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The *JOE* Review Process

Abstract: In "The *JOE* Review Process" I explain the *JOE* review process, obviously, including my initial peer review of all submissions and the double-blind review many submissions also undergo, and describe the valuable role played by Manuscript FastTrack (MFT). In "April *JOE*" I talk about the three Commentaries in the issue, an article making the point that more of us should be documenting long-term impacts, and two complementary article pairs.

The *JOE* Review Process

In August of last year I announced that *JOE* was "on track," in other words, that we had started using Manuscript FastTrack (MFT) as our online review system. That has been a big success. Authors are getting their review results faster—something we have all wanted—and *JOE* reviewers couldn't be happier with MFT.

In that same Editor's Page, I also announced that, starting in 2012, *JOE* would start accepting new submissions via MFT. But there's been a change of plans. While *JOE* will continue to use MFT for reviewing articles in those categories subject to double-blind review (in fact, we can't imagine doing without it), authors of *JOE* submissions should continue to send their new submissions to me directly at [<joe-ed@joe.org>](mailto:joe-ed@joe.org).

There's a good reason for this.

JOE claims (rightly) to be "a unique combination of professional development and academic rigor." The professional development aspect is mostly my contribution to the rich *JOE* mix. As editor, I review *all* submissions initially to determine their suitability for review (Feature, Research in Brief, and Ideas at Work articles) or publication (Commentary and Tools of the Trade articles).

That's because, as I've said before, *JOE* has a heterogeneous readership *and* writership. In other words, many *JOE* authors (but certainly not all) are new to academic publishing, have never submitted an article to a refereed journal before or do not have a traditional academic background. They are application-oriented practitioners rather than professors. I work with those authors to help them get their articles ready for double-blind review or for publication. In 2011, I returned 184 out of 293 articles (62%) to their authors for revision before accepting them for review or publication. Already this year I have returned 42 submissions to authors for revision, 28 of them in categories

subject to double-blind review.

JOE is pretty unique among refereed journals in this regard, and we believe it's a significant "value add" for Extension professionals. But our uniqueness is not something that can easily be accommodated by MFT, which was developed to suit more traditional refereed journals, which it does very well. Many journals use MFT for initial submission as well as review.

But not *JOE*.

JOE authors continue to submit their articles to me at <joe-ed@joe.org>. Once I have determined that articles are suitable for double-blind review, either at the initial submission stage or after revision, I give the authors the information they'll need to upload their submissions to MFT for review. I handle articles in categories for which I'm the peer reviewer directly, without recourse to MFT.

Our excellent *JOE* reviewers, of course, are largely responsible for the academic rigor part of the *JOE* review equation. The system's working well, and Feature, Research in Brief, and Ideas at work authors can claim that their articles have undergone both peer *and* double-blind review. How's *that* for rigor?

April *JOE*

You'll notice that this issue contains *three* excellent Commentaries instead of the usual one or two. They are "[Extension's Future: Time for Disruptive Innovation](#)," "[Extension Through a New Lens: Creativity and Innovation Now and for the Future](#)," and "[Don't Get Rode Hard and Put Away Wet](#)." The reason I've paired the first two must be pretty obvious, while the third is a salutary reminder to take care of ourselves amidst the innovation and disruption. And if you like "Don't Get Rode Hard and Put Away Wet," you should also enjoy "[Removing the Tension from Extension](#)."

Speaking of salutary reminders, the first Feature, "[Evidence of Impact: Examination of Evaluation Studies Published in the Journal of Extension](#)," reminds us that we should be doing a better job of documenting long-term outcomes or, rather, that more of us should be doing it.

The "Put Away Wet," "Tension from Extension" connection is not the only example of complementary articles in the issue. "[Extension Leads Multi-Agency Team in Suppressing a Pest in the West](#)" describes "team leadership by Extension personnel in coordinating regulatory efforts, research, and farmer education in rapid suppression of the cereal leaf beetle pest." And "[Multi-Agency Team Uses University Archival Tool to Conserve Vital Project Information](#)" recounts how the team archives their materials in an open, digital repository.

That's seven out of 36 articles in yet another great issue.

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