Journal of Academic Language and Learning (JALL) Editors’ Report and Workshop for Reviewers and Authors

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Workshop Overview

- Overview of JALL – Brief report and practices & procedures
- Outline common expectations for scholarly papers and the peer reviewing process
- Hands-on peer review activity
JALL 2015 Report

- JALL is an Open Access double-blind peer-reviewed online journal with Editorial Board and public policies re scope, processes, etc.
- Est. 2007, as of October 2015, 137 papers published
- Acceptance rate: 54%
- Median number of downloads per article: 1504

(see Report Handout)
Review Criteria for JALL

- Relevance and interest to the readership
- Grounding in theory/scholarship (i.e. the paper is informed by relevant published work in the field)
- Substance & Originality (i.e. the paper makes a worthwhile contribution to the field)
- Quality of research design and data analysis; and/or soundness of arguments presented
- Quality of the Writing
JALL’s publication process

1. Author submits manuscript.

2. Editor checks it fits within the journal’s scope and forwards the paper to a sub-editor.

3. Sub-editor reads it and invites two reviewers to provide a review within 4 weeks according to the journal’s criteria. Double-blind process.

4. Sub-editor makes a decision based on reviewer reports. Either the paper is accepted outright, author asked to revise (& maybe resubmit for review), or the paper is declined.

5. Once a paper is provisionally accepted, it is copy and layout edited (i.e. even after “acceptance” an author may be asked to make further revisions, usually only minor).

6. The author is sent “proofs” to check prior to publication.
Reviewer rankings

Accept submission
- No flaws of any kind found; publish the paper as it is.

Revisions required
- A few minor flaws found (e.g., typos; referencing errors; a small number of unclear statements).
- The author’s revisions will be evaluated by the editors.

Resubmit for review
- Paper has significant weaknesses in terms of structure, argument, acknowledgement of prior work and/or analysis of data, but holds the promise of making a useful contribution to the field.
- Revised manuscript needs to go back to the referee to be evaluated.

Decline submission
- Has major flaws; doesn’t meet criteria and unlikely to, even after revisions.
Reviewing activity

Instructions:

Read the composite review provided. What do you think of it? What are its strengths and weaknesses? (For example, you may consider tone, content, how the author is positioned.)

Group report back:

What are the most important principles reviewers should keep in mind when providing feedback to authors?
Reviewing guidelines

+ ‘Review’ not ‘mark’ the manuscripts
+ Developmental versus gate keeping role
+ Constructive versus destructive feedback
  - Tone and content
  - Explicitness – i.e. tie comments to specific, clearly indicated examples from the author’s text
  - Comment on what is written as well as what is missing
  - Ensure consistency in rating and recommendation
Use the template as your guide.

Make your point *with* concrete examples (include identifiers such as page numbers)

Literature and theory - relevance, absences, accuracy, currency

Research - appropriateness, transparency, reliability, replicability, veracity of ‘claims’

Argument - logical, well developed

Structure and presentation

Sentence level matters
Editors love it when....

a reviewer can spot what's missing and provide suggestions that will really improve the intellectual/scholarly contribution of the text.

submissions are carefully proofread and presented according to journal's specified requirements.

the submission explicitly states the paper’s overall argument and its new contribution to the field.
Editors hate it when...

reviewers criticize but can't/don't suggest how to improve.

reviewers say: “In section X, the authors should discuss the work by Smith and Jones (2012),” but don’t provide any other bibliographic information for the reference(s).

authors ignore reviewer criticisms, or worse still, imply they have attended to the criticism but really have not, or have done so in a very paltry fashion.

submissions are sloppy (different from ignorance) in expression and/or referencing.

the author appears to be blissfully unaware of the existing, current literature pertaining to the field under discussion.
Advice for authors

Ask yourself not just,

“What did we do and why did we do it?”

but also

“What did we learn that other people [in the AALL field] could benefit from hearing about?”
References / Further reading

