the review process. Decline promptly if you have no intention of reviewing and simply do not have the time. If you have a conflict of interest or if the manuscript is a poor match for your expertise, just say so
11. *Be tactful*. If a manuscript is poorly wrought, go ahead and reject it but do not punish the author. For instance, one reviewer wrote: "This reads like an undergraduate paper". The editor felt that this comment was insulting and took it out of the review comments before sharing them with the author. Strive to be collegial and helpful rather than treating review as a way to deliver harsh criticism with impunity

on my CV as 'in press'?" The professor replies "A publication is not in press unless it actually is in the production phase. Even if an article has been accepted for publication, it is, strictly speaking, not in press. For example, one of my colleagues had an article accepted for the state level publication of a professional organization and, shortly afterwards, the association decided to cease publishing the journal because it was not cost effective. So, due to circumstances beyond that author's control, it never was in press or in print. Of course, there are grey areas as well. If a text book publisher advises the authors that the book is going into production, it is difficult to know exactly when that will occur. The safest route is to describe exactly where a manuscript is in the process. Sometimes, in desperation, faculty will list manuscripts that were merely submitted for review as a way to show that they are trying to get published. But this sort of information has no more of a place on the CV than a list of courses you would like to teach someday. After a manuscript has been reviewed, revised, accepted and edited, some publishers will post a typeset copy online. The manuscript appears just as it will when it is published in a particular issue—other than the page numbers. That way, authors have documentation that the article truly is in press and awaiting publication."

The ethical issues surrounding published manuscripts are complex and have been further compounded by major changes to the communication environment, such as online publications and the internet (American Association of University Professors, 2015). Consider, for example, the following situations.

Situation 1 After making a conference presentation, a professor receives a very flattering e-mail from a book publisher he has not heard of previously. The editor invites him to submit a manuscript. The letter assures him that the book will not be reviewed and promptly published directly from the file he submits without any edits. When he checks the submission policies, he discovers that he has to pay a fee to get the book published.

There is a saying in the business field that, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." The situation just described may result in a book, but it will not count towards tenure and promotion. The absence of a peer review process is an indication that it is a hoax. If a publisher reassures you that your work will not be reviewed or edited, you might as well take your manuscript to the local copy store and have it bound because it is useless from an academic standpoint. This "pay to get published" scheme is commonly referred to as a "vanity press" because the goal is to have a physical copy of a book with your name on it as author and put it on display.

Situation 2 A writing team has their article accepted for a respectable journal in their field. As part of the acceptance process, they are asked if they want to order color reprints or provide open access (OA). Both are very expensive, so they decline and choose to have the work published in black and white in the print journal and available to academic libraries with subscription services to the journal.

Many times, when authors submit a manuscript, they will be asked if they want to provide "open access". What open access does is to post the work online and make it available to anyone who has a computer, free of charge. Readers do not need access to a university library, a subscription to the journal, or to pay for a download. The author is, in effect, paying *for* others to read, download, print out, and distribute the work. While this appears to democratize access to research, the fees charged often are exorbitant—sometimes over $1,000 U.S. dollars.

In theory, open access (OA) gives the work the widest possible distribution; however, some questionable publishers have given it a bad name. Generally speaking, reputable scholarly publishers will not require you to pay to have work published. Purchasing color reprints on glossy paper probably is not worth it when you can download black and white copies through a university search engine for free.

Online Tool
For details on Open Access, consult the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing, 2003 at http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/bethesda.htm.

Activity 12.4 Predatory Publishers

At some point, you will receive a very flattering letter inviting you to submit a manuscript to a journal. Before you start writing, click on the "author policies" and "submission guidelines" for the journal. If they have something called an "Author Publication Fee" or "page charges", beware! These can range from a few hundred to over S1000 U.S. dollars. A good source for checking up on publishers is Beall's List of Predatory Publishers at http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/.

The truth is that what might first appear to be a shortcut turns out to be a detour and dead end. Rather than succumb, make your manuscript as close to perfect as you can get it and work with respected, professional publishers who have a presence in your field.

Becoming an Editor

A faculty member and her doctoral advisee were co-presenting at a conference. To save money, she and the student were sharing a room, so the professor said, "Here's a learning opportunity for you. I am working to guest co-edit a special issue of this organization's journal, so I have my evaluations and my co-editor's evaluations. I'll keep the identity of the authors confidential. I'm wondering if you might provide a third professional opinion. Your role is to respond as someone who reads the publication regularly, not to edit. Read them as if they appeared in the journal and give your overall impression." The student agreed and the professor numbered each

article and spread them out over the desk. By the second day of the conference, the student had read all of them and jotted down some comments. When it was time to discuss them, there was one article that she felt was "Just—to compare it to movie ratings—only two stars when all others were four and five stars". When asked why this was the case, the student said, "It's just dry, dry as dust." The doctoral student was interested to learn that her assessment of the articles and that of the two co-editors were entirely consistent. So, even at this early stage in her career, she was capable of responding as an editor.

In a way, everybody edits. Authors write and revise manuscripts. Speakers stop in the middle of a sentence to search for a better word. Students go back and refine their lecture notes to make their study time more efficient. All are editing and undertaking the role of the editor: to communicate effectively. In scholarly publishing circles, editors edit journal manuscripts, book manuscripts, reports, and other types of communication. They make sure that the written text of print or online publications are of high quality. They use the reviewers' assessments to select works for publication, assist in the publication design and manage other responsibilities related to the publication.

In the popular media, book editors often are portrayed in posh New York offices while newspaper editors are seen barking orders at their reporters. Neither expectation applies to editors of scholarly publications. Financial rewards for editing are few, so much so that Plotnick (1982) once commented that disdain for high wages is a very useful attribute of editors. Many times, editors of scholarly publications are "field editors"—meaning that they are employed full time at a university and edit as a service to the professional group. It is likely that they have no clerical support and their office is small space designated for that purpose in their homes. Chances are that they are fellow scholars in the discipline, so boss management and putting writers "on assignment" is unacceptable. Given that many of the scholarly journals and books are published by professional organizations and/or nonprofit groups, financial remuneration often is little to none. Some editors may receive a small honorarium, modest royalties for books, or perhaps no money at all. However, in some instances, their university employers will reduce their teaching loads in exchange for the status of having a respected journal affiliated with the institution.

While the financial incentives are low, the expectations are high. Editors of academic publications need to go beyond their knowledge of grammar, spelling and composition. Ideally, they should be capable of:

- Creating a vision for the publication that takes all of the major stakeholders into account
- Recognizing high-quality, original work that advances thinking in the field
- Keeping pace with technological advances in publishing
- Treating the publisher, authors, reviewers and production staff with respect and fairness
- Anticipating which manuscripts will be well-received by the intended audience

- Identifying modifications to manuscripts that improve their quality
- Envisioning the finished product while attending to myriad details
- Using resources in a cost-effective fashion (e.g., budget, journal space)
- Meeting deadlines despite obstacles
- Responding appropriately to problems, complaints, and ethical quandaries
- Contributing to the discipline through their work

How can you tell if you have potential as an editor? Editors are expected to be fair, competent, and eager to contribute to the discipline. The majority of editors select this role because they are fascinated with language. They find pleasure in identifying the apt phrase to communicate an idea and complex information in a clear way. They are obsessed with detail, accuracy, and correcting errors in publications. They notice unscientific claims, erroneous statistics, and badly written sentences. Editors may differ in their academic education and experiences, but all are proficient in communicating effectively in using the most appropriate structure, format and content for the target audience and purpose. They simultaneously focus their thinking on the writers, the readers and the sponsors of the publication. Particularly if the publisher is a business, rather than a nonprofit professional organization, the editor needs business sense, familiarity with the field, and marketing savvy.

Although there is greater visibility and prestige associated with the role of editor, editors also encounter pressure and stress. Most editorial duties are accomplished outside of the normal work day. They work long hours, on weekends and during breaks or holidays to meet deadlines. As one small illustration of the time commitment, a survey of U.S. and international editors of scholarly journals in the nursing field found that editors spend an average of 3.5 h working on a "revise and resubmit" manuscript to get it ready for publication (Freda & Kearney, 2005). Considering that this is, by far, the most frequently rendered editorial decision on manuscripts gives a glimpse of the time demands.

As a first step in becoming an editor, scholars first amass extensive experience as peer reviewers. Aspiring editors need to review many manuscripts for the journal to be able to understand its guidelines. They can also volunteer to serve on the journal's advisory or editorial board. The editor-in-chief usually selects members of the advisory board and will sometimes invite outstanding advisory board members to become an associate editor. Aspiring editors can use the associate editor experience as a form of on-the-job training. In some instances, an advisory or editorial board member will serve as a guest editor for one or more issues of the journal. Look into the policies and practices within your organizations to identify guest editing opportunities; usually, it requires a formal proposal and list of potential authors committed to submitting articles for the special issue. When the journal places a call for a new editor-in-chief, scholars who can demonstrate a track record of successful experiences as advisory board or guest editors are more likely to submit a successful proposal and earn support from the organization to become the next editor-in-chief.

In the case of journals that are published by businesses rather than nonprofit organizations, the current editor may be asked to recommend his or her successor and, again, a history of service to the publication is a major factor in these decisions.

Some publishers, such as Springer Nature, publish books that complement the focus of their most successful scholarly journals. Many publishers produce series of books on various topics; aspiring book editors need to study the publisher's list and discuss their future plans with the sponsoring editor who is an employee of the publishing company or professional organization. Some publishers also are interested in handbooks or encyclopedias to which leaders in the field each contribute a chapter or entry. To some extent, proposing an edited book relies on having an expansive network of scholars in the discipline who are respected, competent, and dependable authors/contributors. The first step is to write a proposal that is sent out for review. The proposal is then sent to the series editor to make an initial decision about whether or not to pursue the project. Next, the authors develop their chapters or entries for the volume and the completed manuscript is sent out for review. Book editors need to manage all of these contacts, follow up with authors, and see to it that the recommended revisions are made. After that, the book goes into typeset proofs for final corrections. After this round of edits, the book goes into production. At each stage along the way, the editor is involved.

Conclusion

The first time that I received three independent and anonymous peer reviews on a book manuscript, I had sufficient foresight to go out to my car and read them rather than remain in my university office. The experience was so memorable that, to this day, I can point out the exact parking space where that event took place. Although most of the comments were far from complimentary, the editor's letter indicated that she was willing to give me another chance rather than terminate the project. After your work has been criticized, it is difficult to remember that peer review is the cornerstone of scholarship. Without a doubt, negative comments sting. The challenge is to use those barbs to spur you into action that will improve the work. Persistence in getting work published does not consist of just flinging the same manuscript into the review process repeatedly with the faint hope that eventually, it will be accepted.

Higher education is, in many ways, grounded in the peer review process. When college students plan a class presentation together or read and respond to one another's work, they are learning how to take others' perspectives into account and use their input to improve the work. When a graduate student submits a thesis or dissertation to the committee and responds to recommendations for improvement, it is a form of dress rehearsal for the peer review process used by respected scholarly journals and publishers. Widely published academic authors have learned to handle

peer review with poise and aplomb rather than treat it as a personal attack and ego threat. They are sufficiently mature to realize that it isn't a simple matter of others being "on their side" or "liking" what they have written; rather, peer review and editing is an appraisal of the thinking on paper and the effectiveness of the presentation of ideas. Instead of being wounded by reviews, think of them as troubleshooting. Avoid dwelling on the disappointments of peer review and capitalize on its contributions to improving your scholarly work. At its best, peer review ferrets out the flaws, enhances the accessibility of the work, and makes you look smarter.