Sharing Tacit Knowledge of Academic Publishing: How to Respond to Reviewer Comments

Danielle E. Lorenz, University of Alberta, Canada

Abstract: Navigating academic publishing is trying and complicated for both junior and established scholars. Some of the demands from the process come from the hidden curriculum within academic culture which is exacerbated by the tacit knowledge that only some folks possess. In this editorial, I explain some of my personal struggles with academic publishing as a First in the Family (FiF)/First Generation Student (FGS). I utilize my understanding as a way to frame an issue within academic publishing that I have personally experienced and observed in my CJNSE editorship: responding to reviewer comments. I then outline the components academic authors must include when replying to their peers' assessments of their manuscripts, and provide an example of a method of how to do so. Fittingly, the work of the authors, Review Mentors (graduate student peer mentors), and Senior Review Editors (PhDs with publishing experience) in this issue highlights the mentoring qualities of CJNSE and how tacit knowledge can be shared in this publishing environment. The topics discussed in this issue include the shortcomings within English language learning courses for immigrants and refugees to Canada (Lam); the different qualities and emotional intelligence required of department chairs (Cowley); the need for curricula change to include death, dying, and grief in elementary curricula (Durant); querying the principalship as a democratic process (Kendrick); questioning the idea of universal values for education policy educators (Hankey); the tensions between Deweyan and Confucian educational philosophies in English language learning in China (Peng); the factors that mediate a language teacher's corrective feedback decision (Chen); the factors that affect an individual's likelihood of reporting sexual assault on a post-secondary campus (MacKenzie); the ways in which washback and curriculum agreement are interconnected methods of classroom instruction (Sultana); the limitations and utility of Kimberly Maich & Carmen Hall's "Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Ontario Context: An Introduction," and explaining the importance of Jen Gilbert's "Sexuality in School: The Limits of Education" to educators, particularly those in Canada (Virani-Murji).

Keywords: Tacit knowledge, First in the Family, First Generation Students, Graduate student writing

Academia and Tacit Knowledge

For those of us who identify as *First in the Family* (FiF) or *First Generation Students* (FGS), completing a degree at the undergraduate level can be quite challenging because we do not have the experiences of our parents to help guide us. FiF/FGS students are post-secondary students whose parents do not have a university degree or college diploma (Castillo-Montoya, 2017; O'Shea, Stone, Delahunty, & May 2018); they are also more likely to be women, people of colour, and of lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Gardiner & Holley, 2011). Given the nature of graduate school being more demanding than undergraduate programs, the difficulties associated with program completion are usually intensified for FIF/FGS students (Gardiner & Holley, 2011; Turner, Pelts, & Thompson, 2017). Some of the ability to be successful in higher education comes from being able to understand the *hidden curriculum* of academic culture; that is, the aspects of one's education that are not part of the formal curricula but are instead learned in social environments through various experiences (hidden curriculum, 2003). For many, being successful in graduate school—particularly within a doctoral program—is tied to what we learn within these spaces that goes beyond our coursework. Academic publishing is one of these areas.

The first time I submitted a manuscript to an academic journal for publication[1] I felt like I no idea what I was doing. I had just finished the first year of my PhD, and typical of other FiF/FGS students (e.g., Gardiner & Holley, 2011; Turner, Pelts, & Thompson, 2017) I had muddled my way through, made some missteps, and felt imposter syndrome.[2] When I received The Email from the editor, I thought that they had made a mistake: *surely this article should have been rejected*? Once I got over the shock, I googled what I needed to do to make revisions: I had to address the comments from reviewers and write a letter to the editor. I completed them to the best of my ability, telling the Editor that I was a little unsure of what I was doing as that manuscript was my first publication. Luckily for me, the Editor was kind and gave me feedback on how to improve my revisions further. The manuscript was eventually printed following copyediting, and the world did not end as a result.

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[1] The first time I submitted an article for publication was for a journal that was created as part of a course. Although some of the process was the same as submitting to other academic journals, it functioned as a type of formative assessment (Andersson & Palm, 2017) because it focused primarily on feedback. It was also very different because a) all of the students were being guided by the instructor, Dr. Anne Trépanier (Carleton University), through every step in the process, and b) of the weekly face-to-face interaction of classmates/reviewers is atypical of the review process having spent the term learning in their presence; I discussed this a little bit in Lorenz (2018a).

[2] Cope-Watson and Smith Betts defined *imposter syndrome* as "a phenomenon characterized by an inability to internalize academic success" (2010, p. 1, citing Clance & Imes, 1978).

The second time I published something I was a little more confident in myself and my abilities because I had that prior positive experience (and Google) to fall back on. However, despite my being a FiF/FGS student, it is imperative that I mention that I carry certain privileges with me when my work is reviewed (anonymously or otherwise). As a native English speaker and someone with first and family names of European origins, I am not as susceptible to the politics of academic review (Canagarajah, 1996; Lillis & Curry, 2013). Nonetheless, I still have had a few encounters with Reviewer Two.[3] These experiences, both positive and negative, publishing with *CJNSE* and elsewhere, have made me come to realize that I have certain kinds of acquired knowledge about academic publishing that I can share with others.

Over the last year as the English Managing Editor of the *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education*, I have learned even more about how academic publishing works.[4] As Polyani wrote, "*we know more than we can tell*" (1966, p. 4; emphasis in original); indeed, it was not until I went through the revisions process with a co-author this summer that I really considered what I *actually knew*. In making changes to our article, I looked at the process as both an author and an editor: I knew that we had to demonstrate to the editor that we had evaluated and attended to the critiques of our work from the reviewers while also clearly communicating that we had done so while also ensuring we maintained the original foci of the piece. I believe that I will persist in doing the same as I submit manuscripts for publication.

Given my experiences with academic publishing though in particular those as the *CJNSE* English Managing Editor, I believe that my understanding of academic publishing is a type of tacit knowledge. As Melonie Fullick explained in a blog post a few years back, *tacit knowledge* is "informal or unwritten and difficult to pass on to others but nevertheless necessary to know" (2015, para. 5). In other words, tacit knowledge is comprised of things that "everyone knows" or is supposed to know, yet are never part of what is formally taught. One can be instructed on how to write, as we have been; yet, all of the intricacies involved with academic writing requires more than combining letters into words, words into sentences, and sentences into paragraphs. Since teaching someone how to write for publication far exceeds the scope of an editorial, so I have endeavored to include a different topic: responding to peer review.

Telling What I Know

One thing that authors seem to struggle with—which I have both observed as an editor and floundered with as an author—is addressing comments. Regardless of how you may personally feel about the critiques you have received from reviewers and the editor, you must speak to them in some way: to avoid them can be considered not collegial. Your response to the assessment can be affirmative (i.e. you agree with the reviewer's critique), or negative (i.e. you do not concur with the reviewer's criticisms) based on your preference (Lemming, 2016; Noble 2017). There are many different ways you can demonstrate to the editor that you have gone through the remarks of the reviewers, but my   personal   favourite   is   to   use   a   chart,   as   seen   in   Table   1.

Table 1
One Method for Responding to Reviewers

Reviewer Comment	Author Response	Author Action	Location in Manuscript
The final paragraph states "As the research demonstrates…" but the research process is not described previously within the paper. As a result, this affirmation is somewhat weak and should not be included.	I appreciate that the reviewer mentioned this to me. I have made sure to describe more of the research process earlier in the paper; as such, I have kept the statement from their comment.	Added the following paragraph: In order to determine how K-12 educators in Canada conceptualized the idea of decolonization, I created a short, anonymous online survey. The	p. 3; underline added paragraph has all text underlined.

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[3] Colloquially—and especially on Twitter—Reviewer Two is the peer reviewer who provides unhelpful and often mean comments to authors, sometimes because the way the article was written was not how they would have written it (Reed, 2017).
[4] I wrote a little bit about this in Lorenz (2018b).

survey design allowed participants to share their thoughts in a way that would prevent them from being identified. The survey had four open-ended questions: 1) What does decolonization mean; in other words, how would you describe it? 2) How do you employ decolonizing methodologies in your classroom (if at all)? 3) What does decolonization mean to you on a personal level? 4) What advice do you have for K-12 educators that want to decolonize their classroom? The open-ended nature of the questions allowed for participants to respond in much or as little depth as they felt necessary. After one month I closed the survey, and began to thematically code the questions using Dedoose. Each of the themes are explained in detail in the following section.

"Line 306. The sentence follows a bit of a Yoda-esque grammar" (@Shitmyreviewerssay, 2018, para.1)	Thank you for pointing this out to me. I have now fixed the sentence.	Line 306 reads as follows: The research that was conducted for this study took an unintended turn: it was initially intended to be used to answer the research question How do Alberta K-12 teachers respond to the upcoming changes to the *Teacher Quality Standards* (TQS). Instead, the data prompted a new question: what do Alberta K-12 teacher responses to the *Teacher Quality Standards* relate	p. 15; ==highlighted in-text in yellow.==

to settler colonialism?

Overall this paper is well-written and well-researched. Visual organization (vis-à-vis the use of subheadings) would solidify the paper's organization further.	Thank you for this comment. I agree that subheadings would be helpful.	I have added a number of subheadings. In the Methodology section, there are now Survey Design, Sampling, Recruitment, and Data Interpretation subheadings. In the Results section, there are now subheadings for each of the finding themes (Racialization, Classism, and Gender).	Each of the new subheadings are <mark>highlighted in red</mark> within the main text body.
"This lack of familiarity with the literature is admittedly a bit unnerving, but hey that's what peer-reviews are for" (@Shitmyreviewerssay, 2016, para. 1).	I do not agree with the reviewer's comment here. Despite settler colonialism being a growing area of study, the number of publications that focus on settler colonialism and education is very sparse. I have included all seven that apply within the literature review after an exhaustive search using ERIC and Education Search Complete.	I wrote a sentence to qualify the lack of sources within the literature review. Though the number of publications on settler colonialism is steadily growing, settler colonialism within an education has rarely been a topic of focus. In fact, despite a thorough investigation of the educational databases ERIC and Education Search Complete, I was only able to find seven papers that considered settler colonialism within education.	pp. 6-7; <u>text is underlined</u>
In order to contextualize the researcher in the research in regard to the topic explored, more information about the author (e.g., motivation for writing, relationship to the work, Indigenous status) is essential. This should be included in the introduction of the paper, and would not need to consist of more than one paragraph.	I was concerned that describing my social location would allow me to be easily identified during review, so I did not include it. Now that the paper will be published, I have added the identifying information.	I wrote the following to position myself in the research: Who I am is integral to how I have approached this research and how I have interpreted the data I collected. I am non-Indigenous; I am a white woman, a child of working-class parents. As a settler on Indigenous lands, I felt it important to interrogate what is seen as "normal" or "regular" by other non-Indigenous peoples.	p. 3; <u>text is underlined</u>

The examples I included in Table 1 are an amalgam of real comments other academics have received, alterations to comments I received with a coauthor, and one I made up. As such, the responses were devised to be potential or possible answers had the comments been directed to my personal work. These illustrations are representative of comments an author could receive from a publication where the author's and reviewer's identities are masked from each other.[5] At the same time, some of these are not the type of reviewer comments one should aspire to leave[6] because they are reminiscent of those of Reviewer Two.

In all five of the illustrations, I have clearly laid out a) the reviewer's critique, b) whether or not I agree with their comment, c) what I did to respond to their remark, and d) where in their paper what I have done can be found. These are the things that editors are looking for when you are responding to the assessments from peer reviewers. They do not have to look like this—they could be written in a series of paragraphs, or in your manuscript directly if you were fortunate enough to receive extensive comments—but they should include all of these aspects. Remember, publishing is a collegial endeavor, and one of your responsibilities is to acknowledge the work that others have done in making your manuscript the best it can be.

In This Issue

I am so pleased with the nine articles and two book reviews included in this issue: it has been great working with these folks as their writing has gone through the publication process. I am delighted to welcome these eleven individuals to *CJNSE*'s fold of published authors. In this issue, unlike the previous, there was no specific Call for Papers: as a result of this, there is no general theme for the issue and not all of the papers relate to each other. Nonetheless, all of these junior scholars had to ensure that their manuscripts fit with the purpose and scope of the journal as well as met the guidelines for publication with *CJNSE*. Moreover, these folks also had to address the comments they received on their work from peer reviewers, Review Mentors, Senior Review Editors, and the Managing Editor. Language learning, educational hierarchies, challenging normative understandings, and the needs of learners and society were themes shared amongst and between this issue's manuscripts.

Michelle Lam (University of Manitoba) challenges normative understandings of language learning in "'I put myself in my parents' shoes': Dignity and dehumanization in EAL classrooms." Applying an intersectional framework, Lam outlines and considers the teaching experiences of "Steven," a Southeast Asian man who instructed in an English as an Additional Language program in the Canadian Prairies. At the conclusion of her case study, Lam provides recommendations to change the format of language learning pedagogy and curricula for refugees and immigrants in Canada.

Summer J. Cowley (OISE/University of Toronto) examines the "human side" of post-secondary educational administrators in "Department Chairs: More Than Floating Heads with Absent Hearts." Examining the current literature that focuses on the characteristics of department chairs as rational and of similar personalities, Cowley points to the fact that department chairs are not a homogenous group that can be typecast in one way or another. In her analysis, Cowley concludes that the position of department chair is relationship-orientated, highly social, and emotional labour comprises a significant component of the role.

Keri-Lyn Durant (Lakehead University) highlights the necessity of learning about non-academic issues within the context of schools in "How Grief Camp Reinforces the Need for Death Education in Elementary Schools." Durant uses her experience as a grief camp volunteer to situate herself in this work and articulate why grief education should be added to curricula. Considering the amount of time children have spent in schools by the end of grade eight, Durant believes that avoiding the topics of dying, death, and loss in elementary schools does children a huge disservice.

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[5] I stopped using the word "blind" to explain peer review where author and reviewer are anonymous to each other because of how the *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies* describes their review process. CJNSE thus adopted the usage of "masked" or "masked review" in 2018 because there is no need to use a disability as a descriptor in the peer review process.

[6] Instead, one should aim to be kind. In the words of Otipemisiwak scholar Zoe Todd, "We are all the product of the networks of beings within which we live. We are all contributing to one another's well-being and success" (2017. para. 7).

Jeffrey R. Hankey (University of Alberta) uses a postmodern lens to evaluate basic understandings of knowledge and reality in "Do You See What I See? Universal Translation, the Postmodernist Lens, and Implications for Educational Policy Research." In this philosophical paper, Hankey contends that there are no such things as universal norms and values, and queries how these relate to practical paralysis (inability to act), and the role of ethical educational policy researchers. Asserting that educational policy researchers must be keen to encounter philosophical issues in their work, Hankey recommends that they must also be critical of ideas that are portrayed as universal.

Astrid Kendrick (University of Calgary [alumni]) probes common conceptions of the principal role in "Reflections on the Role of School Leadership: Principal as Gatekeeper." Weaving popular representations of the principal from television and film into her work, Kendrick asks the question, "What if we considered school leadership as a representative of democratic function rather than a person?" Noting that there are other ways classroom leadership can be conceptualized, Kendrick reminds us that empowering principals to lead differently will positively impact the school environment for everyone.

Yue Peng (Queen's University) assesses the difficulties associated with teaching English as a second language in China in "Foreign Language Education in China: When Reforms Meet Tradition." In her article, Yue considers the Deweyan educational principles that underlay Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the educational values of Confucius that form the basis of educational philosophies in China. Peng's conceptual and historical analysis offers greater understanding of English language teaching in China today.

Lily Chen (McGill University) considers the ways in which corrective feedback (CF) is applied by educators in "Exploring Corrective Feedback in Real-time Classrooms: Factors Mediating Teachers' In-class Corrective Feedback Decision." Chen's literature review looks into the ways in which an instructor applies CF and the factors that impact how and when it is provided to students learning a new language. Closing the paper, Chen states that how CF can "work" in a classroom depends on a number of factors, while also indicating several other possible topics of research within CF.

Taylor MacKenzie (McMaster University [alumni]) stresses the significance of sexual assault on Canadian post-secondary campuses in "Exploring inequality in relation to rates of reporting sexual assault at Canadian post-secondary institutions." In this literature review, MacKenzie investigates the factors that impact an individual's odds of reporting sexual assault. Lack of sexual assault policies, existing barriers to support, and poor responses by post-secondary institutions, are the three most prevalent themes MacKenzie identifies in the literature.

Nasreen Sultana (Queen's University) contemplates the relationship between the areas of washback and curriculum agreement in "Investigating the Relationship between Washback: A Literature Review." In order to produce a comprehensive paper on two different topics, Sultana applies a scoping review to blend the literatures. Sultana's work suggests that if curriculum alignment and washback are simultaneously investigated by researchers more effective classroom instruction could result.

Joyce Magat (York University) explores *Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Ontario Context: An Introduction* (2016), by researchers Kimberly Maich and Carmen Hall. Magat criticizes the authors' reliance on the medical model of disability and the lack of inclusion of autistic voices while praising the book's inclusion of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) over the lifespan. Consequently, Magat infers that a variety of readers—and those in Ontario in particular—may find the book useful so long as they are cognizant of whose voices and perspectives were not included.

Farah Virani-Murji (York University) examines the ways sexuality is deliberated within schools in her review of Jen Gilbert's (2014) *Sexuality in School*: *The Limits of Education*." Reminding the reader of recent policy changes to Ontario's Heath and Physical Education curriculum, Virani-Murji considers the mediation between psychoanalysis and sexuality, as suggested by Gilbert, and weaves the ethic of hospitality and acceptance into her review. Ultimately Virani-Murji establishes that Gilbert effectively addresses the ways sexuality is misconstrued while also offering interventions to educators on how to approach sexuality in schools.

As the tenth year of the CJNSE/RCJCÉ's existence and ninth year of publication comes to a close, I hope that the eleven English-language papers, the six French papers, the French and English papers that have come before—and all that are yet to come—cause you to consider what you know and how you can share that learning with others.

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My experience as the Managing Editor (English) for CJNSE has taught me so much; not only about being an editor, but also a reviewer, writer, and mentor. I have been extremely lucky to have had this experience, and will certainly look back on this year fondly. I would be amiss to not mention the folks who were important in helping me not only with the publication of the second/final issue under my editorship, but also throughout the last twelve months more broadly.

Authors

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Danielle E. Lorenz: Danielle E. Lorenz is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. Her research focuses on the manifestation of settler colonialism within systems of education. She has been the *CJNSE* English Managing Editor for 2018; she was the Associate Editor in 2017, and a Senior Copyeditor in 2016. Danielle is also a copyeditor for the *Alberta Journal for Educational Research*, a research assistant, and an archival researcher for Gunn Métis Local #55.