



LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

Citation:

la Velle, L and Newman, S (2020) Reviewing for Academic Journals. In: UCET Conference, 3-4 November, Online. (Unpublished)

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/8328/>

Document Version:

Conference or Workshop Item (Published Version)

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Reviewing for Academic Journals

UCET Conference (Virtual) November, 2020

Linda la Velle (Bath Spa University)

Stephen Newman (Leeds Beckett University)

- Purposes of review
- Role of Reviewer
- Good and bad practice
- Issues with reviews
- Approaches to review
- Getting 'your head around it'
- Constructing the review

Purposes of review

- Peer review of research and scholarly output– the backbone of academe – forms the academic community
- To describe, analyse and evaluate
- Originality, Significance and Rigour
- To ‘hold up the mirror’ for reflection: gives academics the opportunity to respond to others’ interpretations, ideas and work
- Maintains the frontiers of knowledge in the field

The role of the Reviewer

- To understand the article: to read critically and analytically
- To bring experience and expertise of the field to the article: to respond to it
- To critique, validate, verify and interpret the article: to evaluate it
- To contextualise the article: to compare it
- To enquire: about the article, the author, themselves; the context

Good and Bad Practice

- Thoughtful
 - Justification
 - Objectivity
 - Clarity
 - Conciseness, sufficiency
 - Formative, research based suggestion for improvement
- Casual
 - Description
 - bias
 - vagueness
 - Brevity
 - Unsubstantiated critical comment

Approaching a review

- Online platforms – their communications – how they recruit reviewers – personalisation not always possible
- Scan – title, keywords, abstract, structure, conclusion.
 - Note down: main purpose of paper: RQ/topic; bottom line outcome
- Scrutinise – detailed, critical reading
 - Note down: main points from each section (what it is and what it does); questions that arise for you; discern the ‘golden thread’
 - Review notes: two columns: observations and responses -reflect – note down;

Mapping the review

- Your observations about the article:
 - Information; focus; evidence; methods; ethics; analysis; claims;
- Your responses to the article
 - Try to suspend judgement until you have made your observations
 - Ask yourself:
 - Does it fall within the journal's remit?
 - What is the subject/topic of the article? What key ideas will you outline?
 - What is the bottom line? (claim for new knowledge)
 - What evidence does the author draw on? Does it support the claims?
 - Is the 'golden thread' of argument discernible, convincing, well articulated?
 - Is the methodology robust and ethical?
 - What is the significance of the findings for the field?
 - Is it satisfactorily presented? (title, abstract, keywords, structure, English, etc.)

Writing the Review

- Try hard to keep to the time schedule: if it was your paper in review, you would appreciate quick turn-around (and so would the editor!)
- The Introduction: draft a clear statement that evaluates the article and justifies the evaluation – state final judgement
- The body of the review: organise around your responses to the key questions raised during the critical reading – OSR important
- Write as accurately and elegantly as you can: the text will be copied directly into the email to author
- Balance judgements; stay positive (even when ‘rejecting’)

The Editor's perspective

- Timely
- Appropriate
- Formative

