

## Guidelines for Reviewers

### *Teaching Practice Briefs*

Association of Counselor Education and Supervision

April 2023

We thank you for agreeing to review brief manuscripts for *Teaching Practice Briefs* an ACES publication. Your review is invaluable to us when you follow these guidelines.

### Comments to the Editor

Comments submitted via the review form to the Co-Editors are confidential and will be read only by the editors; comments are not shared with the authors, at least not verbatim. In some cases, we may summarize your comments when communicating with the author(s).

Please use the confidential Comments to the Editor box in the review form when explaining your recommendation to accept, revise, or reject the manuscript. The Comments to the Editor box can also be used to (a) discuss the severity of major weaknesses and whether or not they can be addressed by revision; (b) to communicate other reasons why the paper should or should not be accepted for publication; and/or (c) to inform the editors about any confidential questions, concerns, or opinions that you may have about the brief manuscripts. **Do not copy and paste the same material into the Comments to the Editor and Comments to Authors boxes.**

### Comments to Authors

Comments to Authors are read both by the authors and the editors. Comments should provide a critical but **constructive** review, in a considerate and impartial tone. **They must not reveal your confidential recommendation to reject, revise, or accept the draft briefs.** Final decision to reject, revise, or accept the draft briefs are made by the editors, not by the reviewers.

Some of the reviews we receive are difficult to comprehend and hard for authors to respond to. For example, some reviews provide lengthy unstructured commentary or lists of assorted issues without prioritizing concerns. We are counting on you to highlight the most important issues, i.e., the main reasons why you think the paper should be rejected, revised, or accepted.

To this end, we encourage you to divide Comments to Authors between the following three sections:

- **Principal Strengths:** Describe the main strengths of the brief manuscript. Highlight points that make it interesting, informative, important, or novel. Be concise.
- **Major Points:** Identify significant problems, weaknesses, errors, omissions, and limitations of the draft brief. Here, we suggest focusing primarily on deficiencies in the instructional design, not in the writing (see Minor Points). Preferred format: numbered list with no more than about 5 – 10 items. Be specific.
- **Minor Points:** List any other concerns, weaknesses, errors, omissions, and limitations that should be addressed. Communicate violations in APA Formatting, as well as issues in grammar, quality of writing; etc. Preferred format: List with no more than about 10-20

items. Using the brief manuscript's level headings, outline your comments and indicate the location(s) of the problems in the draft (i.e. page, paragraph, and/or line number).

If reviewers find performing the roles of gatekeeper and supportive evaluator simultaneously difficult, we encourage reviewers focus on one role at a time. We suggest reviewers maintain collegial respect and utilize tactful candor when pointing out concerns within a draft brief. One common strategy is a double-revision process: first review focusing on publication recommendations and second review focusing on a narrative evaluation. Regardless of the approach of the reviewer, they must stay alert to fulfilling both important roles in the peer review process.

### **Recommendation**

Base recommendations to reject, revise, or accept a draft brief primarily on the key strengths and major weaknesses of the instructional design, not of the writing. Reviewer recommendations should be consistent with your comments. If you find any significant concerns in the draft briefs, we request you consider whether they are potentially fixable. Weaknesses in the design of a brief's teaching innovation or instructional strategy (TI/IS) may be both serious and unfixable; these problems can lead you to recommend rejection. Major weaknesses in the draft brief may not necessarily justify rejection if they are potentially fixable. If unsure whether a major concern is fixable, we suggest you consider recommending major revisions, so authors have the chance to address concerns.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The Co-Editors must be informed immediately and directly if a reviewer determines there may be a potential conflict of interest between the authors and the reviewer. Examples include submissions by authors on recent shared collaborations, submissions by faculty colleagues and/or students, and financial gain conditional upon acceptance or rejection of the manuscript. Brief manuscripts will be reassigned when a conflict of interest is present, and the reviewer is asked to immediately delete/destroy all copies of the manuscript.

## **Brief Manuscript Structure**

### **Introduction**

The basic tasks of the Introduction are to (a) introduce a brief review of the relevant evidence base, (b) articulate the rationale, purpose, and timeliness of the TI/IS, and (c) provide a concise description of the TI/IS and how the brief addresses an instructional need or knowledge gap. Do the authors provide an adequate review of the relevant literature? Is this review synthesized in a way that lends support to the TI/IS? Do they explicate conceptual frameworks underlying their TI/IS?

### **Description of the Teaching Innovation or Instructional Strategy**

Some basic tasks of this section are to present a clear and concrete summary of the aims and conceptual framework guiding the implementation of the TI/IS, as well as detailed instructions for replicating the intervention. Could you, using just this section, repeat the TI/IS in your own

classroom? Do the authors provide an understandable outline for the steps needed in their TI/IS? What ethical and legal considerations do the authors make regarding implementation of their TI/IS? Have the authors described how their TI/IS promote equity, diversity, and inclusion? How much do the authors demonstrate reflexivity and examine their impact on the classroom and the success of the TI/IS? Are the references and resources relied upon recent or outdated?

### **Assessment & Evaluation of the Teaching Innovation or Instructional Strategy**

This section is made up of two subsections: 1. Assessment and 2. Evaluation. Do the authors review tools, instruments, or methods used in assessing student learning outcomes? Have the authors demonstrated attention to student sociocultural and neuro diversity in their assessment and evaluation strategies? Did the authors distinguish between assessment of student learning and evaluation of the TI/IS? How thoroughly do the authors describe their process for evaluating the effectiveness of their TI/IS and measuring students' receptivity?

### **Discussion & Implications**

Have the authors presented logical conclusions (i.e. supported by practical or observed evidence, integrating relevant literature, or citing assessment or evaluation outcomes)? Do the authors connect their implications for teaching practices and instructional design specifically to counselor education? Did the authors include their unanswered questions and identify limitations? What directions for future practice, research, or evaluation of the TI/IS do the authors present?

### **Additional Resources**

Learn How to Review a Manuscript

Peer review is an integral part of science and a valuable contribution to our field. We hope that these resources will be helpful as you consider joining the community of APA reviewers

<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/resources/how-to-review-manuscripts>

How to review a manuscript

Journal editors identify 10 key steps for would-be reviewers

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/05/review-manuscript>

"How to Review a Manuscript" is an instructional video in the Science Career Series, produced by the APA Center for Learning and Career Development. It is available for viewing at

[http://www.apa.org/career-development/courses/manuscript/story\\_html5.html](http://www.apa.org/career-development/courses/manuscript/story_html5.html).

For an excellent primer on how to review a manuscript, see:

Lovejoy TI, Revenson TA, & France CR (2001). Reviewing manuscripts for peer-review journals: A primer for novice and seasoned reviewers. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 42, 1-13. DOI: 10.1007/s12160-011-9269-x.